Research Report

Graduation Fashion & Management
The following report is made with the purpose of measuring the potential of the Antwerp based market regarding made to measure women suits. This report therefore serves as a base for the eventual business plan. In order to measure the potential of the Antwerp based market and consumer, general macro analysis was done. The demographic, economic and socio-economic development of the city was analysed from a macro perspective.

Since Antwerp operates as a province as well as a city, the macro analysis was done from both perspectives. In terms of demographic development, Antwerp serves as an interesting city and province for the establishment of a business focussing on made to measure women suits. Men and women are equally divided within the Antwerp population. What is more, the Antwerp population consists of a rather young generation whom are actively working as young professionals and earning a relatively high salary every month which contributes to the overall welfare of the province and the city. Moreover, women are generally higher educated and less unemployed compared to the men living in Antwerp.

Furthermore, the economic status of the province and the city, positively contributes to the establishment of innovative concepts. Antwerp adds the biggest value to the overall Belgian economy. Especially in terms of creative industry and fashion industry, Antwerp has established a prominent reputation, internationally as well as nationally. However, the retail environment of the fashion industry does not operate well and is expected to develop downwards the upcoming years which will play an important role within the establishment of the concept and business plan.

Finally, additional branche and consumer analysis was done in order to substantiate the earlier conducted macro analysis. Branche analysis has showed that there is an actual gap in the market when it comes down to made to measure clothing and women suits, especially within the Antwerp based market. Therefore, Antwerp offers a great potential for made to measure women suits. But also the potential target group seems to be interested in made to measure women suits. However, research has shown that the focus should be on the customization aspect of made to measure. Therefore, rebranding the concept of the made to measure business is needed. Showing women that made to measure is about designing own pieces of clothing which can come in the form of an entire suits but also separate pieces such as trousers, blazers, coats and skirts.
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Research Proposal
Introduction

Ever since I was young, I have had an enormous love for fashion. By the time I graduated from high school, I was finally able to start my process in becoming a fashion professional. Over the past few years, my studies at AMFI and several jobs within the fashion industry, have given me a deeper insight in the world of fashion. It helped me to realise what kind of fashion professional I want to be. Therefore, my graduation project will serve as a tool in order to start up my own business. This will be done in the form of an in-depth market research report with an eye on the actual product namely, a business plan regarding the start-up of a brand focusing on made to measure women suits. However, the question remains: Where does the idea of starting up a business in made to measure women suits derive from? Or more specific, why is there an issue that needs to be explored?

The reason of researching an issue within the world of made to measure women suits derives from a conclusion drawn out of empirical research. My mom and I both share a deep love for fashion. Even though my mom and I have an age difference of almost 30 years, we both share the same style and therefore love the same type of brands. Especially when it comes to our enormous love for suits. However, the majority of our closets exists out of suits, my mom and I both find it very hard to find a well fitted and fashionable suit. Since we are both only 1.60 tall, most of the suits we buy, need to be adjusted or re-made. This is when I realised a tailor made suit would be the perfect solution to our problem. But not only the fit made me realise that tailored suits could be a solution, also the ability to design pieces of clothing to your own style contributed to my desire to start up a business for made to measure women suits. Therefore, I started researching brands who offer made to measure women suits. Unfortunately, I was not able to find a brand that offered made to measure women suits in a fashionable and convenient way. In order to solve this particular problem, I decided to start up my own brand specialising in made to measure women suits. However, I did not have any experience within the world of tailoring. Therefore, gaining more experience within the world of tailoring was a must. This is when I started working for an Antwerp based tailor, specialised in made to measure suits for men. As I was working there, at least once or twice a day, the question if we created suits for women as well was asked. Soon it became clear that the problem my mom and I were facing was shared by other women as well, meaning that there really is a big interest and demand for made to measure women suits within the Belgian market. But also the Dutch market, or more specific the Amsterdam based market, seems to have a great interest in made to measure women suits. Having built up a great network within the fashion world over the years, I came in contact with L’Atelier Amsterdam. L’Atelier Amsterdam is an Amsterdam based suit atelier, offering made to measure suits in a modern, casual and fashionable way. Because of their laid-back living room atmosphere in combination with their dandy inspired suits, L’Atelier Amsterdam can be described as a unique modern tailor and therefore differentiates itself from the rest of tailoring market. During several meetings with Pascal, the founder of the label, it became clear that also he notices an increasing demand for made to measure women suits. Pascal explained that the demand for women suits is noticeable in the store itself, meaning that existing clients of the brand or women passing by the store, are asking for made to measure women suits. But not only the internal demand proves that there is a big market for made to measure suits, also external factors such also the rising interest for women suits by the competitive market like SuitSupply who established a sublabel named, Suit studio1, confirms that the market is reacting upon a need for made to measure women suits. However, the offer for made to measure women suits is rather limited, work wear related and conservative in my opinion.

