The Struggle of an Aging Woman in Fashion

When your mind is young, but body gets old.

Emilia Parikka

BACHELOR'S THESIS
June 2023

Entrepreneurship and Team Leadership

ABSTRACT

Tampere University of Applied Sciences
Degree Programme in Business Administration
Bachelor of Entrepreneurship and Team Leadership

PARIKKA EMILIA:
The Struggle of an Aging Woman in Fashion
When Your Soul Is Young, But Body Gets Old.

Bachelor's thesis 61s pages, appendices 8 pages
June 2023
_____

The purpose of this thesis was to aid the Anna Ruohonen label with their target customer group and to find out how a fashion label could help women over 50 stay stylish as they age. In this thesis the focus was on what aging women need from fashion, what kind of struggles they have regarding fashion industry, how ageism and media effects these struggles and whether women over 50 are visible in fashion. Furthermore, the goal was to create an understanding of adult female fashion and give concrete ideas to the customer on what they could answer to the needs of this customer segment.

The struggle of an aging woman is the feeling of your body getting old, while your soul stays young. With this struggle comes different problems such as finding fitting clothes, facing ageism, or dressing appropriate for one's age. A discussion with the founder of Anna Ruohonen label, about the struggles of aging women sparked the idea for this topic.

The theory part of this thesis deals with ageism, anti-aging culture and women over 50 in fashion. Ageism is been explored through its history and gendered ageism. Anti-aging culture explains the effects of media and how this culture is visible in our society. To understand women over 50 and fashion, their consumer habits and stylishness is discussed in the theory part. Research was conducted through interviews and observatory research. The interviews were used to gather the thoughts women over 50 have about fashion. The interviews were conducted face to face and aimed to gather ideas for the customer on how

they could answer the needs of this customer group. As supportive research, the author observed how women over 50 are visible in media and what their street style looks like.

The results were mirrored was mirrored to the theory presented in the work. Based on the research it could be concluded that women over 50 know what they want very well and wish to have possibility to alter the items they purchase to fit their needs. With the research and theory, it could be noted that aging women were not very visible in fashion, except when they had gained power in the industry. The theory and research presented in this work can be used to develop services for women over 50 in the fashion industry.

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

This research was conducted in Spring 2023 as a Bachelor Thesis for Entrepreneurship and Team Leadership program. In this research is discovered how women over 50 feels about fashion, what makes them stylish and how a fashion label could help them as they age. This topic was relevant to the customer Anna Ruohonen label, which has their customer base conducted of women over 50.

The research is interesting as women over 50 look at fashion differently from younger women and are often disregarded as an eligible customer base by many companies. According to The Economist this group spends approximately 4 trillion dollars each year and as their number grows, so does the number of money they bring to the market. This in mind, shockingly only 31% of companies consider this target group when planning for future. (The Economist, 2016)

This work would be useful to fashion brands wanting to expand their target audience to women over 50 or to any fashion brand wanting to answer to the needs of an aging customer group. According to The Economist in 2016, the customer group of those over 60 is vastly growing and by 2030, their number is estimated to reach 222 million. (The Economist, 2016)

It's meaningful to research the desires the age group over 50 has, as the Economist states, aging affects individuals differently as some stay capable longer and others vastly fade away. They point out, that there are differences in consumer habits also between different stages of "being old", it's not the same to be in the 60s as it is in the 80s. (The Economist, 2016) This is why, in the research the individuals interviewed range from 50-82 years of age.

Beauty and fashion are highly connected, as fashion is influenced by the concepts of beauty. This topic is relevant as Widdow states in her book Perfect Me, beauty matters to people, both in conscious and unconscious ways, and thus researchers should not ignore it. Beauty is gaining more importance as the

beauty ideal becomes stronger and affect wider range of people. In our society beauty is an extension of once identity and determines who is valuable and who is not, thus beauty should be taken seriously. (Widdows, 2018)

The fashion industry is huge, and according to Ariella, in 2022 the fashion industry in a global scale was valued to be 1,7 trillion dollars. They continue, that of 3.4 billion people who work in a global scale, 430 million works in the fashion industry. (Ariella, 2023) This is why researching the fashion industry, it's effects on aging women and researching what makes these women feel stylish, is important on a global scale.

1.1 Customer Anna Ruohonen label

Anna Ruohonen label was established in 1999 by a Finnish fashion designer Anna Ruohonen, who is currently located in Paris, France and she goes back and forth between Paris and Helsinki, the two main locations of her business. Anna Ruohonen label is heavily influenced by Nordic design, as the designer herself grew up surrounded with Finnish handmade art. The label produces on demand clothing, meaning they don't have a storage, but each item is produced after a customer makes an order. (Anna Ruonen, n.d.)

The goal of the label is to produce luxury fashion, that is timeless and brings beauty to people's life everyday through their designs that connect Nordic simplicity with French elegance. This simple design is produced in the label's atelier in Paris by skilled craftsmen and with high-quality materials, to ensure the endurance of time. As sustainability is in the core of this labels' values, the high-quality materials together with the no-stock thinking, support a greener future for fashion industry label. (Anna Ruohonen, n.d.)

After having discussions with Anna Ruohonen, herself, the topic of the struggles of aging women came up, as Anna noted most of her customers are mature women, aged over 50. Therefore together, it was decided, that researching this topic and finding answers to how a fashion label could answer the needs and struggles of this customer group, was meaningful. As Anna herself is aged 56 years, she herself understands the pain this age group feels, but to have

someone out of the age group conduct the research was seen as an asset of reliability, as person aging 25 would not be blinded by their own feeling regarding the topic.

As the customer has a heavy focus on sustainability, by using high quality materials and with their made to measure concept, it should be no difficulty for them to take into action the findings of this research. As their values aline with sustainability, it's sustainably smart to research what the customers desire to be able to produce design that will not go unsold and be waste of resources later.

For a fashion label it's important to keep up with the desires of customers, to keep your business running, from this perspective this research can be seen as highly important to the business development of Anna Ruohonen label. Murphy talks about how a socially responsible company, can gain a positive advantage towards competitors (Murphy, 2022), and focusing Anna Ruohonen label's business around solving struggles of these women, is acting responsibly, instead of ignoring the affects fashion industry has on women.

The goal of this research is to gather ways for Anna Ruohonen label to gain competitive advantage over competitors through researching how the label could answer to the struggles of women over 50 and be more responsible in the fashion industry.

1.2   Objectives, purpose, and research questions

Objectives of this study are to create an overall picture of what aging women struggle with regarding fashion and to research with what kind of solutions a fashion label could answer to these problems. Researching the struggles of this age group of women supports Anna Ruohonen label to better understand the customer base of the company, mostly conducted of women over 50 years of age. Finding these solutions to women's issues in fashion will in turn provide operating models that can support the success of the company.

The reason this research looks into the problems of aging women is that the problems highlight things a fashion label should focus on and creates a better

understanding of the needs of the customer. Through these struggles, it's easier to establish a picture of what a fashion label should and shouldn't do in order to make these women feel more stylish.

The main research question "How to keep women over 50 stylish", stems from the idea that feeling stylish equals feeling good and fashion is the way to being stylish. This question is relevant to Anna Ruohonen label, as they design clothes mainly for women over 50 and their desire is to make them feel good and look stylish, and thus ease the pain aging women struggle with. This focus on consumers is allowing the company to create more sustainable production, as they know better what the consumers need, and thus can provide for the need.

Sub research questions: How does it affect women over 50, that young women are more visible in fashion? And how visible aging women are in fashion? These sub questions were formed, based on the struggles aging women face and the idea, that seeing aging women in fashion would support a healthy self-esteem and thus support the stylish self-image of an aging woman.

As a fashion label, it's important for Anna Ruohonen label to consider these factors, that affect their customers, as being socially responsible is a factor of success in business, as Murphy states in their article, social responsibility has a positive effect on company image and can increase customer loyalty. (Murphy, 2022) The author has a hypothesis that women over 50 would be a growing trend and thus more visible in the media, which for Anna Ruohonen label would mean using more mature women in their advertisement, could be worth aiming for.

1.3   Thesis outline

This research is divided into five chapters, that support each other and help to create a picture of what aging women struggle with in the fashion world and how to solve these struggles in order to improve the operating model of Anna Ruohonen label. The first one introduction gives an overall understanding of

what can be expected from this research, what are the goals and objectives of this research and what questions should be answered at the end of this thesis.

The second chapter, the theory focuses on the struggles of aging women, the history behind these struggles and the ways the fashion industry is affecting it all. The focus is on the anti-aging culture, youth focused advertisement and gendered ageism. Thus, the background research will answer to the latter research questions. This second chapter is creating a base for understanding the struggles aging women have regarding fashion industry and in order for us to find solutions to those struggles, we must understand the history and different aspects affecting the creation of these struggles.

The third chapter highlights and explains the research methods used and why they were eventually chosen as an approach to this topic. This chapter helps the reader to understand how the research was conducted and what kind of data can be expected to have been gathered.

In chapter four the author is conducting observatory research to gain deeper understanding of the topic and analyses the results of interviews conducted with 8 women aged over 50. The data is displayed in form of tables to aid the reader to process the data collected. This chapter looks into the fashion women over 50 wear, and what kind of solutions the fashion brand could provide for their problems. As comparative research, an interview with a specialist was con-ducted at the end of this chapter.

Finally in chapter five all findings throughout this research are drawn together and analysed to find the solutions most relevant to fashion labels. The conclusion of this research will be the answer to the main research question: How to keep women over 50 stylish".

2 BEHIND THE FASHION STRUGGLES

2.1 History & ageism in the world of fashion

Before understanding the struggle on an aging woman, we must understand the culture and history of ageism, as ageism is heavily connected to the world of fashion and thus affect the way women over 50 feel stylish. This will later help the research to focus on specific areas in questions presented to the women interviewed and guides us to understand what affects the creation of the struggles these women have. The reason this research notes the ways ageism is visible towards older women, is because the target group of this research is based of women over 50.

In an article, published in Journal of Social issues, Robert N. Butler describes ageism as negative attitudes and prejudice behaviour towards an age group and notes that this can occur towards any age group. However, in the case of ageism against elderly people, ageism is caused by the fear and denial of our own aging and eventual death. (Butler, 1980) Throughout this thesis, when talking about ageism, the author is referring to ageism against elderly people.

This fear of death and aging itself, is visible in the world of fashion. As Lewis et al. noted in their study, the significant absence of aging women in fashion magazines demonstrates their inherent ageism, which in turn feeds the image of an older woman being undesirable and not worth marketing for. (Lewis et al. 2011)

PICTURE 1. Turn Back Time (Canva).

2.1.1 History of ageism

We need to look at age and how our society views aging to understand how ageism affects aging people. As John Vincent states in his book "Inequality and old age", age itself is a socially constructed phenomenon, and the low social status elderly people face as they age, is not consequence of their aging, but rather of a system created to maintain inequality in the society, as our pension system deems elderly as dependent. (Vincent, 1995) Calasanti and Slevin point out, that our society built the pension system and later is deeming elderly people as "dependent" for having to use that system created. As persons value is measured through benefiting the capitalist society, old people become a burden. (Calisanti & Slevin, 2001) Another factor is the setting of viewing elderly people as historically irrelevant, as the focus is often on the young change makers in history. (Vincent, 1995)

The terms "Age" or "Aging" are both culturally constructed terms, and the latter is subject to change in regards of what is being referred to and is in no way tied to old age. This is most visible in the fashion industry and is mentioned in an article by Julia Twigg, investigating how Vogue negotiates Age. Even as her article focuses on women over fifty, she emphasizes that in an industry like fashion, or in a magazine like Vogue, aging can be seen starting as early as in

twenties. (Twigg, 2010) This demonstrates how "aging" is not tied to a certain age, but is a flexible term, dependent on a situation.

Calasanti and Slevin talk about how important it is to define, what is being considered as "old", due to the significant differences between people in their 50s, 60s, 70s etc. The physical and mental capabilities between different age groups of "old" can vary heavily. Some scolars are even concerned about calendar age being used as a factor for someone being "old" as there are big differences in aging processes of individuals. (Calasanti & Slevin, 2001) This from the point of view of a fashion label, is interesting, as it notes the importance of seeing customer groups more widely based on other factors than just calendar age.

So called "old-age" used to be tied together with retirement, and in the eyes of the state, this is still the case. However, as Twigg puts it, this is no longer valid as people's career paths are no longer what they used to be. People in good health in their fifties or sixties, might not be retired yet and even if they are, they may not categorize themselves as "old" as their health allows their life to continue as it had before. This phenomenon has created the "Third Age" in which a person focuses on pleasure, themselves, and consumption. (Twigg, 2010)

Despite this "Third Age", and most of luxury consumers older age Ndjongo talks about how brands are neglecting their older consumers, by showcasing the items on younger models, in attempt to appeal to the younger consumers. Ageism seems to be rarely acknowledged even though as models age, it becomes harder to book jobs, as the demand for older models is still significantly low. (Ndjongo, 2017) This demonstrates that the topic of ageism is highly relevant in regard to the world of fashion and the research conducted in this thesis to establish a solution to the customer is relevant.

2.1.2 Gendered ageism

This research is focused on women and the struggles of ageing women, this is because the target group of the customer is women and according to Saucier,

women are much more affected by this biased culture as men are rarely valued over their appearance, but rather their knowledge. (Saucier, 2004) To women, we're taught early on as little girls, that we should value our appearance above everything. (Freedman, 1986) Saucier continues that, because of this, it is visible, that ageism affects women more and has consequence to how they view themselves, their body, and the mental issues they may encounter in later life. (Saucier, 2004) De Beauvoir continues with the claim that starting as little girls, we're thought to please and accept being treated as a living doll. (De Beauvoir, 1953)

Freedman notes that, women are expected to be beautiful and are rewarded as they manage to fit the measures of it. The division between boys and girls, in relations to beauty expectations, can be traced all the way to their birth. Little girls are described with terms like beautiful or pretty, whereas boys were described as strong and well-coordinated. This demonstrates how beauty is essential to women, but for men their actions and capabilities are the key determinator of their value. (Freedman, 1986) This is important to note, as the research later conducted focuses on establishing an understanding of the struggles aging women face in regards to fashion.

Widdows, notes that it's not only that aspiring to beauty would be a must, but it also promises rewards, such as better pay and success in career. One is also seen as more desirable through being attractive and more lovable with beauty, as attractive people are generally seen in a more positive light. What we should aspire for is integrated through praise and judgement from ourselves and others around us. (Widdows, 2018) This also works for how rules of fashion are pushed on people, if you fail, you are judged, if you choose right, you're re-warded.