Out of the conducted empirical research, the assumption can be made that there is an increasing demand for made to measure women suits. However certain brands do respond to this increasing demand, the offer remains limited. Therefore, there is a problem that needs to be solved. However, this conclusion is conducted out of personal findings and experience, in-depth research within the history and contemporary market is necessary in order to substantiate this problem with real facts. Therefore, the following part of the report will focus on preliminary research focusing on the history of tailoring and suits combined with research within today’s market, in order to prove that there really is an issue that needs to be explored.
Tailoring can be defined as the art of making or the adoption of something to suit with a particular purpose which can come in the form of made to measure or bespoke tailoring. The word "tailor" derives from the French verb, tailler, meaning "to cut" which dates from the early Middle Ages. The first tailors of the world were considered as linen armorers which means that they created tailored garments that were worn underneath the chain mail in order to protect the body from the rubbing during heavy armour. Before this time, garments only functioned as pieces of cloth to cover the body which was made from one piece of cloth. Therefore, individual style or trends were not important to a garment’s maker or wearer at that time. However, over the years, people began to desire clothing in certain styles, for different body types, or in unique patterns. This is when the demand for skilled tailors increased. Clothes started to become more than just pieces of cloth for functional use. It was there for people to express themselves, project their status, and show off the best version of themselves. In other words, the emergence of tailors is proof that fashion was developing as a concept.

As the demand for tailoring emerged, shops owned by skilled tailors began to spread over the world. Most shops were owned by a master tailor, who was the face of the business and created most of the garments. The tailors at that time all had a signature style which was created by the way they cut and created their garments. Together with the expansion of tailor shops more and more fabric cutters were hired and trained. This is when tailoring marked its place into fashion industry. Furthermore, England emerged as the place to be for bespoke tailors and, since the turn of the 18th century, Bond Street, Saville Row, and St. James Street in London’s West End have been known as places to find elite, traditional tailors. However, even traditional tailors continually update their looks to fit modern styles, the oldest labels, like Huntsman for example, famously keep their signature elements, developed by the original master tailor.

Today, people generally associate the word “tailor” with someone who creates custom men’s suits. The process of making a tailored suit can be done in two ways, either bespoke or made to measure. However the difference between the two is significant, most of today’s tailors do not understand the difference between both practices. Bespoke, meaning ‘spoken for’ and not for sale to the public, are garments made from scratch for a specific client whereas made to measure garments are created by adjusting an existing pattern to a client’s measurements. In order to differentiate a bespoke suit from a made to measure one, the 5-pt check can be done. Nowadays, bespoke tailoring is very rare to be found and seen as a non-scalable business. This because of financial and practical reasons. The minimum price of a bespoke suit will be around 2500 euros which is, for the biggest part of the population, too expensive. Only the most significant English or Italian tailors manage to generate profit out of a bespoke tailoring business.
Nowadays, almost every woman owns a suit in their closet. Women are wearing suits on a daily basis, either casual or for professional purposes. However, this was not always the case. In fact, prior to the late 19th and 20th century, the rules for dressing were very strict regarding women’s clothing. Women were forced to wear form-fitted dresses, underskirts and tight corsets. The silhouette of a woman’s body had to be emphasized in the best possible way. Coming to the 1920’s, women started to enter the workforce and, for the first time, they were able to vote. Therefore, women’s clothing had to be re-evaluated, meaning a less restrictive and more casual attire was requested. The design of the Chanel suit served as a turning point in the history of women’s fashion, a key breakthrough that began to normalize the suit in the mainstream female wardrobe. With her designs, she rebelled against the feminine styling and embraced a more androgynous style. Also her active role within the movement towards female empowerment, paved the way for menswear-inspired clothing. Elegant suits, tweed blazers and simple everyday-wear marked the way of dressing for women at that time.

Over the years, menswear-inspired fashion became more and more popular. Actresses such as Marlene Dietrich, Audrey Hepburn and Katherine Hepburn started to adopt the masculine style in their closets. Although Coco Chanel, Marlene Dietrich and Katharine Hepburn adopted the masculine style before the 30’s, wearing pants was only acceptable during the wars when women had to take over the daily tasks of the men. With the end of the war, women returned to their role as housewife meaning that they returned to wear dresses and skirts. Therefore, clothing made to accentuate a women’s hips and bust with tight dresses and curved jackets became popular again. However, throughout the 20th century certain moments in time were marked by women wearing men’s clothes, the masculine style for women was not fully accepted. It lasted until the late 60’s that suits or menswear inspired fashion in general, were no longer considered as a rebellious political statement. During the early 70’s, the suit became a must have in women’s everyday-wear. Prominent designers such as Yves Saint Laurent who re-designed menswear-inspired styling with his “Smoking” Tuxedo Jacket, turned the suit into an iconic and forever to stay style. As Yves Saint Laurent once said himself: “For women, the tuxedo is an indispensable outfit, which they feel comfortable with, so they can be who they are. This is style, not fashion. Fads come and go, style is forever.”

Until the day of today, suits are available in different styles and forms, for men and women, offered by a wide range of fashion brands and retailers. Suits can be found in the fast fashion segment of the fashion industry but also high end luxury brands such as Yves Saint Laurent and Chanel who show their newest designs on their classic pieces every year during fashion week. Next to fast fashion and luxury fashion, also made-to-measure and bespoke tailored suits have had an essential role within the fashion industry. However, this way of designing suits has only been common for men but very rare for women, throughout the history as well as within today’s market.
Nowadays, suits are offered by a wide range of fashion brands. In fact, “the suit” is one of the most prominent garments worn on the runway during the latest fashion weeks. Also today’s most influential people are spotted while wearing various types of suits. Although ready to wear suits are to be found around every corner of the street, offered by a number of significant brands, made to measure women suits are very rare to be found. Having done in-depth research within the International, Dutch and Belgian market, in the form of a market matrix, the conclusion can be made that only a few brands offer made to measure women suits. In fact, the focus of these brands is mainly on the professional career of women. What is more, the word ‘work wear’ is excessively used and communicated to their consumers which contributes to the conservative perception people have on made to measure women suits.

This, rather work wear related, boring and conservative connotation surrounding these brands really is a problem that needs to be solved. Especially since the consumer of the future is looking for more value and excitement. In fact, significant changes within generations and consumer behaviour shows that upcoming consumers are looking for more valuable, durable and personalised products, especially when it comes down to buying clothing. Therefore, the made to measure industry of fashion is becoming a more and more valuable way of buying garments. Made to measure is a very efficient, personal and sustainable way of developing clothing. The process of making a made to measure suit starts with an in-depth and one-on-one appointment where the whole design is discussed together with the consumer. Therefore, the consumer is able to personalise her suit to the way she wants it whereas the atelier gets a perfect overview of what needs to be ordered meaning that the waste of producing a suit is minimal or even zero. Therefore, the process of making a made to measure suit is highly durable, personal and valuable.