This value of beauty is visible in what Pearsall talks about women becoming undesirable and ineligible earlier than men. As man ages, he is still seen as desirable husband for a younger woman, but an aging woman has little or no chances of marrying a younger man. This is in relation to woman's sexual

appeal disappearing over age, whereas for a man it remains about the same or may even increase. (Pearsall, 1986)

This disappearing sex appeal is connected to the power women loose in the world of fashion as they age. McGlynn et al note in their research that, in the entertainment industry, women loose power over their careers as they age. As their beauty is a big factor of success, that fading over time, turns older women eventually invisible in an industry obsessed over youth. (McGlynn et al, 2017) This is visible in art history, as women artists seem to disappear as they age. After a research McGlynn et al conducted, they noticed that many female artists kept working even as they aged, but for some reason their work showcased, and the histories written of them seemed to focus on their times of youth. (McGlynn et al, 2017)

Pearsall states that the old age is the most stigmatized stage of a woman's life and thus aging in a patriarchal society is extremely difficult. As women are subjectified, their appearance becomes the property of others, this together with the devaluation of elderly, pushes for a gendered ageism. A woman is as old as others see her to be and thus her real age often becomes a "dirty secret". (Pearsall, 1997)

2.2 Anti-aging culture's effects on women

Saiphoo and Vahedi define body-image as once own perception of their own body in cognitive, behavioural, affective, and evaluative perspective. (Saiphoo & Vahedi, 2019) Media has a huge influence on how we portray ourselves and others. What we see on the media, can affect how we perceive our own body. As Saiphoo and Vahedi state, research has shown, that exposure to different media outlets such as billboards, magazines, and commercials, can be linked together with poor body-image. (Saiphoo & Vahedi, 2019) As this research is about a fashion industry, which does also use these types of media in their advertisement, it's important for this research to understand how these media outlets affect the way we view ourselves. This will help in the understanding of what kind of struggles the aging women are facing.

Reason why this research is especially focused on women over 50 is that women are more affected by the beauty standards and ageism in the fashion industry. As Freedman notes, women are expected to maintain their appearance and keep up with the ever-changing beauty standards and thus are judged more harshly than men, when not meeting those standards. These expectations, together with the made believe of selling everlasting beauty in a bottle at a right price, is what keeps anti-aging culture alive. (Freedman, 1986)

A reason why beauty is so closely mirrored to the body-image issues, is that according to Widdows, this over-focus causes a lot of body-dissatisfaction, which leads to health problems, including mental and physical health issues, disordered eating, risky behaviour, and lower self-esteem. The over-focus in our society to appearance is extremally harmful and body dissatisfaction has been named as a public health problem by researchers, as it has such significant affect to health. (Widdows, 2018)

Even though body image issues can be seen throughout ages, when women get closer to middle age, they get even more conscious of the changes happening in their body, as they realize it's no longer possible for them to meet the beauty standards society has deemed necessary to be considered worthy members of society. According to Saucier, due to this dilemma, middle-aged women are likely to experience anxiety, depression and eating disorders. (Saucier, 2004)

In a research Freedman refers to, it was noted that nearly every woman, was suffering from negative body-image and did active dieting, even when there really was no need for such a thing. Women observed and described their bodies harshly and even unrealistically. (Freedman, 1986) In the Perfect Me, Widdows also noted that 89% of women interviewed felt weight-based dissatisfaction and most of those dominantly wished to be thinner, which strongly suggest her hypothesis of desired body to be thin, firm, young and smooth to be correct. (Widdows, 2018)

Slimness is seen as an anti-aging strategy for women over 50 to stay looking younger. (Twigg, 2010) A woman's wisdom can't compensate for her body fat or the wrinkles revealing her age. (Freedman, 1986) This makes it understandable that slimness then would be seen as anti-aging. While searching for relevant research material for this thesis, it was noted that when typing "Aging Women" in the search bar of audio book apps, (*Storytel, BookBeat and Nextory)* the dominating books appearing, were books about dieting as noted in the FIGURE 1 below.

Percentage of people portrayed
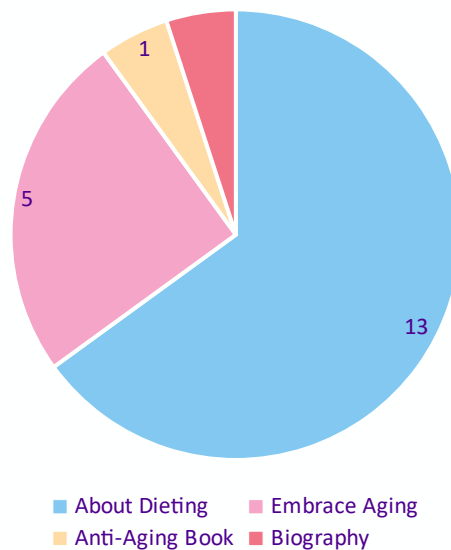
FIGURE 1. Books about "Aging Women" in Storytel research

As Widdows notes in *Perfect Me*, we judge others through the lens of beauty ideal. Fat is seen as sign of lazy, bad, stupid, and ill-disciplined, a form of moral failure to keep up once appearances, while thin is seen as energetic, disciplined, smart and hard-working. This is visible in the stories we tell our children, the good, beautiful princess vs the old, ugly evil witch displays a moral division between beauty and ugly. (Widdows, 2018)

This type of thinking can reflect later in life to us as we age and may gain body fat and thus seem to lose the respect to ourselves and from others. This can reason, with why so many aging women struggle with body-image. As fashion is strongly related to the beauty industry, this draws a picture of how fashion af-

fects us, our self-esteem and creates fashion related struggles, which could be solved by fashion labels, such as Anna Ruohonen label. The anti-aging culture is visible in fashion in moments, when young women are more visible in fashion, than aging women are, as fashion aims to keep its distance from aging. (McGlynn et al, 2017)

2.2.1 Anti-aging culture

As our culture idolises youthfulness in a gender-biased context, this form of ageism can be seen as oppression towards the aging population of women. (Veresiu & Parmentier, 2021) As media portrays the image of a "perfect woman" as someone young, lively, and thin. It's no surprise that women feel the need to constantly improve themselves to be accepted in the society. (Saucier, 2004) Anti-aging culture is a meaningful part of this research as it has an effect on how these women later being interviewed are perceiving themselves and understanding what kind of struggles, they are potentially facing.

Freedman notes that older women are often seen as less feminine, as femininity is related to youth. This is fueled further with the praising of women who manage to disguise their age and "stay desirable" longer that their peers. (Freedman, 1986)
The history of anti-aging culture is partly in the beginning of consumerism, as women were increasingly expected to maintain a youthful image through cosmetics and other services related to beauty. Through this, it was clear the new ideal image for a woman, was a young adolescent girl. (McGlynn et al, 2017) Thus, an older woman looking her age can be considered outcast and less worthy.

Another factor to the anti-aging culture is how ageing is seen as something we should be cured of. Calasanti and Slevin talk about how with aging, we're focusing on illnesses and how things like menopause are seen as a disease instead of something natural that occurs in a life cycle of female body. (Calasanti & Slevin, 2001) Through this kind of mentality, we end up in a

situation where being old is seeing all together as unnatural and something to be cured.

According to Widdows, youth is at the centre of the ever-growing beauty ideal, as hairless, smooth, firm, and thin body and face, all reflect elements of youth. While aging women are pushed to aspire youthful look, they are at the same time judged for doing it or doing it too much. It's not enough to look young or carry once age with style but one must look "age appropriate" yet appear not aging at all. This is most visible in celebrities being judged for showing signs of aging and then again for having work done. (Widdows, 2018) This beauty ideal and judgement is visible in the fashion industry.

While researching Vogue magazines, Twigg noted that even if women over 50 were represented in the magazine, (which was rare), they were never in correlation to high end or mainstream fashion, but rather in the sections of beauty and hidden with heavy airbrushing not to be recognized as aging women anymore. (Twigg, 2010)

To bring more variety into the fashion and beauty market, there are older influencers, who aim to maintain their aging appearance as that, aging. In the research conducted by Veresiu and Parmentier, they noted that their target group fought against the beauty market that targets older women with miracle cures for aging and pushing the fantasy of everlasting youth. On form of resistance was demonstrating the "flaws" in their face and bodies that occurred over age, with no desire to hide them, but rather flaunt them as stylish. (Veresiu & Parmentier, 2021)

The fact that these women were showing their aging skin and scars, was even more meaningful as according to Cohn, men are allowed to be scarred and are even considered sexy in current pop culture, but women are still desired to remain untouched by life. (Cohn, 2016)

Our consumption culture is centred around looking young and the way one can say they've aged successfully, is not through accepting their age and physical

signs of age, but rather aging without any signs of it happening. This is apparent when looking at the women in Vogue looking decades younger than their actual age. (Twigg, 2010) This kind of imagery is harmful, as Widdows notes, it does not matter if we know a picture is being photoshopped or not, it still causes the feeling of "I should look like that". (Widdows, 2018)

Widdows argues that the amount of time and money spent on these products promising everlasting beauty, demonstrate the dire reality of beauty being a moral dilemma, a determining factor of once value and as the key feature of beauty is youth, (Widdows, 2018) older women are fighting harder than anyone. This is why in the context of this research, we need to understand how these ideals affect the overall beauty ideal, which in turn is visible in the fashion industry and to whom the fashion items are designed for.

2.2.2 Effects of media

As mentioned earlier, the things we see on the media affect our self-image. The portrayal of elderly people in media, affects greatly on how they are viewed in the society. Kim Vickers says that as we live in a society driven by media, a lot of the way we view the world and those around us (including elderly people) comes from how they are portrayed. (Vickers, 2007)

Understanding the effects of media is relevant as, the fashion industry uses media outlets, social media, magazines, tv commercials etc. to market their products. By researching the different ways media creates an image of aging, it's possible to draw a picture of how aging women feel about themselves and the women visible in media, and thus help Anna Ruohonen label to find ways, they could create more positive media around fashion and aging. This approach helps the business to be more socially responsible.

McGlynn et al talk about an incident evolving Madonna when she was 58 and Piers Morgan, reacted to a clip showing Madonna twerking, with an expression of vomiting. He was quoted saying, how he used to love Madonna back in the day, when she acted appropriately to her age, but now at her age, this was too much. This continued later with Piers Morgan stating in an article, that Madonna

was an angry feminist, and her being now an old and bitter Vinegar Girl, instead of the fresh and young Material Girl she used to be. (McGlynn et al, 2017)

This is a very clear example of ageism in media outlets, how on entertainment television shows and articles, aging women are shunned for being sexy or standing up for their beliefs. McGlynn et al state that this type of commentary on aging women, demonstrates a strict thought system, in which female sexuality and power over once rights is only for the young. (McGlynn et al, 2017) This kind of portrayal of aging women feeds a narrative that aging women should disappear and somehow change drastically as they age. This is turn can cause struggles to women as they age.

Part of the low status of elderly people and ageism is the portrayal of elderly people in movies and tv shows. In his study Vickers found that seeing elderly characters is rare and when they are seen, they are portrayed as anti-change, manipulative, senile and moody. (Vickers, 2007) This type of image created of aging people pushes harmful stereotypes that in turn support ageist behaviour and according to Vickers, can lead to young people disrespecting their elders and on the other hand prevent elderly from enjoying their life as they age due to poor self-image. (Vickers, 2007)

The way others treat us affect the way we view ourselves. This is apparent in elderly people internalizing the hateful views depicted about them. When one is being deemed as passive, it may not be true at first, but can turn into a self-serving prediction. (Pearsall, 1986)

The advertisements we see on magazines, tv and other media forms influences how and what we deem acceptable and beautiful. Widdows notes that in advertisements related to beauty products, so called "good skin" is smooth, whereas "bad skin", is wrinkled. This pushes the idea, that visible signs of aging are bad for you. (Widdows, 2018)

The beauty adds are highly focused on making signs of aging disappear. According to Widdows, as our beauty adds focus on bringing attention to

microscopic flaws in skin such as veins, age-marks, blemishes, and large pores, we are demanded to fade away any signs of aging or even natural differences between skin types. In the Perfect Me, Widdows notes that sentences seen on adds like "you're worth it" and "your best self", push the idea that one should invest in beauty because it's good for you and "you're worth it". This type of advertising demonstrates that beauty is not a choice, but rather a must. (Widdows, 2018)

Media outlets want to bring a sense of aging women becoming a trend. Goode notes in their article, that even if it's being said, that older women would be trendy, it's not visible in the media. Even if some aged women are posing in the covers of magazines, those women are most likely famous women covered in designer clothes and jewellery that the reader could never afford. (Goode, 2018) As demonstrated in FIGURE 2, seeing older women in magazines such as Vogue is very rare. This pushes the idea Pearsall talks about in her book "The other within us", that older women lose their sex appeal to men as they age, and thus vanish from the media, unless advertising for food or medicine. (Pearsall, 1997) This is interesting to this research, as it's being researched, whether or not aging women are becoming a trend in fashion.
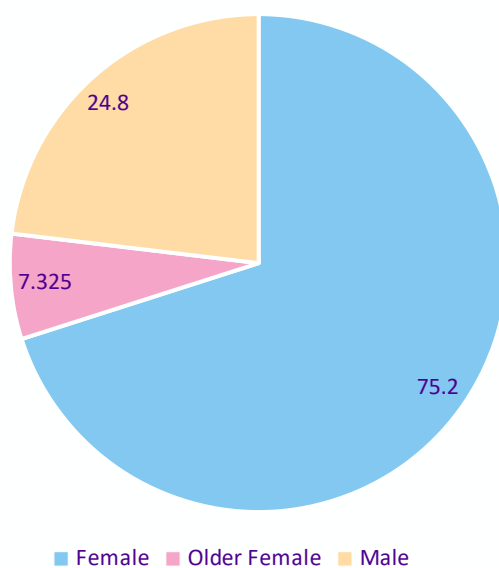
FIGURE 2. Percentage of demographics depicted in Vogue. Lewis, D. et al. 2011

As demonstrated in FIGURE 3, ageism stems from the fear of once eventual death and the way our society has stigmatized old age. As beauty is seen as capital for women, losing it means losing your value in the eyes of ageism. Ageism has fueled anti-aging culture, which roots can be traced to the beauty ideal, which is centered around youth and the human desire to "cure" old age, instead of treating it as natural. When the beauty ideal has become a moral code advertisement in media will showcase an old, wrinkled skin as bad, and something to be fixed with a serum, that will make the skin "good" again.
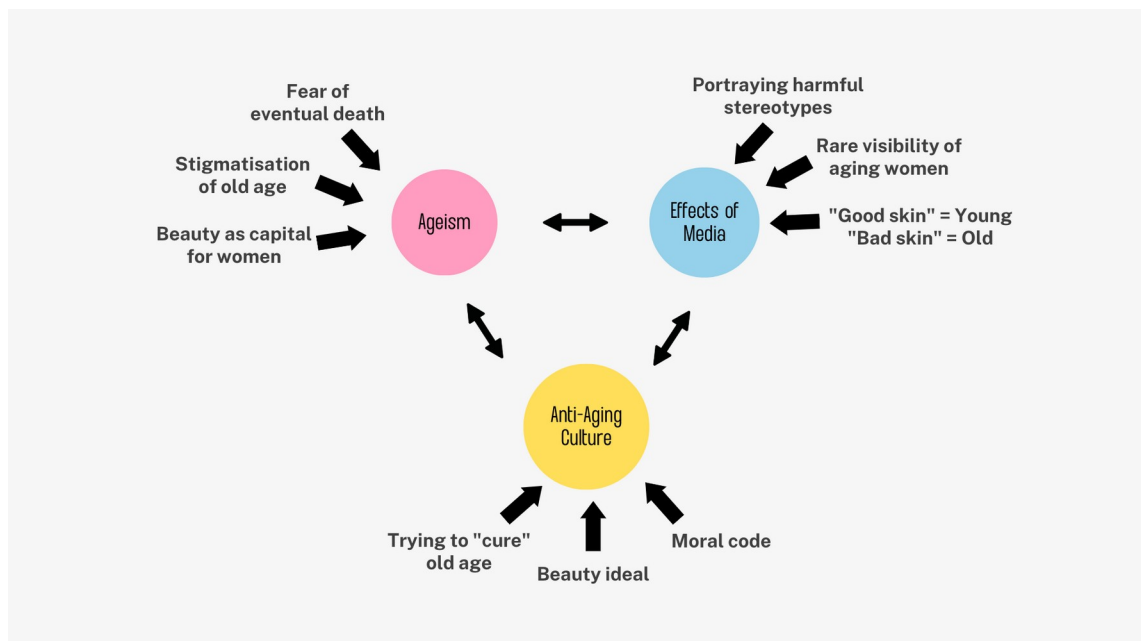
FIGURE 3 How Ageism, Media and Anti-aging culture play together.