Regarding the market matrix and analysis of the next generation’s consumer behaviour, the conclusion can be made that the lack of innovative made to measure brands is an actual problem in Belgium. With suits being a never ending trend and the current consumer on the look for value and personalisation, the establishment of a brand focusing on made to measure women suits could be of great success. However, the aim is to gauge whether there is a potential for made to measure women suits in the Antwerp based market.
Problem Statement

Combing both research findings of the history of women suits and tailoring together with the research done in today's market, the conclusion can be made that the vision on the concept of made to measure women suits is problematic. The conservative, workwear related and non-fashionable connotation surrounding today's made to measure womenswear derives from the late 1300 where tailoring and suits were mainly associated with menswear. Only when it comes down to the ready to wear part of the fashion industry, women suits are offered in various innovative and fashionable ways, as well as in history, thinking of Chanel and Yves Saint Laurent, as in today's market. In fact, ready to wear suits have been a big trend in the past few years. This because of the growing interest of women empowerment among designers and innovators. Until the day of today, most of the people tend to hold on to the masculine connotation surrounding tailor made suits. Therefore, the majority of today's offer within made to measure women suits is very limited and rather old fashioned. Only, two to three brands, located in the Netherlands or abroad, offer an innovative vision on women made to measure suits. The remaining made to measure labels communicate a rather boring, conservative and traditional message. Since the majority of the made to measure brands are owned by an older generation, this conservative vision and rather limited offer of made to measure women suits can be explained. In order to solve the problem, the made to measure industry involving women suits is facing, establishing a brand focusing on innovative and fashionable women suits will be a valuable goal for the research report. Therefore, the research report will serve as a tool in order to understand whether the Antwerp based offers opportunities for made to measure women suits. To what extent is there a potential for a company specialised in made to measure women suits on the Antwerp market?

- What are the macro developments and fashion trends in Antwerp/Belgium?
- What is the offer for made to measure and ready to wear women suits in Antwerp?
- What is the demand for ready to wear women suits in Antwerp? + Consumer profile

Aim

The aim of the research report is to gain in-depth knowledge within the Antwerp market in order to gauge the potential for made to measure women suits with an eye on the establishment of the final business plan.
In-depth market analysis will form the content of the research report. This market research will be done by using two research techniques namely primary market research and secondary market research. During specific primary market research, information will be gathered directly from the source namely the potential consumer, through surveys, observation or experimentation. Sequentially to this part, secondary qualitative and quantitative market research will be done meaning that macro analysis, branch analysis and potential consumer analysis will be gathered through existing desk research using resources like company records, research studies and literature.

Methodology

In order to find out to what extent the Antwerp market offers potential for made to measure women suits, in-depth market research needs to be done. This will be done by answering the following sub-questions:

1. What are the macro developments and fashion trends in Antwerp/Belgium?
2. What is the offer for made to measure and ready to wear women suits in Antwerp?
3. What is the demand for ready to wear women suits in Antwerp? + Consumer profile

First of all, Antwerp will be researched from a general perspective meaning that the environment of Antwerp will be analysed from a demographical, economical and sociological point of view. Understanding the demographical facts regarding women living in Antwerp together with their socio-economic status within the market of Antwerp is needed in order to measure the potential for made to measure women suits. However, this is not enough to conclude whether the market of Antwerp offers great opportunities regarding this concept. Therefore, research within the economic development of Antwerp is necessary. At first, the economic status will be analysed from a general perspective to understand if the Antwerp market is performing well in terms of economic development and welfare. However, additional research within the economic development and impact of the fashion and retail industry is required to measure the potential of made to measure women suits.

Additional to this research, in-depth analysis of the tailoring branch in Belgium will be done. This will be done throughout trend analysis and competitor analysis substantiated by interviews, done with people actively working within the tailoring business. Finally, potential consumer analysis will be done in order to understand the behavior of the female consumer living in Antwerp. This will be done in the form of general consumer behavior analysis underpinned with surveys and interviews with potential consumers. The purpose of this research is to understand the market of Antwerp and its potential in terms of made to measure women suits. Therefore, all the above listed topics of research need to be combined in order to formulate a definite and efficient conclusion.
In order to do proper market analysis, defining the area of research is highly required. The market analysis of the report will focus on the market of Antwerp divided into two levels:

1. Antwerp as a province (map 1)
2. Antwerp as a township (map 2)

The Flemish region will be used as a point of reference and comparison. In this way, the market of Antwerp can be analysed from a general as well as from a more detailed perspective.
MACRO ANALYSIS
In order to understand the role of women within the county of Antwerp, research within the demographical composition of the province, meaning the number of women living in Antwerp, is needed. Looking at the data provided by the city of Antwerp and the Flemish region, the county of Antwerp has a total of 1,849,943 of which 932,219 are women whereas 917,724 are men. Therefore, the relation men/women, is with an average of 50.4%, evenly divided.

However, women cover a slight majority of the Antwerp population but also, in comparison with the other provinces, most of the women are located in Antwerp.

Furthermore, the division of women and men throughout different age groups, is an important aspect of research. Data shows that 557,075 women and 567,510 men are in between 18 and 64 years old. Although, women cover the majority of the province, women are, with 1.0% difference, in a minority when it comes down to age. However, the difference is negligible due to the small percentage.
2.1 According to gender

Taking a more detailed look within the statistics of the city of Antwerp and its neighbors, the township of Antwerp counts 523,248 inhabitants of which 262,168 are women and 261,328 are men. Therefore, women are in a slight majority. However, this is a difference of only 1,0% and therefore negligible.

Out of the earlier conducted research, the township of Antwerp generally consists of more women than men. However, in-depth analysis of the different age groups of Antwerp shows that men cover the majority of active generation meaning people with an age between 18 and 64 years old. But, a closer look within more age groups shows that women cover the majority of the older population (60+). What is more, within the age group of 20-29 years, men and women both have an equal share within the population of Antwerp and the differentiation men/women is never higher than 1,0%.
Finally, the conclusion can be made that men and women are more less equally divided within the province of Antwerp as well as within the township of Antwerp. Nevertheless, slight differences are noticeable within the different age groups. However, these differences can be described as insignificant and will not have direct impact on macro level due the small percentages. Looking from a more general perspective, Antwerp as a province and as a township expects to grow even more in terms of population. Furthermore, aging of the population in the township Antwerp is developing downwards. Therefore, most of the people living in the township of Antwerp are between 20-29 and 30-39 years old. In contrary to the township of Antwerp, the province of Antwerp is facing aging of the population which might have impact on the evolution of the economic development of Antwerp. However, this information is not sufficient enough in order to gauge the potential for made to measure women suits in an Antwerp based market. Therefore, the following part of the report will analyse the economic status of Antwerp in terms of the creative industry and the socio-economic status of people living in Antwerp with a more detailed focus on the female population.
Conducted out of the policy letter of Antwerp provided by professionals specialized in economic science, Antwerp can be described as an enterprising city with a wide range of businesses. With Antwerp being the biggest and strongest province of the Flanders, Antwerp significantly contributes to the Flemish economy. With a total of 70 boroughs spread over the whole province, Antwerp provides a total of 827,000 workplaces throughout a wide range of sectors. Especially the chemical and life science industry cover, with 36,000 jobs and an added value of 7.3 billion euros, the biggest part of the economy of Antwerp. Furthermore, the construction industry, logistics, the port, the creative industry and the retail business play an important role of the economic development of Antwerp.

In order to understand whether Antwerp fits as an efficient market for made to measure women suits, a closer look into the economic status of the creative industry is needed. Earlier conducted research shows that the creative industry of Antwerp delivers an important contribution to the general economy of Belgium. In fact, 3% (69,900) of the total Flemish workforce and 13.5% (51,900) of the total amount of the self-employed people located in the Flemish part of Belgium, have a job within the creative industry of Antwerp. What is more, the fashion industry of Antwerp contributes, with an added value of 621 million euro, strongly to the economic development of the Antwerp creative industry.
Out of earlier and general conducted research, the conclusion can be made that the creative industry of Antwerp highly contributes to the global economy of the Flemish region. However, the purpose is to understand to what extent there could be a potential for made to measure women suits in Antwerp. Therefore, a more detailed look into the impact and development of the fashion industry of Antwerp is needed.