The media further fuels the ageist anti-aging culture by rarely showcasing aging women in adds and portraying a harmful stereotype of old people in tv shows and commercials. As active parts of the overall problem, these parts fuel each other and maintain youthful beauty ideal and lessen the chances older women have in the world of fashion and beauty. In the next chapter, the relation of fashion and women over 50 is further researched.

2.3   Fashion and women over 50

Now that we have established an understanding of the different aspects affecting aging women, such as the anti-aging culture, ageism and effects of the media, it is relevant to dive deeper into the world of fashion. While researching

the topic of how women over 50 feel stylish, an important aspect to look at, is the fashion industry itself and how it treats age and especially women over 50. As Julia Twigg says it, clothes are part of how we express ourselves to those around us (Twigg, 2010) and for this reason, it's crucial to understand how the fashion world treats age.

Fashion industry loves the young and beautiful, and as Julia Twigg says in an article many older women would have money to spent, but fashion is focused on the young entirely. Stylists design clothes for young women, these clothes are showcased by young women and many stylists don't even desire to make any changes. Because of this focus, a fashion magazine like Vogue finds itself in a dilemma; how to maintain the high fashion image, mainly dependant on youth, while satisfying the needs of aging women. (Twigg, 2010)

To fight this problem, Twigg finds Vogue using the term "Ageless Style" as they try to attract all audiences, without compromising their status and values of fashion world. This kind of lifestyle suggests that aging women could use the same clothes as younger once, even when the reality is that our society still holds norms for "age appropriate" clothing. (Twigg, 2010)

In her research Twigg quotes the words of Shulman from an article she wrote in July 2008 saying all of us end up losing ourselves with age. Even as Shulman speaks of everyone being able to choose what they want to wear; she mentions the fear of being inappropriately dressed for once age as someone in their fifties. This demonstrates well the conflict aging women face in our society, as in one hand, they're being told to be bold, stand-out and wear whatever they want, but at the same time, they are encouraged to avoid looking inappropriate or even ridiculed for "dressing too young". (Twigg, 2010)

Even as the aging population is also taking part in the pleasures of buying clothes and taking part in fashion, Twigg notes that this part of the market is highly overlooked and almost seems forgotten. (Twigg, 2010) Townsend et al, found out in their research, that aging women felt strongly dissatisfied by the current fashion and found it difficult to find garments fitting the needs of their

aging bodies. They felt their needs where over-looked by fashion labels. (Townsted et al. 2019)

In the research conducted by Holmlund et al. women noted, they desired to look fashionable and enjoyed the experience of buying new clothes, but avoided trends, as those were highly associated with "Young People". These women stated that they did not see themselves in the women used in advertisement and thus in their eyes advertising was only for the young. (Holmlund, 2011)

One reason the fashion industry seems to keep its distance from older women, may be that as McGlynn et al states, brands associated with old women decrease their value. (McGlynn et al, 2017) This stems from as Calasanti and Slevin state in their book, there seems to be no positive associations with the word "old". (Calasanti & Slevin, 2001) McGlynn et al also talk about the twisted setting of young women in advertisements selling items to old women and how the older women are only visible in fashion if they have gained enough status over their life. Such women including Anna Wintour, (McGlynn et al, 2017) the chief editor of Vogue.

There is however seemingly positive change happening as the world of fashion seems to be adding more older women into the picture. Acoording to McGlynn et al labels are beginning to adapt women who are older than the norm into advertisement. This can be explained with the fashion industry always looking for the new and edgy, without appearing scandalous. Bringing in older models, could be seen as bringing in the "newness". (McGlynn et al, 2017) This is echoed by Ndjongo in their article *"Ageism Plagues the Fashion Industry"*, as it's noted that Guo Pei, Chinese fashion designer booked an 85-year-old model on their 2017 Couture Fashion Show in Paris. (Ndjongo, 2017)

This part demonstrated that there is a long history of aging women being shunned away from the world of fashion, unless they have had a huge impact on the industry previously. However, it can be seen that the fashion industry would have started to open itself up for aging women more as the time goes on.

2.3.1 What is considered stylish for women over 50?

Understanding what makes women over 50 feel stylish, we first consider from the perspective of the fashion industry that what is considered stylish for someone aging. Discussing earlier of the idea, that older women should disappear or turn invisible as they age, McGlynn et al wonder if dressing age appropriately for an older woman means, dressing invisible, like one does not wish to be seen. (McGlynn et al, 2017)

Ines de la Fressange, a French model in her 50s and Sophie Gachet, a Parisian fashion authority share their insight to what they consider to be stylish for women over 50. Their *Parisian Chic encore* style guidebook includes. tips and *fashion-faux-pas* (fashion fales). According to Fressange & Gachet, a woman who wants to get a fashion facelift, should continue evolving her style and not get stuck to what she did before. Being boring, is named as the number one enemy of staying young and fresh, and one should look for specific accessories or items that will change the look, such as a bright pink shirt. (Fressange & Gachet, 2019)

Some restrictions for aging women that can be found in *Parisian Chic encore* – is the minimum length for a skirt on women over 40 is at the knees or just under it, but not anything shorter. *Fashion faux-pas* especially for women over 50 are mini-skirts and micro-shorts, which according to Fressange & Gachet, makes them look like holding on to their golden years too tightly. She also advises women over 50 to avoid cliches like pearl necklaces together with pearl earring or a fur coat, that according to them will make you look like Cruella de Vil and will age you significantly. (Fressange & Gachet, 2019)

Calasanti and Slevin talks about the different levels of rules in our society related to age. For example, the legal age in which a person is allowed to consume alcohol is a formal age norm, whereas things related to what one can and cannot wear at a certain age is an informal rule. These informal rules, like a miniskirt not being age appropriate for an older woman, depict how we view age in our society and how we may shun older women for stepping out of the dressing norms of society. (Calasanti & Slevin, 2001)

McGlynn et al showcase that as the fashion world loves to be connected to youth, rebellion and individuality, older women are often depicted as cool, when visualized in fashion magazines. Big sunglasses covering an older woman's eyes, make her appear "cool", like she doesn't care about the person looking at her image. Along with the sunglasses goes black and white outfits and invoking relation to once younger self. (McGlynn et al, 2017) This form of coolness can be considered a form of stylish for women over 50.

McGlynn et al draw from Ari Seth Cohen's blog called *Advanced Style*, which showcases older women with style. According to McGlynn et al, these women seem to throw out the window the ideas of appropriate for once age, but rather display their bodies with pleasure, reclaiming their power and their place as relevant in the world of fashion. These women are described as cool, elegant, and stylish as they stand demanding attention for their appearance. (McGlynn et al, 2017)

According to Fressange & Gachet, an aging woman who continues to look stylish has curiosity towards new brands and styles but does not follow blindly trends. Being surprising with once outfit choices like wearing a leather jacket to an evening gathering instead of a blazer. (Fressanfe & Gachet, 2019)

When purchasing items for women over 50, Fressange & Gachet emphasize that, not all items need to be interesting or exciting, some should be simple and elegant. According to them, ballet flats are always a good choice for women over 50 as they seem to give more of a friendly look. However, according to *Parisian Chic encore*, women over 45 should not try to look too chic and women over 30 should avoid matching bags and shoes. She also emphasizes that aging women should not try to look too girly, with this she means avoiding mini-skirts or T-shirts with funny prints. (Fressange & Gachet, 2019)

This part showcases, that there are some rules that can be seen regarding what women over 50 should or should not wear in order to remain stylish. FIGURE 4 has an overview of what a stylish woman over 50 would and would not be wear-

ing. Based on this, a stylish aging woman, does not do cliches, wear anything too short and keeps exploring the possibilities of style with new findings. In some part the descriptions of stylish aging women are contradictory, as can be seen in one hand dressing invisible and other hand going against the norm.
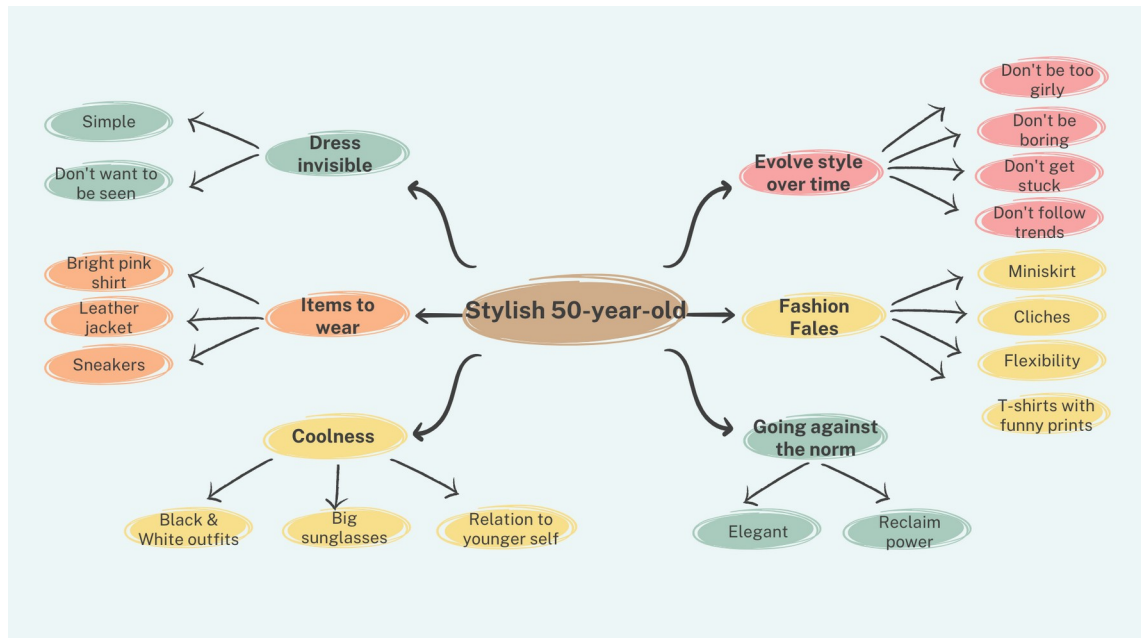
FIGURE 4. Graph of a stylish 50-year-old

Many of these rules, seem to be connected to the desire to make distinction between an older and younger woman. This is apparent in "age-appropriate rules", such as denying older women to wear miniskirts or funny printed t-shirts. Trends are clearly seen as intended for the young, as stylish women over 50 are advised not to follow trends too much. Later in this thesis, in chapter 4: analysis, we'll look at what women over 50 themselves, the participants of this study thought about being appropriate or stylish for women over 50, combined with an interview of fashion industry specialist.

2.3.2 Consumer habits

To be able to give suggestions for Anna Ruohonen Label on what they should do to help women over 50 feel more stylish, understanding the customer and their consumer habits is significant. This will help in formation of the questions for the interview and to being able for the author to mirror the answers of the interviewees with the information collected pre-hand.

As the number of aging people is growing, they will most likely play an important demographic of those purchasing fashion goods notes Rahman et al. in their research of Canadian Baby Boomers shopping habits. (Rahman, et al. 2018) This is why, understanding the consumer habits of aging women is relevant to this thesis.

When it comes to women over 50 and fashion, they focus on the comfort and fitting of the clothing and easiness of the shopping experience. This was found in the research conducted by Holmlund et al. in 2011. They note that for their target group brand name was highly associated with quality and brand loyalty could be found in cases the women found good sizing and helpful staff. These women prefer visiting the same stores over and over, once they've established a relationship with the workers that will then make their shopping experience improved through helping them find the right size, right colors and right fit. According to this research, mature women didn't necessarily mind spending more money on an item, if the quality was good, fabric was easy to clean, and the clothing fit them well. (Holmlund, 2011)

In more recent study conducted by Townsted et al. in 2019, the desire for good quality, easy clean and proper fit was proven to be main drivers for decisions of purchase. The women in the research conducted preferred clothes that could be warn at any season, were made of natural fibers, and were sustainably produced. The aesthetic aspects of the clothing played an important part, as the women wished for the garment to represent their individual personalities and styles. One notable functionality of garments that was desired by these aging women, were the inclusion of pockets to their clothes, as they were able to carry keys, phone or other important items in them. (Townsted et al. 2019)

In chapter 4 the author will analyze the responses of women over 50 interviewed to see if they have similar desires in relations to their consumer habits. Along the above discussed habits, the author will look into where these women shop, what kind of media they follow and if they follow trends in some way.

2.4 Summary

As seen in FIGURE 5, fashion, media, and ageism are three phenomena related to each other, that together create the struggle of an aging woman. The three support each other in a negative way, creating a cycle of negative thoughts towards aging. Fashions obsession with youth and use of mainly younger women in advertisement, combined with the beauty standards media sets for women, it's adamant that women over 50 are misrepresented. This misrepresentation is visible in the lack of aging women portrayed compared to the number of younger women in fashion magazines and in the way aging women are portrayed as much younger than their actual age.

Gendered ageism and anti-aging culture together with the advertisement seen on media outlets fuel the body-image issues aging women face. Ageism together with the world of fashion has created struggle of not finding properly fitting clothes, as the designers focus is on the young. All these different phenomena uphold the struggles of aging women, as they feed off each other's problematic approaches.
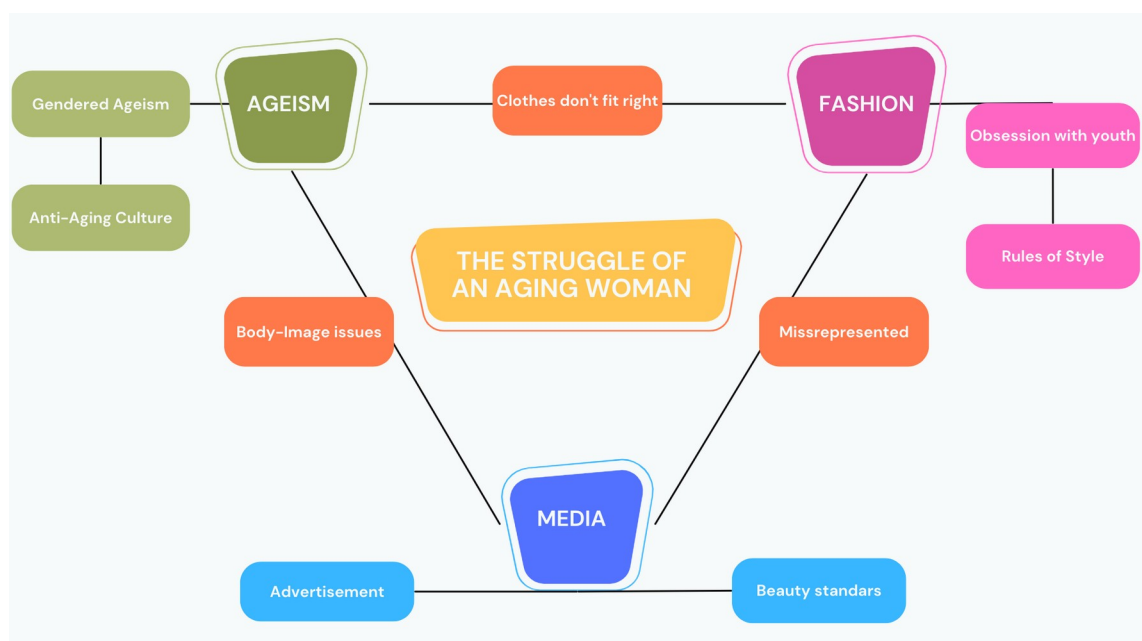

FIGURE 5. Graph of the struggle of an aging woman

Based on the literature researched and described above, it's important to note women over 50 struggles with aging, because of the youth orientated culture we

live in. This youth-orientated culture fuels ageism, which affect women more than men due to the patriarchal structures of our society, which emphasise the importance of beauty on women, much more than men.

This biased culture of ageism pushes the idea onto aging women, that they should spend money on miracle cures and should hide their signs of age, in order to stay socially accepted. So called "aging well" is about how long you can pass as younger for your age, rather than accepting and carrying your age with grace and confidence. This can shape the way these women later interviewed in this research may feel about themselves.

It's not easy for aging women to navigate the demand to look stylish and young enough, but not to try to be too young. Examples about being stylish include not wearing too short items, evolving once style with time, and avoiding stereotypical "older woman" fashion styles, such as pearls or fur coats.

It's important to note, that age and aging are both socially constructed terms and thus in relation to time and the culture we live in. This is very visible in the world of fashion, where someone can be seen as "aging" far before, what the author of this research considers to be an aging woman (that of over 50).

The media influences this anti-aging culture and how aging women perceive themselves and how their body-image evolves. Majority of women have been found in various research to suffer from some form of body-dissatisfaction. As the fashion industry portrays a certain type of image, it can be seen as affecting this issue as older women in the past have seemed to vanish as they age. In regard to this, it can be noted that young women seem to be more visible in media, and this seems to have an effect on how aging women perceive themselves. This interesting finding will be research further in following chapters.

Some of the authors in this chapter, however, did depict a more positive picture for the future of how aging women are becoming increasingly acceptable part of the fashion industry. However, there can be spotted restrictions regarding what aging women should or should not wear, which showcases the ageist ideology

of the fashion industry still standing. There was a hopeful image of women over 50 becoming more accepted as part of the fashion industry, but the author cannot determine yet the level of acceptance we're currently in.

Even as our consumerism is centred around youthfulness, the consumer habits of aging women seem to be more about quality and less about trends. They don't mind spending money on quality, which from a perspective of a fashion label, should make them desirable customers. Which in turn is why, the whole topic is being researched at this very research. The author wants to find out what kind of dreams and solutions this desirable age group would have for a fashion label, that could then in turn answer to these needs and make profit while doing so.

The objectives of this research are to find the struggles aging women have, and the above description of the effects of ageism in a gendered context, together with the culture centred around youth, are key factors on understanding where these struggles stem from. They are not only in the minds of these women, but rather at least in part created by the society we live in.

The background research and overall theory of this thesis is partly based on feminist theory, which highlights the difference between the lives of women and men. This decision was made due to according to Walliman, ignoring these differences could result incorrect conclusions. (Walliman, 2011) In the second chapter it's noted, that women are judged more harshly based on their looks than men, which leads to more body-dissatisfaction and pressure to maintain a youthful look as they age.

The theoretical part of this thesis in chapter 2 is based on data researched and read. This data was in the form of articles, books, and magazines. Considering the nature of the topic discussed and research in this thesis, it has been important to investigate this data in order to conduct a history and base for the events, phenomena and concepts.

3 RESEARCH METHODS

With this data, it was possible for the author and reader to establish an understanding of the struggles aging women have and what are the causes of those struggles. This knowledge in mind, it was easier to establish proper questions to the interviews and dive deeper into the wishes these women have in regard to fashion.

In this thesis, multiple-level research was conducted to support each other and establish more solid picture of aging women in the fashion industry and their wishes on how a fashion label could answer to these needs and keep them feeling stylish. In the section 3.1 the first 2 research done and discussed in this thesis, were done in the form of observation, in which the author did not take part in affecting how the results would be. The first observation was into the social media channels of two high-end fashion magazines, to determine how visible women over 50 are in fashion. The second observatory research focused on what women over 50 were wearing in their everyday life on the streets of Paris and Tampere.

The sections 3.2 and 3.3 are focused on the semi-structured interviews done, of which the first was with the target group and the other was with a specialist in the field of fashion. The interviews with target group aimed to gather information directly from the women over 50 about their desires and struggles. The interview with a specialist was conducted to get a professional point of view on what is stylish for women over 50 and how will the industry change. All this research will be put together in the chapters 4 and 5.

Using multiple research methods in one research can provide more reliability for the data gathered. (Merriam & Grenier, 2019) This thesis is using multiple research methods to create comprehensive analysis and gather more detailed perspective of the phenomenon research thus it can be described as multimethod research. (Hesse-Biber & Johnson, 2015) As the topic of research did not have a ready-made theory, but is rather a conclusion by the author based on information gathered, it was seen as valuable to take multiple ap-

proaches to the research itself, in order to validate the reliability of findings and create more comprehensive picture of the topic researched.

Observatory research will allow the author to see the current situation of how visible women over 50 are, and the observation of street style will give an image of what women over 50 feel stylish in. When this is combined with the interviews of the target group, the results can be mirrored and thus the author can ensure the reliability of the research conducted. With such a complex and personal is-sue, it was reasoned that the research would benefit from innovative research methods. Based on all the data collected, it was possible to gather suggestions for Anna Ruohonen label on how to improve their business.

3.1   Observation

Observational data is collected through observing reactions, materials, or results. This research method is about all senses; visual, smell, hearing and touching. It can be efficient way of collecting primary data to assess the state of a situation. In the observation, the researcher does not affect the situation observed, but only follows the events occurring. These observations should be recorded to ensure the quality of the data collected. (Walliman, 2011) The researcher must keep in mind what data is relevant to the investigation and remain detached from the study group, as they observe a phenomenon in its natural setting. (Baker, 2006)

3.1.1   Observation of visibility in social media

For the first part of this research conducted, was in the form of observation. It was chosen due to its nature of following events and recording observations (Walliman, 2011), as it was suitable for constructing an understanding of the current situation of the women over 50 in fashion world. The author had the hypothesis that women over 50 are becoming a trend in fashion and thus increasingly more visible.

To find an answer to this hypothesis, the author conducted a 1-month long observatory research into the Instagram accounts of Harper's Bazaar UK and

Vogue US. This research was conducted between 3rd of March and 11th of April in 2023. Instagram was chosen as the main source of research material, as social media is part of our culture and communication. As Kehbuma Langmia & Tyree say in their book "Social Media Culture and Identity", today our communication is fully lived in the online world and cultures are affecting each other through it. (Langmia & Tyree, 2017)

Vogue's Instagram account was chosen to establish a base for the visibility of women over 50 have in the world of fashion. Vogue was chosen as Twigg states in her article, as Vogue depicts the high-end fashion world, it's important research material for studies regarding age and fashion. (Twigg, 2010)

Harper's Bazaar UK account was chosen to have something to compare Vogue with. United Kingdom was chosen instead of US account, to have more variable between targets under onservation. Harper's Bazaar is one of the first fashion magazines launched in 1867 in the US. (Lewis, et al. 2011) This is why it is seen equal to Vogue and qualified research material.

TABLE 1 Age Category of Women reading Harper's Bazaar (Lewis et al, 2011)

Age	%
18-34	28
35-49	48
50+	23

As seen in TABLE 1, according to Lewis,,et al. 48% of the readers of Harper's Bazaar are aged between 35-49, whereas 23% are over 50, which is only 5% less than 18–34-year-olds. Vogue's reader base is conducted 35% of 18–34-year-olds, making it 15% bigger reader group, than 20% of readers aged over 50, which can be seen in TABLE 2. (Lewis, et al. 2011)

TABLE 2. Age Category of Women reading Vogue (Lewis et al, 2011)

Age	%
18-34	35
35-49	45
50+	20

The questions the author posed upon themselves while observing these two Instagram accounts, were "Are women over 50 visible on the page?", "How often are they visible compared to other age groups?", and "In what context are they visible?".

To understand how visible the women over 50 truly are, a comparative design was used as the author calculated the number of women of different age groups visible (Walliman, 2011) on the Instagram pages of the 2 high-end fashion magazines followed during this period. These numbers are documented in TABLE 5 and TABLE 6 in chapter 4. This was seen as a necessary form of research, to demonstrate the difference of different age groups of women being visible.

3.1.2 Observation of street style

Another type of observatory research was conducted later in two locations: Paris and Tampere. These locations were chosen as they are the two current locations of business operations for the customer Anna Ruohonen label. The first of these observations was conducted in Paris on 17th of May between 11am and 6.30pm. The second observation was conducted in Tampere on 24th of May between 11am and 1.30pm.

This observatory research was conducted in a complete observer form, in which the researcher does not participate or interact with the observed. They are at the same scene but remain invisible with no contact. (Baker, 2006) This form of observation was found well suited for this research, as the author of this thesis wanted to gather an overall image of how women over 50 dresses in everyday

life. There was a fear of if a contact would be made, these women would change their appearance to fit better with the typical standards of beauty.

The women observed were clearly over 50, with visible signs of aging, such as grey hair or wrinkled skin. The observer wrote down detailed descriptions of what the women were wearing, and these descriptions can be found in appendices, Appendix 4 and Appendix 5. In order to get these detailed descriptions, the women observed, needed to stay in the same location with the observer for at least 10minutes or more.

The data collected was in the form of observational notes which describe what was seen, but on the side, the observer added personal notes, which detailed the observers own thoughts arising from the things observed. (Baker, 2006) In order to keep the data valuable, it was important to describe what was seen as it was, but to create an understanding of what women over 50 wears in general, it was important to write down, the thoughts the observer had during the observatory period.

The research was conducted in multiple locations in Paris, with the observer being seated, either in a metro, café, or park. The Park chosen was *Place des Vosges* due to its closeness to shopping opportunities and its closeness to Café *Carrette*, which the author chose as one of the observatory destinations, due to its popularity. Metro was chosen as one of the locations as it's a popular form of transport in Paris and thus an everyday wear is easy to be seen there.

In Tampere locations chosen, were the tram, Keskustori Kesäkeidas (Summer Terrace at Central Square) and Café Puisto. These locations were chosen, due to people being out on their everyday life in these locations, such as the tram or the café. The Central Square was chosen as a main location, due to its attractiveness to people which creates possibilities to carefully document what people are wearing.

The people observed and recorded were chosen based on visible signs of aging; women who looked clearly over 50 years of age, due to wrinkles, stretch

marks or gray hair. The women were not photographed as that would have been against ethical research practices without their permission, and as the researcher wished to keep a clear distance without disturbing the people observed, asking for a picture was not possible. To ensure the quality and reliability of this data collection, only women who stayed still long enough for the observer to gather detailed description of their outfit, was taken into the research. This excluded any woman over 50 who just quickly walked past the observer, with the observer having not enough time to detail the outfit worn by the woman.

As one of the objectives of this research is to determine what could make wo-men over 50 feel stylish, it's important to research what women choose to wear when they go outside their home in their everyday life. This can reveal a great deal of what is the fashion of women over 50 like and what makes them feel good.

These detailed descriptions can be found in chapter 4, as the author has gathered the data collected and analyzed it's meaning in regards of what women over 50 can be seen wearing on the streets in everyday life. The relevance of this part of the research is to demonstrate what women wear and compare it to what is deemed stylish for women over 50 and thus create a picture of what stylish women over 50 are wearing.

3.2   Interviews

To gather data of the thoughts and dreams of women over 50, a descriptive design was chosen in the form of interviews. Descriptive design focuses on gathering data through observation and documenting everything. (Walliman, 2011) The aim of this research was to gather data of what are the dreams and wishes women over 50 have regarding the world of fashion and how a fashion label could help them tackle the struggles they are facing with fashion. Based on the knowledge gathered in chapter 2, the interviewer conducted a set of questions for the interviews, to guide the conversation and get answers to the objectives of this thesis.

The qualitative research conducted is interview-based. Qualitative method was chosen as People's feelings and thoughts can only be put to words and not numbers (Walliman, 2011) and the author thus found the qualitative data measurement more suitable for the topic. Pickering says in their book *Research Methods for Cultural Studies*, that due to the flexible nature of qualitative research, it's well suited for researching complex issues (Pickering, 2008) as qualitative research can help bring light to nonwritten information. (Weathington et al, 2012) The author conducted face to face interviews with 8 individuals and compared their answers to conduct a possible solution for the given problem of the customer Anna Ruohonen Label. This interview consisted of questions related to fashion, style, and the own experiences of these women.

Interviews, according to Pickering, can be seen as a key method for gathering qualitative data and are focused on the interaction between an interviewer and an interviewee. The former poses questions to gain understanding of the topic at hand. (Pickering, 2008) This data is primary, as it was recorded and gathered from the interviews by the interviewer first-hand. This primary data was collected using interrogation, asking the interviewees thoughts, feelings, and ideas about the matter in question. (Walliman, 2011)

The interviews had questions to guide the conversation, but the interviewer could change the order in which the questions were asked, dependent on the flow of the interview, which is possible in a semi-structured interview. (Saunders et al. 2009) The interviewer did have a list of questions that guided the conversation, and ensured specific topics were covered during the interview, to get answers to the research questions, which according to Pickering is described as a semi-structured interview. This method allows the freedom to explore issues that arise in the conversations, but also makes sure comparison between interviews is possible. (Pickering, 2008)

The interviews were conducted between 25th of April and 6th of May in 2023, as seen in TABLE 3. The length of the interviews varied between 20 minutes and 1,5 hours, depending on the amount the individuals interviewed were talking. These were in the form of face-to-face interview as the author conducted the

interview in person with each interviewee individually. Most of the interviews were conducted in a familiar environment to the interviewee, such as their home, their daughter's home, or their own cottage. Only one interview was conducted in a public space, at the reception of a hotel. As Walliman suggest using smiles, nods and other visual signals to get good responses from the interviewees, (Walliman, 2011) this was what the author used in the interviews. Pickering emphasises that no negative reactions, should be visible towards the answers of the interviewee's responses. (Pickering, 2008)

TABLE 3. Women participating in the interviews between April 25th and May 6th.