Antwerp is often overlooked when it comes down to the global fashion map. Although Antwerp is a relatively small city, their role within the fashion industry should not be underestimated. Antwerp holds a unique position due to its positive image created by the Antwerp six of the 80s. But not only the Antwerp six contributed to its success, also the famous fashion academy, which is known for its innovative and creative students, and the fashion museum, devote to its international success.

Until the day of today, Antwerp is described as creative, groundbreaking and blessed by an international positive reputation when it comes down to its fashion industry. With almost 70 home-based brands, the Antwerp fashion industry significantly contributes to the Belgian economy. What is more, results show that Antwerp is the attractor for companies actively working within the fashion industry such as designers and patternmakers. In fact, bottom-up numbers show that 30% of the Flemish companies, originating from the fashion industry, are located in Antwerp. However, the head departments of these companies are located outside of the city center. From an economic point of view, independent designers have a limited but important share within the Antwerp fashion industry, especially when it comes down to the middle-high and high-end fashion segment. In fact, luxury fashion and independent designers hold the highest added value for each employee relative to the entire fashion industry of Antwerp.

Although the Belgian fashion industry does perform well in terms of independent designers, education and image, the Antwerp fashion industry is not operating well on retail level. Research within the retail industry of Antwerp shows that more and more stores are closing which results in an overload of empty storefronts. According to a research report regarding the retail industry of Antwerp, the supply is way higher than the demand. Therefore, changes within the retail industry of Antwerp are desperately needed which might have impact on the concept of made to measure women suits.
CONCLUSION

Regarding the economic status of Antwerp, with focus on the creative industry, the conclusion can be made that Antwerp is a vibrant, well operating and strong city in terms of economic development from a general as well as from a fashion perspective. With its incredible reputation within the fashion industry and its desire to support young entrepreneurs, Antwerp could be an interesting city to start up a new business. However, in terms of retail, Antwerp is not operating well. Stores are closing down which results in an increasing number of empty storefronts. This problem is expected to increase even more in the future as a result of changing purchasing behaviors among the people together with other external factors, which will be discussed later in the report. Therefore, the city of Antwerp can be described as a city with great potential for innovative concepts but not in terms of retail. This problem will have impact on the establishment of the concept of made to measure women suits. However, in-depth branch and consumer analysis is needed in order to discover whether Antwerp offers great opportunities for made to measure women suits.
The official data library of Belgium, Statbel, offers a lot of information regarding the socio-economic status of women living in the Flemish region of Belgium. However, the data according to each province is limited and therefore specific research, in the form of interviews and surveys, will be added later in the report. The following research will be divided into two focus points namely the socio-economic position of Antwerp from a general perspective and the socio-economic position from a gender perspective. In this way, precise insight within the socio-economic status of the population of Antwerp can be conducted.

In order to understand to what extent there could be a potential for made to measure women suits in Antwerp, understanding the socio-economic value of women within the market is necessary. However, information regarding specific topics such as salary, work and education according to gender is limited to the Flemish region only. Despite the fact that information according to gender is rather limited, the province of Antwerp does provide efficient information on welfare, education and employment. Eventually, it is important to understand the market from a general as well as from a female perspective in order to decide whether the Antwerp market offers great opportunities for made to measure women suits.

1. SOCIO-ECONOMIC: ANTWERP

Understanding the socio-economic position of Antwerp implies in-depth research within the welfare of the province. Although the focus is on women, a general view on the socio-economic status of the population is of crucial importance to describe the potential of the city for made to measure women suits. According to ‘provinces in numbers’¹, the average employment rate within the province of Antwerp is 65,6% whereas the unemployment rate counts 7,4% which is 1,8% lower than the Flemish average. Important to notice is that unemployment is most prominent under the age of 25. In fact, 8,5% of the people with an age between 18 and 24, living in Antwerp, are unemployed.