Interview number.	Interview date	Interview length	Age	Nationality	Employment
Participant 1	25.4.2023	24:40	67	Finnish	Entrepreneur
Participant 2	25.4.2023	42:51	50	Finnish	Entrepreneur
Participant 3	27.4.2023	01:29:29	61	Finnish	Retired
Participant 4	2.5.2023	20:47	53	Brazilian	Employee
Participant 5	3.5.2023	55:03	82	Finnish	Retired
Participant 6	5.5.2023	43:14	58	Finnish	Entrepreneur
Participant 7	5.5.2023	27:05	71	Finnish	Retired
Participant 8	6.5.2023	43:29	53	Finnish	Entrepreneur

3.2.1 Reliability of interviews

The data gathered from these interviews was carefully analyzed after being tape recorded and transcribed to give a reliable and specific information about the pains of aging women and their thoughts of solutions to these pains. According to Pickering the interviews need to be tape recorded and transcribed to ensure the correct analysis. (Pickering, 2008) To ensure the reliability of this research, the interviews were transcribed close to being recorded, as the researcher can still remember the interview well and does not lose some of the notes and insights gathered during the interview. (Saldaña, 2011) The data of this research answers to the research questions of this thesis.

Reliability of the data is challenging to gain, as all individuals interviewed have different experiences and beliefs of the topics discussed. It's possible that the interviewer can interpret the data differently than the interviewees intended or how others would. However, interview allows the interviewee or the interviewer to ask follow up questions, allowing the former to understand better the topic discussed and the latter to deepen the level of answers given. It is important, that the interviewer asks the questions clearly and the questions are logical to make answering easier. This according to Walliman is what gives the interview a better reliability. (Walliman, 2011)

As the researcher is more interested in the in-depth understanding of the struggles and dreams of aging women, qualitative research can be seen as a reliable method for gathering this information. Collecting supportive data through observation, can work as an insurance for reliable data. (Merriam & Grenier, 2019) The supportive data collection of observations discussed in part 3.1 ensure, that the data collected through these interviews, together with the interview of the specialist is reliable.

3.2.2 Who was interviewed?

The women of the research were selected based on age, interest in fashion and capability of investing money to once own looks. As Pickering notes, the people interviewed should represent candidates offering alternative perspectives, (Pickering, 2008) and for this reason the women ranged from 50 to 82 years of age. This age group was selected to represent the pains of aging women, as aging people are not one unanimous group, but there is a range of variety be-tween a woman in her 50s and in her 80s. There was at least 1 representative per decade, to ensure the necessary range in age. The range in age, can be seen in the TABLE 1. Two of the women interviewed had their career in the field of fashion, and these participants are marked in TABLE 1 with pink color. As they work in the fashion industry, it's important to note their specialist knowledge, which can affect their answers.

The interest in fashion was confirmed with a question "how much time in a day do you spend with fashion", expecting the women to spend time every day in some form with fashion. The idea was that if someone does not spend any amount of time thinking fashion each day, the interest is not strong enough. As seen in TABLE 4 below, all women interviewed spent time with fashion daily, half of who spent 1-2 hours each day. The two women, Participant 1 and Participant 6, spent the most time with fashion, each day, as they work in the industry.

TABLE 4. Hours spent with fashion each day.

Time spent with fashion each day	Number of participants	%
30min	2	25
1-2h	4	50
3-8h or more	2	25

The capability to invest in once looks was confirmed with questions "How much money do you approximately spend on clothes in a year" OR "How often you make new purchases to your wardrobe". The women deemed as target group would be spending significant amounts of money (thousands of euros a year) to their clothes or as seen in FIGURE 6 updated their wardrobe often or with a lot of items at once. As seen in FIGURE 7, the women interviewed spent at least thousand euros each year to clothing and that amount could rise even to 10 000€s a year.

Number from participants

■ Every month ■ Every 2-3 months
■ Twice a year ■ Don't know, but a lot at once
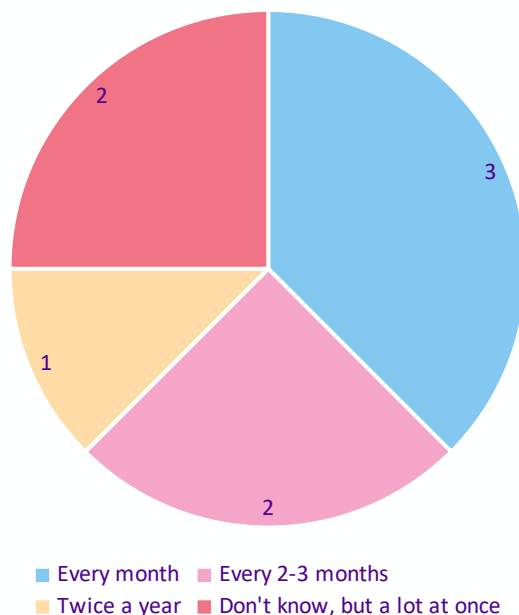
FIGURE 6. How often women updated their wardrobe.

Number of Participants

■ 1 000-2 999€ ■ 3 000-10 000€ ■ Don't know
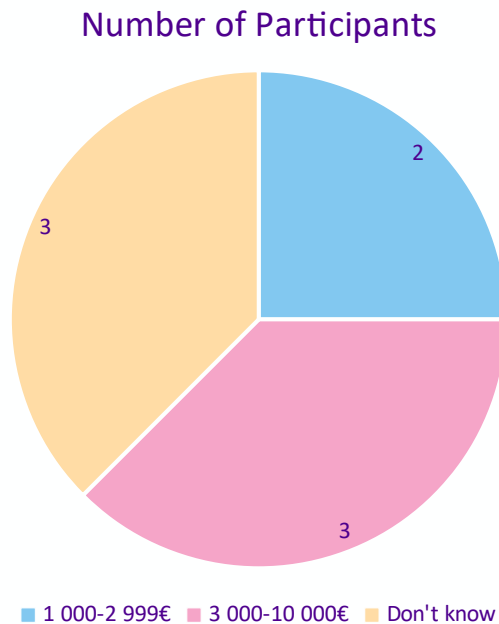
FIGURE 7. How much money women spent in a year to clothes?

As seen in TABLE 3 of the women interviewed 7/8 were Finnish women born and living in Finland and 1/8 was a Brazilian woman living in Finland for more than 5 years, she was chosen as for the sake of inclusivity, the author scaled the target group as women in Finland, not women born in Finland. There are non-Finnish people living in Finland too, thus it can't be assumed that Finland as a market area would be homogeneous and getting the point of view in the form of diversity in the research can benefit understanding the whole market area better. Thus 1 of the interviews was conducted in English and 7 of them was conducted in Finnish and then translated to English by the author. The location of Finland was chosen as the conduction of interviews was easy to arrange and thus guaranteed the reliability and quality of the research. The area of Finland is one of the target areas for customers' business.

3.2.3 Interview questions

Based on the background research conducted by the author, they formed a set of questions to guide the interviews. These questions covered topics from dreams, fashion and once own style. The questions were mostly formed in an open form to leave out the possibility of answering yes or no. If an interviewee was struggling with answering a question, they were able to ask follow-up questions to understand better what they were answering to. The interviewer posed follow-up questions after answers to get deeper knowledge of the topic discussed. All questions can be found in appendences, Appendix 1.

Style related question of "What inspires your style?" wanted to explore what kind of influence media has on these women's styles or what are the places that they draw inspiration from. This would help the author to share with the customer, what are the ways of inspiring these women with fashion and were to reach out for them. The question "Are you overall happy with the way you dress?" does need follow up questions why yes or no but is an important question to pose in building an understanding of what women over 50 feel stylish in and what do they struggle with.

Questions about fashion, such as "What do you focus on when buying clothes?", "What difficulties you have when buying clothes" and "What part of your body would you rather hide with clothes?" Answer to the question of what these women over 50 struggles with, regarding fashion and what kind of things a fashion label should focus on when designing clothes for women over 50. These questions, thus create the answer to the main research question; "How to keep Women over 50 stylish?"

In relations to dreams, the interviewer asks a question, "If you could give 3 wishes to a genie, about fashion, what would you wish for?" is an interesting one, that leaves all possibilities open. The interviewee may answer related to things they would wish for themselves, which would give clear indications of what they would wish a fashion label would design, or in case their answer is more generally related to the fashion industry, it demonstrates change they

would wish to see, which can in turn give an answer to the fashion label of what to do, to attract this customer group.

3.3 Specialist interview

To get answer to questions and fill all objectives of this thesis, a specialist interview was conducted. The benefit of interviewing a specialist, gives you access to knowledge, which may be sealed from public knowledge. It works well in mixed-method research as a supportive material. (Soest, 2022) This method is often used at the beginning of research to find key questions or at the end to validate findings of research. (Science Practise, n.d.) This interview was used as a mirror to the answers given by the target group to validate the data gathered.

This interview was conducted via zoom due to it being the most efficient way for this interview. The interview in total took about 30minutes and was conducted on 22nd of May. The specialist chosen for the interview had 40 years of experience in the fashion industry from multiple different aspects; freelancer, teaching and working for other brands, such as Anna Ruohonen label. It was concluded that due to her long experience in the industry and specialisation to women's fashion, this person was the right specialist to be interviewed for a professional point of view on what a stylish woman over 50 is and what is the current and future situation of mature female fashion.

The interview was transcribed shortly after the interview, to ensure the interviewer still had the interview fresh in their mind and managed to use all notes and data collected in a reliable way. (Saldaña, 2011) The interview was conducted in Finnish and translated to English by the author of this thesis.

This interview was conducted to be cross-checked with the observation research and interviews done with the target group, and thus make the overall research more reliable. The author wanted to get a specialist point of view on what is considered stylish for women over 50 and understand what the future of mature women clothing looks like.

4   ANALYSIS

This chapter contains all research conducted by the author of this thesis, including observatory research into the street style of women over 50, observation of how visible women over 50 are on fashion magazines social media and interviews with both, the target group, and a specialist in the field of fashion.

4.1   Visibility

The following is observation-based research conducted to establish an understanding of if and how women over 50 are visible in the high-end fashion industry. The observations during this period of 3rd of March to 11th of April are recorded as a diary to visualize the different observations made during this time. These diary entries can be found in the appendices as Appendix 2 and Appendix 3. Photos of the said posts are not included as necessary licenses from the two accounts followed has not been received.

4.1.1   Visibility in Vogue

After following closely and observing the women visible on Vogue's page for a little over a month, in conclusion, it's difficult to determine the age of all women on the page of Vogue as the magazine rarely tags or names the people on the pictures, one simply must know who they are to search any further information about them. It was also interesting to note that for some people it was not possible to find their age online, which could be a sign of trying to hide it. Which could indicate to what was discovered in chapter 1 about old age being stigmatized.

When looking at the numbers of the women, capable of finding their age online, it's clear the young women are way more visible on Vogue's Instagram than women over 50 or even women above 36. As seen in the TABLE 5 the dominating category of women visible on Vogue's page are women aged between 18-35 comparing to women over 50 being knowingly visible only 5 times during the observatory period.

It's not always clear to say someone is 50years of age, as many of the women may not have any visible signs of aging. In the research conducted by Lewis et al, similar problem was noted, that often it's difficult to know a woman's age in magazines, as no signs of age are visible. This could be due to heavy airbrushing, plastic surgery, or make-up. (Lewis, et al, 2011)

TABLE 5. Age Category of Women in Vogue US 1.3.2023. – 11.4.2023.

Age	%	Number
18-35	76	53
36-49	17	12
50+	7	5

It's noticeable that women possibly over 50 are wearing sunglasses, which seals most of their face, making it difficult to determine their age. Women over 50 were mostly in relation to beauty or anti-aging products, rather than high-end fashion. Based on this observation and information gathered from it, it's concluded that women over 50 are not very visible on the pages of Vogue at this time, which indicates fashion industry's desire for youth to be still present. It's interesting to note how 45% of the women reading the magazine were 36-49years of age, but the women visible in the magazine were dominantly 18–35-year-old. This can be noted, when comparing TABLES 3 and 4.

4.1.2 Visibility in Harper's Bazaar

After observing Harper's Bazaar for a month, it's clear the magazine has much more mature women on their page than Vogue. Even though as seen in TABLE 6, women 35 and under are half of all women seen, the other half is conducted from women aged from 36 to 96, and the difference between these two categories is not as visible as it was in Vogue. In this magazine, the women's signs of aging are more visible and even if there wouldn't be wrinkles the women still look mature enough to be noticeably 50+ of age.

The focus of this magazine is clearly on fashion, especially on what everyone is wearing and more on the celebrities themselves and what is going on in their lives. This could be seen as the magazine almost always tagged or at least

mentioned who was featured. This made it much easier to search the age of the women in question and determine how many aging women were featured.

TABLE 6. Age Category of Women in Harper's Bazaar UK 1.3.2023. – 11.4.2023.

Age	%	Number
18-35	50,5	53
36-49	30,5	32
50+	19	20

As Harper's Bazaar is mainly focused on red carpet events and what everyone is wearing, it's understandable that women over 50 are also in relation to their fashion and not only in beauty commercials. The pages showcased women actresses and even British royalty.

4.1.3 Conclusion

Compared to Vogue, Harper's Bazaar is showcasing much more women of all ages, whereas Vogue is mainly focused on showcasing young women. This could be due to, according to Lewis et al. Europe is more accepting of all age groups, than the US which has heavy emphasis on youth. (Lewis, et al. 2011) The target group of Vogue is younger women 18-35, whereas Harper's Bazar is dedicated to more mature audience.

Harper's Bazaar is also more focused on celebrities and what they are wearing, rather than high fashion itself. It has much more material from red carpet events, while Vogue focuses on street style and what stylists have to say. This can be seen in the way Vogue sometimes showcases pictures of clothes with no people in them and the amount of runway shows featured on their page. This separation indicates a different approach to fashion, between these two pages.

It is also possible that Harper's Bazaar has more age variety because it's target group is more variable, which could explain their desire to showcase women of all ages. Another noticeable thing is how Harper's Bazaar has celebrities and royalty on their page, but Vogue mainly has models on theirs. This in turn could

be because, according to Lewis, et al, Vogue is highly focused on the social scene of New York City which is all about the models. (Lewis, et al. 2011)

Overall, it was a pleasant surprise to see so many aging women in the page of Harper's Bazaar and rather disappointing to see barely any on the pages of Vogue. It highlights the idea, that high fashion is only for the young, which has been discussed as an issue in Chapter 2.

The observations done in this part of the research, correlate with the background research conducted, showcasing those women over 50 visible in fashion, are usually demonstrated in a way that their visible signs of aging are concealed. This can mean airbrushing their images, to give their skin a smooth and toned look. It also correlated with the knowledge of women of power, such as Queen Elizabeth the second or previous contact to the fashion industry, like Naomi Campbell being the once showcased after the age of 50.

Based on these observations, it does not seem to be the case that, women over 50 would be clearly visible in fashion industry these days. It cannot be stated that aging women would have become a trend, thus the hypothesis of the author was false, as the evidence gathered does not support it. Another research of comparing past and present representation of women over 50, could be useful to determine, if there has been change between history and now. To get an answer to if women over 50 are more visible now than before, this question was posed to the interviewees, who have followed fashion industry for decades.

4.2 Street-fashion observation

This section looks into the results of observatory research conducted in Paris and Tampere related to the street style of women over 50.

4.2.1 Women over 50 in Paris

After observing the streetstyle of women over 50 in Paris, it was easy to notice the women, who were clearly over 50, based on gray hair and wrinkles, which

were visible. What caught the observer's attention was the number of jeans, women over 50 were wearing. As seen in TABLE 7, it was the most popular choice of pants, in the group of women observed. Other jean related items such as jean jackets, were also common among these women. Based on this observation, it can be noted, that women over 50 in Paris consider jeans as a stylish element of clothing.

TABLE 7. The Category of pant worn by women in Paris.

Pants worn	%	Number
Jeans	62,5	5
Trousers	25	2
Chinos	12,5	1

Another item in the women's outfit that caught the attention of the observer, was sneakers. Most women, as seen in TABLE 8, had chosen sneakers, as their everyday shoes. These sneakers were white, blue, or gray and always clean. The other shoe choices had only one or 2 per category, and ankle boots, was the only shoe choice in the worm of a heel. It was the only type of heeled shoe, and only seen once among the group of women observed.

TABLE 8. The Category of shoes worn by women in Paris.

Shoes worn	%	Number
Sneakers	62,5	5
Boots	25	2
Ballerinas	12,5	1

Most women were not wearing hats, but did wear sunglasses or glasses, which could indicate about the theory in chapter 2, that aging women look cool, when they are covering their eyes with sunglasses and create a feeling of them not caring about the person looking at them. The glasses could be a sign of normal aging and loosing once vision. There was a variety in both sunglasses and glasses, that some women had chosen big once and others preferred the kind that don't draw attention.

The women's bag choices seemed to be reflecting desire for comfort and functionality, as many of the bags were crossing the body or easy to carry on the shoulder. This same functionality could be said about the shoe choice of sneakers, which make it easy to wonder around in a city like Paris.

4.2.2 Women over 50 in Tampere

While observing the women over 50 in Tampere and what they were wearing, the observer quickly noticed, the well-chosen location of the Central Square, as a lot of women over 50 at least passed that area, but of whom many stayed for a drink or food, which made observing easy. These women also had their visible signs of age visible and all of them were wearing either sunglasses or glasses. What caught the observer's eye, was the luxury brands in everyday use, such as Louis Vuitton bag or Gucci sunglasses. Marimekko and Moomin themed tote bags, seemed like a natural choice in Finland, which is the country of origin for these brands. It can be said that according to these notes the theory in chapter 2 about women over 50 wanting to spend money on quality, is accurate.

When it comes to choices of clothing, jeans were in this observation, also a popular choice, but trousers were even more popular, by one more person choosing them of the group observed, as seen in TABLE 9. One of the women observed was wearing a dress and thus did not have pants on. Based on this it can be said that women over 50 prefer wearing pants rather than dresses in their everyday life, which could indicate to the feeling of stylish in trousers and jeans.

TABLE 9. Pants worn by the women observed in Tampere

Age	%	Number
Jeans	37,5	3
Trousers	50	4
Dress	12,5	1

As seen in TABLE 10 below, half of the women observed in Tampere, had chosen sneakers as their choice of footwear. Only one-woman wearing sandals

had a wedged heel, everyone else had flat bottom in their shoes, which similarly to the observation done in Paris, points to these women looking for comfort, when it comes to shoes, they wear in everyday life. This correlates with the theory in chapter 2 that functionality and comfort are important factors for aging women in fashion.

TABLE 10. The Category of shoes worn by women in Tampere.

Shoes worn	%	Number
Sneakers	50	4
Sandals	25	2
Ballerinas	25	2

4.2.3 Conclusion

Another interesting thing to look at overall was the color choices these women both in Paris and in Tampere had. Most were wearing black, white, grey, or blue overall, but in Finland, as seen in the TABLE 11 below, pink was in the top 3 on shared position with brown/beige. In Paris, the dominating color choice was blue, as it was clearly more popular than any other color. Parisians also chose brown/beige or black colors to their outfit. Only single items were seen in bright colors like orange and green, and there was no pink noticed. In Tampere the dominating color choice was white, followed by black and it must be noted that only 3 items were seen in blue.

The TABLE 11 is formed in a way, that 5 pieces of each outfit was looked at when marking the color choices of these 16 women observed. These pieces were: jacket, pants, shirt, bag and shoes. All these were accounted for, as many women were combining different colors with each other. If an item had multiple colors, the one most dominating was the one marked on the table, there were also women who did not have all 5 of these items.

What was however noticeable was, that often the color theme went throughout the outfit, as in if a person chose to wear pink, all details were pink, mixed with a neutral color like white and if a person had dark blue clothing, all the

accessories would match that dark blue theme. It can be them said, that women over 50 pay attention to details and pieces of clothing matching with one another in color and this is found stylish.

TABLE 11. Colors worn by the women observed in both locations

Color	%	Number of items in Tampere	Number of items in Paris
White	22,97	14	3
Black	20,27	9	6
Black & White	4,05	2	1
Grey	4,05	0	3
Brown/Beige	14,86	5	6
Pink	6,76	5	0
Orange	1,35	0	1
Green	1,35	0	1
Blue	24,32	3	15

With all this information in mind, it's possible that women over 50 prefer neutral colors like black, white, and brown or beige, but gravitate closely towards different shades of blue, when adding color to their look. There is the few daring who added bright colors to their looks and in Finland there were 3 women out of 8 observed, that had one or more items in pink.

Women over 50 can spend money on pricy items like luxury handbags or designer sunglasses but prefer comfort when it comes to shoes and clothing, thus most aging women find themselves wearing some form of pants and sneakers to be stylish. Sunglasses or glasses are a key component of the outfits these women wear, as each of them had one or the other. A stylish woman in her 50s or older, can match different pieces in her outfit, to match one another in theme of color and style.

4.3 Interviews with the target group

The reason interviews were conducted with a target group of women over 50, was to find out what these women struggle with and how a fashion label could help solve these problems related to fashion. The interviewer was interested in the thoughts these women had about the fashion industry and what kind of wishes they would make if there were no limits. All questions asked, can be found in the appendices as Appendix 1.

In the following sections, the author is focusing on different themes of the inter-views and draws a picture of the topics discussed, through the answers these women gave. To ensure the anonymity of these women, they are only referred to as Participant numbers, and possibly their age.

4.3.1 Struggles

The common struggle these women were facing seemed to be with finding clothes that fitted them properly. Clothes seemed to be too tight or loose or didn't fit properly for some part of the aging woman's body. Participant 7 noted *"My hips are very narrow, thus anytime I search for clothes, they are either too tight from everywhere else, or too loose from the hips"*. Another interviewee felt, the clothes produced had lost so called "normal sizing" and were either meant to be very tight or extremely big, which made buying pants, very difficult for her.

These women throughout the interviews mentioned, that they know very well what they like and don't like, which made purchase decisions very quick and easy for them. Sometimes, it was felt that finding clothes from stores was difficult, due to not having once own style available. Participant number 8 stated *"At stores, there is quite a lot, I need to reject, because I don't like them. So many clothes are multicolored and with prints, that I don't like. I wish to have harmony in my clothes"*.

Common theme with the women interviewed was the wish to hide some part of their body. As seen in FIGURE 8 below, most popular part of body to be covered was arms and following was stomach. Participant 2 said *"Well the middle section, my stomach. There are few kilos too much, so I don't want to highlight it"*. One woman preferred not showing any skin at all, Participant 6 stated *"My clothes go until here and here, or maybe here… (Demonstrating with her hands to wrists and ankles, then to knees.) I prefer clothes, that don't show much skin in general"*.
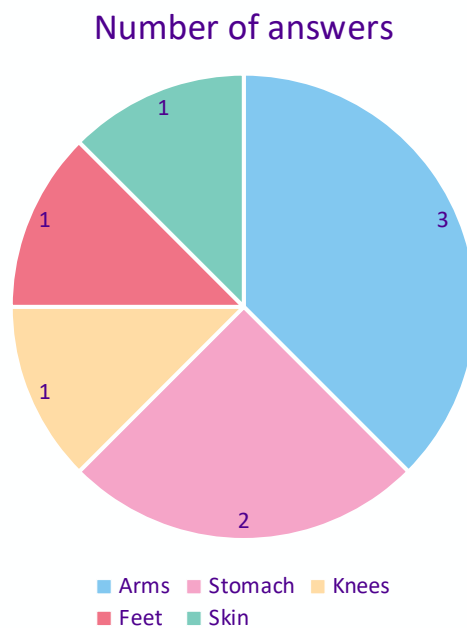
Number of answers

FIGURE 8. Area's women over 50 wish to cover.

All women said, they were satisfied with themselves and knew themselves so well, they did not feel, models in magazines to have that much influence on their self-esteem, if at all. Participant 6 said *"Some days yes, but some days no. I have pretty strong self-image, so they don't always influence me. Sure, there is those days they might affect, but also many of the models I grew up with are now over 50 too"*, another interviewee, Participant 5 stated *"The outside world in general affects me very little, I hold on to my own beliefs so tightly"*.

It was clear these women knew themselves, their own body and style so well, seeing younger models, at least on the conscious level, had little or no effect to their self-esteem. All women also felt, there was more aging women visible in fashion magazines these days. Participant number 6 laughed *"It's so weird to think about it, because the models that were 20, when I was 20, are now over*

50 and haven't stopped working, so it's difficult think about it like that, as the same women can be seen then and now".

4.3.2 Fashion

Based on the interviewee's answers, a stylish 50-year-old woman, does not wear clothes that are too tight, short, or revealing. Can be playful with her style and try out new things but does not follow trends as closely as younger women do. Participant 2 stated: *"I don't understand women my age, who wear things because it's a trend, even if they wouldn't want to. I feel the trends are for youngsters and we should be inspired by trends, but not follow them tightly"*. All women mentioned short, tight, and sexy as adjectives to clothes, not deemed acceptable for women over 50. There were two women in the group, who however liked wearing tight and sexy clothes, and Participant 4 said *"There is a code pushed on people that restricts the way they dress at a certain age. Ageism has a big effect on how women dress themselves. In my culture women show off their body, and in Finland it's judged in a way, it never was before"*.

The styles of these women had totally opposite directions. As seen in TABLE 12, some women loved colorful clothes, flashy prints, and interesting details, whereas others preferred timeless, classic, and harmonious pieces. It's not possible to draw a conclusion of a specific style, that would be "stylish" for women over 50, as almost all of them described themselves as stylish, even as the other words used, may differ a lot. All women said they mostly liked the way they dressed.

Participant 8 described her style as follows *"Harmonious, no bright colors, only broken tones, my style is calm, like my personality. Absolutely nothing splashy, sparkly or big prints"*. Whereas Participant 3 described her style as *"I love leather. Unique, asymmetrical lengths, bright colors, and interesting prints. I feel I got so many different styles, it's hard to describe just one, I buy what I like, and I know when I see it. Eccentric and splashy. I'm stylish in a sexy way and the clothes need to be fitted well"*.

TABLE 12. Words describing the style of interviewees.

Words	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Adventurous		X				X			2
Classic		X						X	2
Colourful	X		X						2
Detailed	X		X						2
Eccentric			X	X					2
Expensive							X		1
Flashy Prints	X		X						2
Fresh							X	X	2
Harmonious					X			X	2
Playful						X			1
Sexy			X	X					2
Splashy	X		X	X					3
Stylish	X	X	X			X	X		5
Timeless		X						X	2
Unique			X	X					2
Well-fitted			X		X		X	X	4

After interviewing all the women, it was clear self-expression through fashion was important. It was seen as part of the fun, that fashion was for them, and represented their personalities. Participant 6 said *"It's very important. Fashion represents the personality and gives joy. Dressing up is not rocket science or too serious, borrow the style of your neighbor if you feel like it. Don't save your beautiful clothes for special occasions, use them to light up your everyday life"*. One participant found it so important to express herself and her creativity through fashion, that she had a seamstress to create all her wildest dreams.

Women over 50 got inspired by a lot of things, but the once mostly mentioned were fashion magazines, shopping experience itself and trends. As seen in TA-BLE 13 the number one answer however was social media. These women wanted to see what influencers were wearing and get inspired by that. Partici-

pant 7 noted *"I look at fashion pictures on Instagram and wish there would be more content for mature women and not only for youngsters. I like to look at what people are wearing on the streets, and I believe if an older woman is wearing a nice outfit, you don't even see her wrinkles"*.

TABLE 12. Words describing the style of interviewees.

Words	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Social Media	X	X				X	X	X	5
Magazines	X	X			X		X		4
Shopping	X	X	X					X	4
Trends		X			X	X		X	4
Street style		X	X				X		3
Brands		X				X			2
Herself			X	X					2
People on TV			X					X	2
Art						X			1
Colours					X				1
Designers						X			1
Own Body				X					1
Seasons			X						1
Their Children		X							1

4.3.3 Shopping

The consumer habits of the interviewees corresponded well with the theory in chapter 2, that women over 50 focus on quality, material, and fitting. The two most important things for women over 50, was that the clothing fits them well and feels good when it's on. Participant number 7 commented *"I like clothes to fit well and feel good. I like clothes, that when I put them on, they stay there comfortably, and I don't have to readjust them"*. Half of women interviewed mentioned the importance of visuals and colors when buying clothes.

Number of answers

Legend:
- Quality
- Material
- Colors
- Fitting
- Feels good
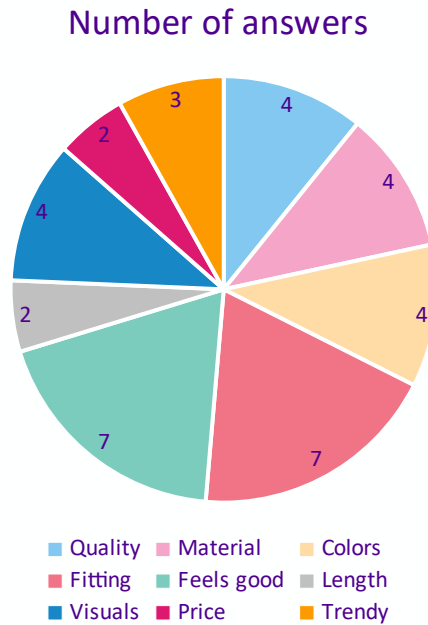- Length
- Visuals
- Price
- Trendy

FIGURE 9. What women over 50 focus on when buying clothes.

Similarly, to discovery in chapter 2, these women noted, they did not mind spending more money on good quality, because they were expecting to wear the garment longer with better quality. Participant 2 said *"If the garment is good, the money is not wasted even if on time purchase would be expensive"*. The quality and right style played a role, when these women chose the places, they preferred to buy their clothes from. As seen in TABLE 14, nearly all women pre-ferred small boutiques, and stayed far away from "the young stores", meaning chains like H&M, BikBok or Lindex. Participant 2 continued *"Small boutiques, like Sköna Clara. I like those stores you search for the special individuals. I like that not everyone I meet will be wearing the same as me. I buy from these places because the quality and materials are good"*.

TABLE 14. Where women over 50 buy their clothes?

Shopping from	Number of women
Designer/Label	4
Mohito/Reserved	1
Online	2
Outside Finland	3
Seamstress	1
Small Boutiques	6
Sokos/Stockmann	4

Only 2 women stated buying their clothes online, at least for the most part. They preferred the easiness and possibilities of it, but most women did not seem to enjoy it, as they wanted to see, feel, and try on the clothes physically before buying. Participant 2 commented *"I want to see and touch the materials. I need to feel them"*, and Participant 7 echoed this with *"If I can't try it on, I don't know what to buy".* The women enjoyed the experience of visiting small boutiques or designer stores, they felt shopping to be a form of therapy and a fun experience.

4.3.4 Dreams

Women over 50 dream of beautiful gowns, dresses that would be long and colorful, matched with high heels. This dress could be altered to different occasions and would probably be found in a small boutique or made by a seamstress. They dreamed big, with see through materials, sparkles, and having one side open. Their descriptions were unique pieces, that no one else would have.

These women dreamed of more courage for themselves or other people to try out new things. Participant 1 said *"I always try new things, and my outfits can inspire others to try new things. I sometimes suggest things to my customers, like a bright orange fabric, that they don't think they'd ever wear, but then they want to give it a chance and they like it"*. They also hoped that women over 50 could wear whatever they wanted to.

For the fashion industry these women wished for labels that designs for mature women to not shift their target group to young women, and they wished to see

more normal people as models and not only those who look "perfect". Participant 3 said *"It annoys me to see so many young, perfect models on adds all the time. Why don't they show real people, with flaws and all?"* Some women wondered about the flexibility from trends, as they felt annoyed not being able to purchase colors out of season. *"I wish less strict following of trends when it comes to selling clothes, more options in colors outside the trendy colors. If those trendy colors don't fit you, you can't buy anything"*, said Participant 5.
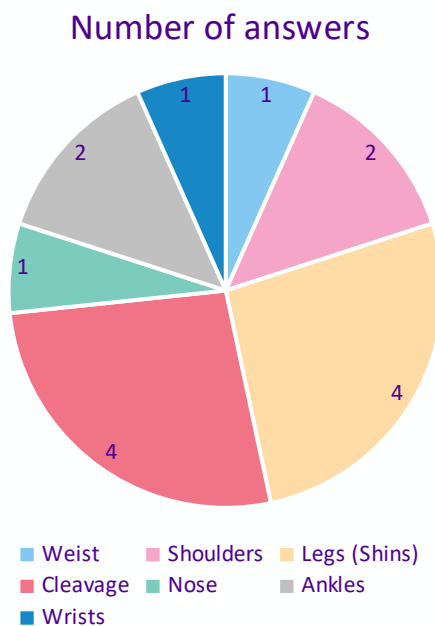

FIGURE 10. Which body part, women over 50 want to highlight.

Aging women want to highlight their legs and cleavage, as seen in FIGURE 10, as these two were the most popular answers with half of the women voting for one or both. Otherwise, there was big variety in parts, like waist, shoulders, ankles, or nose. Based on this, mature women have their own specific areas they, like to highlight, depending on their personality, style, and body type.

4.3.5 Conclusion

Women over 50 are very aware of their own style and have strong opinions on what they like and don't like. This seemed to be also the biggest source of struggle for them, as they struggled with finding clothes they liked and fitted them well. The most important thing when buying clothes, was that it fits well and feels good. They don't mind spending money on quality items, they can wear for a long time.

These women want to express themselves and have fun with fashion without restrictions from the outside world. According to these women the best antiaging move an aging woman can do is to be stylish. To be stylish can mean many different things, and what matters most to these women is that they feel comfortable in the style they wear. There is a conflict between some of the women seeing others dressing too calmly and others feeling there is too much crazy colors and patterns available, and no normal clothes. In this matter the person's own style plays a huge role, which is why it's recommended to see these women as individuals and not as a group of women alike.

4.4 Interview with the specialist

This chapter examines the results of specialist interview and draws an image of what is the future of mature female fashion.

The interviewee had a long experience in the fashion industry and her specialty was in women's clothing. She had worked as a freelancer, under other brands and in a teaching position in the field. According to interviewee, the future of aging women's fashion seemed bright, and they were hopeful. Currently they stated *"I don't really see it. Fashion for women over 50 currently, there are some brands that make clothes specifically for this group of women, such as Marimekko and Anna Ruohonen label, your customer, but not that many, but I do see it changing for the better. There are much more women over 50 in marketing for example, but I do must note that even if their face is allowed to age, their body still looks like a young woman's body"*.

Same as the women interviewed, the specialist also wondered about the importance of individual style and self-expression. They wondered why it would be expected for a person to change their style as they age, because as once body changes, soul often feels still young and enjoys the same things in fashion as before. They noted *"I believe for change. There are new brands arising that aren't strictly in relations to age, but rather different lifestyles. FeelK, Uhana and*

Papu are good examples. I wish labels would see customers more as individuals, than age groups. They should be categorised based on lifestyles".

Like the target group interviewed, the specialist mentioned fitting, materials and quality as important factors when designing for women over 50, as seen in TABLE 14. They stated that, those aged women don't accept any hanging threads or loose buttons anymore. *"My wish for the fashion industry is to maintain quality, throughout the process, design, materials, production, cheap and good is a difficult combo",* stated the interviewee.

TABLE 14. What to note, when designing for women over 50?

Things to note:
Bra straps need to be hidden
Can be open cleavage
Good materials
Importance of quality
Neck covered
Neckline stays in place
No extreme trends
No extremely tight clothes
No micro skirts or shorts

When asked to describe a stylish woman over 50, the answer was positively fresh. The specialist did mention, not designing micro shorts or skirts for women over 50 anymore but emphasized the importance for everyone to find their own style and being comfortable in their own skin. As people are individuals, a stylish woman could carry multiple different styles, but the key is she carries the style naturally. *"Person has to find their own style, you can't teach style, because it has to match the soul. To help someone find their style is like helping them to find themselves".*

The results of this interview mirrored well the once found in the interviews with the target group, and the observations made by the author. The theory stands that, women over 50 are not yet a trend, but growingly more visible in fashion.

The results seem to indicate, that women over 50, should not be put to a box, based on their age, but rather based on their individual styles. A stylish woman over 50 can truly be anything, as long as she carries herself well and feels comfortable in the clothes she wears.

5   DISCUSSION

In this section I'll be gathering the different parts of this process and include my own thoughts about the process. In the discussion, I'll focus on the thesis process, my own experiences, and how reliable and relevant this work is. In this section, will also be suggestions for future research questions.

The theory formed by the author emphasizes the connection between media, ageism, and fashion, and find it important to note, how changing mindset in one area, will eventually help drive change in the other 2 as well. This is why the author finds that fashion could be at the center of driving change related to ageism. The following suggestions for Anna Ruohonen label are ways of impacting that change.

The goal of this thesis was to find out what women over 50 struggles within relation to fashion and how a fashion label could answer to these struggles. The thesis researched how women over 50 feel about fashion. In addition, it was researched, that how visible women over 50 are in the fashion industry based on theory and observatory research. The purpose of this thesis was to generate new knowledge and offer concrete ideas to a fashion label on how to approach this customer group.

Based on the research and interviews, it can be conducted that, women over 50 are increasingly more visible in the fashion industry, but the way they are portrayed is not yet what it should be, as the bodies they displayed were often still considered "a young woman's body" or "too perfect". However, it was concluded that this did not necessarily affect the self-esteem of these women, at least on a conscious level. This should be considered when creating marketing for Anna Ruohonen label, as the women interviewed wished for more real models, and people who aged, not only with their face, but with their bodies as well.

The biggest struggles found in the research, was finding clothes these women liked and fitted them well. It was mentioned multiple times, that they did not remember how old their body was, because their mind and soul felt so much younger. It was discovered that, they wish to stay in style, and not turn into old

grandmas with no style, but they do not want to take part in the wildest fashion trends. Based on this information Anna Ruohonen label should create clothes, that are stylish, but not too trendy. This approach would help the consumer feel stylish even as they age, but not force them to jump on wild trends.

The research showed that women over 50 are very much in touch with themselves, their own personality and style. The answer to the main research question of how to keep these women stylish is, to allow themselves to express their personality and enjoy fashion as a fun experience. It came out clearly in the interviews, that what makes these women feel good, also looks good, and can even work in an anti-aging way, as with a nice outfit, wrinkles are less noticeable. Anna Ruohonen label could use the feeling what good style evokes in a person in their marketing, to reach customer emotions.

According to findings of this research, a stylish woman in her 50s, wear sneakers, black, white, blue, or beige, and matches the colors of her outfit together. She wears sunglasses, and possibly jeans or trousers. To stay stylish, she avoids mini-skirts and cliches and keeps evolving her style. She knows herself well and thus her style is an extension of her personality and demonstrates who she is, as she carries it with confidence.

Based on the research conducted, it was possible to make suggestions for the customer, about what they should do and think about when producing for women over 50. The key finding was to see these women as individuals with different styles and desire to express themselves, rather than a group of aging women. To be socially responsible, and keep a good brand name, Anna Ruohonen label should emphasize how everyone can be stylish in their own way. When designing clothes for these women, it would be important to keep in mind, that they usually know very well, based on the interviews, what they want.

Another note given to the customer is, to keep in mind how interested and active these women were on social media, and how hungry they were for content designed for them in a fresh way. The women desired to see content, that was not portrayed by young women, but at the same time they didn't want to be tar-

geted as "old ladies". An example of what they wanted to see was outfit ideas targeted at their age group, how to combine different items or tips on how to avoid outfit crisis. Approaching these women in social media, would be a great tactic for the company to reach the right audience with content designed for their needs.

5.1   Own thoughts

The struggle of an aging woman was a new concept to me in sense, that as a 25-year-old woman, I could not say I would've experienced it first-hand. Ageism as a concept was familiar to me, and I've heard women older than me, to talk about feeling younger than they are. Thus, it did not come as a shock that their struggle was with not seeing themselves as old.

I found the topic very interesting and captivating, in a sense that drawing a line between what should and should not be included in the final report was at times extremely difficult. The topic had so many different layers and concepts, that could have brought their own perspective to the work. The work felt meaningful as the women interviewed were visibly excited to be talking about this and mentioned how happy they were, someone had chosen them as a target group. The customer, Anna Ruohonen label, was previously familiar to me, and thus working for them felt natural. I felt the topic to be important, not only to the customer, but for the society, to modify the way we view people, especially aging women.

For the most part, it was enjoyable to work on this research, but towards the end I noticed myself getting tired of rewriting parts, I wasn't happy with. The theory this work was based on, had to draw from multiple different topics, as there is not so much work specifically about the aging women in fashion. Often, interesting materials were unfortunately unavailable, but luckily there was a lot of material about anti-aging culture, ageism, and fashion industry in general, that could be used to build a solid foundation for the research. As I had a lot of interesting reedings not necessarily directly to the topic, I ended up removing a lot of knowledge irrelevant to the research at hand.

I wanted the research to have a feminist layer to it, and that I found with the focus on aging women and noting the different treatment women and men face

about beauty. This was important to me, as feminism is part of my core values. Observatory research and interviews with the target group and a specialist ended up supporting each other better, than planned. All the material gathered from these, was used together with the theory to draw conclusions.

5.2 Reliability of this work

Throughout the research, it was noted that ethical research methods were used, and proper measures were taken to verify the data gathered. All interviews were transcribed, stored, and handled safely, to ensure the anonymity of the interviewees. No material concealed with strict copyrights were used, to ensure ethical use of material. The authors of referenced material were noted and given necessary credits for.

The questions of interviews were tested and altered based on modification suggestions, to get the most reliable and relevant answers. The themes of the interviews were shared with the interviewees prehand, so they could prepare themselves and know if they want to participate in the interview. It was always made clear for the interviewees, that they do not have to answer questions, they don't want. The specialist was chosen based on their long experience and knowledge of this specific field in fashion industry.

As someone outside the target group, I had a neutral attitude towards the topic, which made analysing the material from a neutral perspective easier. The research gave comprehensively information which made conclusions easy to establish. Based on these conclusions, it was possible to suggest new objectives for the customer. This thesis could be useful to many businesses, targeting women over 50 in the fashion industry.

The work is seen as relevant, due to rising demand to have more variable representation in the fashion industry. In 2021 Angie Petterson wrote, that unrealistic bodies and faces have represented in fashion, but now the industry is being demanded, by the public to change the concept of beauty. People wish to see beauty in themselves, and diversity is at the core of this. (Petterson, 2021) Even as this work has been going for years, according to The Women Achiever, in 2022 aging women are still completely left out in some advertisements, and

totally underrepresented in the industry. (The Women Achiever, 2022) As it can be seen, the topic is relevant, as people demand for change and there is still work to be done.

5.3 Future research

The theory and research demonstrated how large topic is in question and how important it is to understand different age groups in relation to any industry. It would be worth researching how different cultures affect in the fashion industry and if women over 50 are unconsciously affected by the portrayal of models in media. It should be researched further how visibility of aging women has in-creased in the media. It would be interesting to generate research into this topic further, that would try to dig deeper into the unconscious thoughts and habits of women over 50 in relation to fashion.

With investigative research to old media outlets and new, it could be concluded how and how much the change has happened. In this thesis, it was mentioned how actively these women seeks fashion influence on social media, and as this thesis focused more on the behaviour of aging women with fashion, it would be important to find out, what kind of social media behaviour these women have. An interesting research topic would be, what kind of content are these women looking for.

REFERENCES

Ruohonen, A. n.d. Anna Ruohonen, webpage, Read on 22.05.2023. https://annaruohonen.com/

Ariella, S. 2023. 28 Dazzling Fashion Industry Statistics 2023: How much is the fashion industry worth. Zippia 06.06.2023. Read on 22.05.2023. https://www.zippia.com/advice/fashion-industry-statistics/

Butler. R. N. 1980. Ageism: A foreword. National Institute on Aging. Journal of Social Issues. Blackwell Publishing Ltd 36 (2), 8-11.

Calasanti T. M. & Slevin, K. F. 2001. Gender, Social Inequalities and Aging. California: Walnut Creek, AltaMira Press.

Cohn, A. M. 2016. In today's pop culture, men with scars are sexy – but women are still expected to look perfect, The Washington Post. 01.06.2016. Read on 01.04.2023.https://www.proquest.com/docview/1815919599?accountid=14242&parentSessionId=IQwsnMohbwbtnhKZsHnVjuOg5O7ZS82af5eGNWhP5BI%3D

De Beauvoir, S. 1953. The Second Sex. New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc. Original work 1949.

Freedman, R. 1986. Beauty Bound: Why women strive for physical perfection. London: Columbus Books. Original Work 1988.

Fressange, I. & Gachet, S. 2019. Parisian Chic encore! A style guide. Paris: Flammarion.

Goode, J. 2018. Fashioning the sixties: fashion narratives of older women. Ageing and society. Cambridge University Press 38 (3), 455-475.

Hesse-Biber, S. & Johnson, R. B. 2015. The Oxford Handbook of Multimethod and Mixed Methods Research Inquiry. New York: Oxford University Press.

Holmlund M. Hagman, A. & Polsa, P. 2011. An exploration of how mature women buy clothing: empirical insights and a model. Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management, 15 (1), 108-122.

Langmia, K. & Tyree, T. C. M. 2017. Social Media: culture and identity, Maryland: Lexington Books.

Merriam, S. B. & Grenier, R. S. 2019. Qualitative Research in Practise: Examples for Discussion and Analysis. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons.

McGlynn, C., O'Neill, M. & Schrage-Früh, M. 2017. Ageing Women in Literature and Visual Culture. Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature

Murphy, C. B. 2022. Why Social Responsibility Matters to Business. Investopedia. 31.05.2022. Read on 16.06.2023. https://www.investopedia.com/ask/answers/041015/why-social-responsibility-important-business.asp

Ndjongo, S. 2017. Ageism Plagues the Fashion Industry. ULOOP Inc. 6.2.2017. Read on 8.5.2023 http://uwire.com/?s=UWIRE+Text&x=26&y=14&=Go

Pearsall, M. 1997. The other within us: Feminist explorations of women and aging. Colorado: Westview Press.

Petterson, A. 2021. Why Is Diversity Important in Fashion. 440 Industries. 16.07.2021. https://440industries.com/why-is-diversity-important-in-fashion/

Pickering, M. 2008. Research Methods for cultural studies. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Saiphoo, A. N., Vahedi, Z. 2019. A meta-analytic review of the relationship between social media use and body image disturbance. Computers in Human Behaviour. Department of Psychology, Ryerson University. 101, 259-275.

Saldaña, J. 2011. Fundamentals of qualitative research: Understanding qualitative research. Oxford: Oxford University Press Inc.

Saucier, M. G. 2004. Midlife and Beyond: Issues for Aging Women. Journal of Counseling & Development. Wiley-Blackwell. 82 (4), 420-425.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. 2009. Research methods for business students. England: Pearson Education Limited.

Science Practise, n.d. Interviewing Experts. Science Practise. N.d. Read 27.05.2023. https://www.science-practice.com/teams/good-problems/playbook/interviewing-experts/

The Economist, 2016. Schumpeter; The grey market, The Economist. 09.04.2016. Read on 21.04.2023. https://www.proquest.com/docview/1779560629/abstract/F7D13474915B4607PQ/1

The Women Achiever, 2022. How Women are fighting Ageism in the Fashion Industry. The Women Achiever. 26.04.2022. Read 27.05.2023 https://www.thewomenachiever.com/fashion/how-women-are-fighting-ageism-in-the-fashion-industry/

Townsend, K., Kent, A. & Sadkowska, A. 2019. Fashioning clothing with and for mature women: a small-scale sustainable design business model. Management Decision. Emerald Publication Limited, 57 (1), 3-20.

Twigg, J. 2010. How Does Vogue Negotiate Age?: Fashion, the Body, and the Older Woman. Fashion Theory 14 (4), 471-490.

Veresiu, E. & Parmentier, M. A. 2021. Advanced Style Influencers: Confronting Gendered Ageism in Fashion and Beauty Markets. Journal of the Association for Consumer Research 6 (2), 263-273.

Vickers, K. 2007. Aging and the Media: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. Californian Journal of Health Promotion. California State University. 5 (3), 100-105.

Vincent, J. A. 2004. Inequality and Old Age. UCL Press Limited. Florence: Taylor & Francis Group. Original work 1995.

Von Soest, C. 2022. Why Do We Speak to Experts? Reviving the Strength of the Expert Interview Method. Cambridge University. 21.06.2022. Read 27.05.2023.
https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/perspectives-on-politics/article/why-do-we-speak-to-experts-reviving-the-strength-of-the-expert-interview-method/45E710F27CEC6E739B015E10A161E140

Walliman, N. 2011. Research Methods: The Basics. London & New York: Routledge. Taylor & Francis Group.

Weathington, B. L., Cunningham, C. J. & Pittenger, D. J. 2012. Understanding business research. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Widdows, H. 2018. Perfect Me: Beauty as an ethical ideal. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Interview Questions

About Fashion:
What part of your body do you like best? (Which parts you like to highlight with clothes)
What part of your body, you'd rather cover with clothes?
How does women visible in fashion affect your self-image?
Have you noticed women over 50 being more or less visible in fashion now than before?
What kind of difficulties you have when buying clothes?
Where do you buy your clothes? (Why from there, would you like to buy elsewhere)
What kind of things you focus on when buying clothes?
Have you noticed any restrictions regarding women over 50 in fashion?

About Own Style:
How would your best friend describe you?
How would you describe your own style?
Are you happy overall with the way you dress? (Why yes, why not?)
What makes you feel very good when you dress yourself?
What inspires your style? (What media forms is followed, what affects and what way)
How important is it to you, that you get to express yourself through fashion?

About Dreams:
If you could dress yourself like a paper doll, with no restrictions, prejudice or expectations, how would you dress the doll?
Could you wear these clothes described now? (Why not?)
Where would you find these clothes?
If you got 3 wishes from a genie regarding fashion, what would you wish for?
Any other thoughts you'd like to share?

Appendix 2. Visibility in Vogue

3rd of March Vogue has posted a multi-pic post of Carrie Bradshaw to pay homage to her many beautiful bags over the years. Sarah Jessica-Parker, the woman behind the character of Carrie, is in her 30s or early 40s in all the pictures, except last one in which she could be in her 50s. (Due to her visible signs of age).

7th of March there is a reel featuring Jennifer Lopez aged 53, sharing her makeup tips. She has no clear signs of aging, and it must be noted that first she "passed" as under 50. Only after realizing who she is, was it possible to note her age to be above 50.

9th of March Vogue shares another reel featuring Brooke Shields aged 57 who shares her skin care routine. Brooke Shields is clearly over 50 and her matured skin with wrinkles show it without question of her age.

It's very noticeable, that young women (aging from their 20s to early 30s) are clearly dominating the page. There are multiple posts featuring young models like Bella Hadid, Kylie Jenner, and Hailey Bieber. Most of the posts featuring any women over 50 seem to be more about skin care and beauty rather than fashion itself.

13th of March there is a picture of Naomi Cambell, age 52 with huge statement earrings that are the main point the post is made. The post is made to demonstrate this fashion piece. Naomi does not have visible signs of aging. Another fashion related post is made in 22nd of March with Gabrielle Union age 50 posing in an outfit Vogue draws inspiration from.

19th of March Vogue shares a picture with Erykah Badu age 52 with a caption "Is it possible to repair signs of aging overnight? Yes, indeed…" (Vogue, 2023) It's noticeable how women over 50 once again are used to market a miracle cure for aging.

There are a few posts, that it's unclear what age the women are. They look mature enough to be 50 or above, but in one of the pictures they are wearing sunglasses are not posing directly to the camera, thus it's difficult to determine their actual age. In another Sarah Harris, Vogue's Global network lead is posing in a picture, her age could be somewhere between 40-50, but it was not found on the internet. 10th of April Vogue shares a runway picture, where Marineserre named brand is having a woman clearly over 50 modelling for one of their outfits.

Appendix 3. Visibility in Harper's Bazaar 1(2)

6th of March Harper's Bazaar shared multiple pictures of Donatella Versace aged 67 as she talked about her upcoming collection to the magazine editor.

10th of March Courtney Cox 58 is posing on the red carpet with her daughter Coco aged 18 in a premier event of Courtney's upcoming movie. The post focuses heavily on what the two are wearing. On the same day there is a post including many celebrities among of which is Pamela Anderson 55, looking stylish as ever. The post relates to Versaces fashion show and focuses on who are in front row seats and what are they wearing.

13th of March is dedicated to the Oscars and has multiple posts featuring Michelle Yeog aged 61, who won an Oscar that night. One of the posts is from her acceptance speech, another is her among other women in 'best dressed' reel and the third one features her and her co-stars from the show 'Everything Everywhere All At Once', including Jamie Lee Curtis ages 64.

Michelle Yeoh 61, is featured again on 16th of March together with her co-star Jamie Lee Curtis aged 64, laughing together and holding their Oscars. The post is celebrating the wins of these two women and Jamie is quoted saying middle-aged women are doing amazing things everywhere right now.

17th of March Jennifer Aniston aged (54), is showcasing her iconic Rachel haircut and the caption says, she has brought it back in style. The following day Michelle Yeoh (61) is together with her co-star Stephanie Hsu (32), following the Oscars. The post itself talks about the amazing success of the show. Jennifer Aniston is featured again with 2 other women on 27th of March in a post depicting a simple black dress being the popular choice this Spring.

24th of March post about an upcoming exhibition in the Kensington Palace called "Crown to Couture", is featuring a picture of The Queen Elizabeth in a fashion show. Seeing the late Queen in Harper's Bazaar UK's page is no surprise as she was the Queen of the country.

28th of March there are 2 posts featuring women over 50. First one is about Coco Chanel (as visibly in her older age) and second one with Jennifer Lopez (53) posing on a red carpet with her husband. The first one is about Chanel related exhibition upcoming, and the latter focuses on what the couple is wearing. Jennifer looks fresh in her neon-coloured dress.

30th of March Michelle Obama (59) is posing in all leather outfit and shares in an interview, how she feels at this age freer than ever to explore her style. On the same day, Jennifer Aniston has a reel dedicated to her shimmering silver dress she wears to a movie premier in LA. Jennifer does have slight noticeable signs of age, such as small wrinkles.

Appendix 3. Visibility in Harper's Bazaar 2(2)

31st of March there is a picture of J Smith-Cameron (65) who was interviewed about her role in Succesion. Even though she does not have wrinkles or other visible signs of age, she does look clearly mature enough to be over 50. Last seen picture of woman over 50 during this time, is on 2nd of April as the Magazine discusses what Gwyneth Partlow (50) wore to her court hearing.

Appendix 4. Paris Street Style Observations 1(2)

Wednesday 17th of May:

11am Metro line 8, Republiqué, Paris

Brown bag, which resembles a briefcase and dark blue ankle boots, that have thick heel and low top. The shoes are made of suede. Light blue Jeans, with dark blue long-sleeved cotton shirt, pared with dark blue trench coat. Accessories: Simple and small golden ring on one finger and a delicate necklace.

11.08am Metro line 8, Saint-Sebastian-Froissant, Paris

Light blue jeans pared with a blue jean jacket, that has diamond patterns on one side. Underneath a beige t-shirt made of cashmere. Grey converse sneakers and matching grey shoulder bag, which looks old, and army styled. Square shaped bag. No noticeable jewelry.

11.46am Carrette, Place des Vosges, Paris

Dark blue jeans with a matching blue jeans jacket. Sunglasses are dark and big. Underneath a shirt, made of white and black stripes, which of the latter are very thin. Pared with white sneakers.

12.19pm Carrette, Place des Vosges, Paris

Very big glasses that have strong frames and white sneakers with a silver detail at the back. White vest on top of a light blue and white striped collar shirt. Beige jacket, made of a very thin and flowy material. Black little YSL bag, that has golden strap. Dark blue jeans.

12.30pm Place des Vosges, Paris

Grey chinos, pared with blue sneakers and light green jacket, which buttons are closed, so can't say what type of shirt is underneath. Straw hat, beige colored, big size and big black ribbon around it. Big sunglasses, that have golden details in the handles.

12.40pm Place des Vosges, Paris

White trousers, and black blazer, pared with blue running sneakers. Light brown flap bag. Big glasses, with black handles. White top underneath.

Appendix 4. Paris Street Style Observations 2(2)

16.47pm Pompidou, Paris

Orange wool coat, black ballerina shoes, made of velvet. Dark blue trousers and a huge beige bag with golden and black sparkly details as handles and going around the structures of the bag. Semi-big glasses,with black handles and frames.

18.26pm Metro station: Strasbourgh Saint Denis, Paris 2(2)

Light blue jeans, black leather combat boots, that have silver zipper in front pared with a black wool coat. Big blue scarf made of wool around her neck and small brown purse. The wool shirt underneath is matching blue color with the scarf. The glasses have leopard print on the frames and handles, they are shaped like a isosceles trapezium.

Appendix 5. Tampere Street Style Observations 1(2)

Wednesday 24th of May:

11.00am Summer Terrace, Central Square, Tampere

Pink trousers with matching pink blazer, pared with white sneakers and white translucent blouse, which sleeves are rolled up. Underneath there is a pink top matching the color of the trousers and blazer. The trousers have a white belt with silver details holding them in place. Big white leather tote bag, black rounded sunglasses with thin handles, and small golden watch on a wrist. The pink blazer is stuffed on top of the white bag, which makes it difficult to make any other notes of the bag.

11.20am Summer Terrace, Central Square, Tampere

White linen shirt, with white top underneath and trousers that have white/beige pattern resembling Indian clothing patterns. The pattern is a bit like hearts inside hearts. Huge light brown bag, that resembles a bit of working flap bag. Her shoes are matching color with the bag and are sandals with high platform. The sunglasses have brown lenses and slim golden handles & frames.

11.31am Summer Terrace, Central Square, Tampere

Big, black & white colored Marimekko tote bag, which has the traditional flower print. The dress is following the same color theme, with black and white stripes, that are medium sized. The dress is made of cotton and over it there is a white wool sweater. This outfit is paired with wedged heel sandals, that have wooden heel and silver strap. Gucci sunglasses with brown handles and frames. Light beige crossbody bag made of leather.

11.45am Summer Terrace, Central Square, Tampere

Black sunglasses and light beige straw hat, with a black ribbon around it. Linen shirt which top part is light blue and bottom part is dark blue. Cotton sweater, very thin and white over the shirt and sleeves rolled up. Light blue jeans paired with white leather Tommy Hilfiger sneakers, that have the small logo detail on both sides. Crossbody bag from Marc Jacobs, which is black, but the strap has black edges and thick grey stripe in the middle. Across the strap there is the words "Marc Jacobs" repeating. On the wrist, black thin activity bracelet, paired with two pearl bracelets, of which one is totally black and the other has white and grey pearls.

11.55pm Summer Terrace, Central Square, Tampere

White Nike sneakers, with golden details such as the logo and the back of the bottom part, which is partly translucent. Light pink-collar shirt, with sleeves rolled a bit matched with black trousers. Black sunglasses are a bit cat eye shaped, and the bag held is Louis Vuitton Neverfull in white and grey square pattern with light brown handles.

Appendix 5. Tampere Street Style Observations 2(2)

12.40pm Tram 3, Koskipuisto, Tampere

White linen shirt with black jeans and black ballerinas. Holding a black leather jacket in one arm and wearing black square shaped sunglasses. Black crossbody bag made of leather and farely small. The bag is mostly behind the leather jacket, so difficult to give more details.

1.00pm Café Puisto, Tampere

Light pink sweater and white jeans which are mid-calf in length. Light pink tote bag with stitching pattern on the side. White sneakers that have a light pink heart shaped pattern all over it. Small golden chain bracelet and small sunglasses, that have golden frames.

1.30pm Tram station: Hervantakeskus, Tampere

Sunglasses have a square shape and thin frames. Handles are black and thick. White collar shirt open and sleeves rolled up, with a black t-shirt underneath. Black trousers, which are wide legged. Blue ballerinas, made of fabric. Black crossbody bag and Moomin themed tote bag, which is black and has the *hattifatteners*. (Little white tampon shaped creatures from the Moomin stories).