Furthermore, the welfare of the province depends on the average income of the people living in Antwerp. According to Statbel², the average income of the average inhabitant of the province Antwerp on a yearly basis, is around €18.565 with a welfare rate of 105 which makes them one of the richest provinces of the country. However, the salary within the province of Antwerp is relatively high, the revenue of the people living in the city of Antwerp is significantly lower than the cities surrounding Antwerp. Especially cities such as Hove, Schilde and Bonheide, whom belong to the province of Antwerp, are the ‘richest’ of all cities in Belgium³.
Data provided by the Flemish region states that 325,990 women and 351,364 men, living in Antwerp, are actively working. What is more, 56,035 women and 108,788 men are self-employed which is almost the double. But, interesting to notice is that, within the province of Antwerp, men have a higher unemployed rate than women. However, this is not enough to conclude whether Antwerp is an interesting market for made to measure women suits or not. Therefore, the level of education, job type and average salary of women are crucial points of research.

1. SOCIO-ECONOMIC: GENDER

Although, men are in a majority when it comes down to employment, women score better when it comes down to the level of education. Within the age group of 25-49, 52% of the women are highly educated whereas only 41% of the men have a higher education. Furthermore, women are dominating sectors such as care, welfare and households. Nevertheless, women nowadays are also prominently present within leading functions of companies. Although women are highly educated and actively working within leading jobs, the pay gap between men and women remains. Statistics show that women living in Belgium have an hourly wage of 5% lower than men.
CONCLUSION

Regarding to socio-economic status of Antwerp and women living in Belgium, the conclusion can be made that the average inhabitant of the province of Antwerp earns even as much or more than the flemish average income. Therefore, the province of Antwerp can be described as one of the most wealthy provinces of Belgium, especially because of the cities surrounding the capital of the province. However, the city of Antwerp does not perform well in terms of welfare.

Furthermore, women living in Belgium are often higher educated and less unemployed than men. However, the higher education is most prominent amongst women with an age starting from 30 years old. In fact, more and more people are leaving school at a younger age without a degree. This results in an increasing workforce among the younger generation which also implies the fact that they are starting to earn money from at an earlier stage compared to several years ago.

Finally when it comes down to salary according to gender, women earn less money pursuing the same job as men. Therefore, the pay gap in Belgium remains significantly high. However, this does not imply the fact that women are not successful. In fact, women are actively practicing leading positions within the best paid sectors of Belgium which therefore means, that they could serve as great potential for made to measure women suits. But, in order to gauge the potential of made to measure women suits in an Antwerp based market, this information is not enough to rely upon. Therefore, additional goal-oriented interviews and surveys are needed which will be done later in the report.
In order to gauge the potential for made to measure women suits on an Antwerp based market, research from a macro perspective was needed. Therefore, analysis of the demographic, economic and socio-economic development of Antwerp was done. Research has shown that men and women are equally divided within the Antwerp population. But, women are in a majority when it comes down to the older population. Within the actively working generation, meaning people between 18 and 64 years old, women and men are again equally divided. Furthermore, aging of the population and at the same time, juvenation of the population, is prominently present within the city of Antwerp. All these demographic facts and changes might have a slight impact on the potential for made to measure women suits. However, additional research on the economic and socio-economic status of Antwerp is needed in order to conclude whether Antwerp serves as a potential market for made to measure women suits.

Regarding the economic and socio-economic status of Antwerp, the conclusion can be made that Antwerp is a wealthy and well operating province. Antwerp is one of the richest provinces of Belgium. However, the average net income of the average inhabitant of the city of Antwerp is significantly lower compared to the cities surrounding Antwerp. Furthermore, women in Belgium are generally higher educated than men. Also, the unemployment rate is way lower within the female population of Antwerp. However, women in Belgium earn 5% less compared to men. Therefore, the paygap between men and women is existing in the country of Belgium.

The fashion industry of Antwerp is internationally known for its prominent designers, schools and museums. In fact, most of the people visiting Antwerp come with the purpose of exploring the fashion capital in terms of shopping and culture. Also, its famous shopping streets and home based brands contribute to its international success. Therefore, the Antwerp fashion industry adds enormous value to the global economic development of Antwerp. However, in terms of retail, Antwerp is not operating well at all. More and more stores are closing down because of the increasing e-commerce. Although, Antwerp is not performing well in terms of retail, Antwerp does support new and innovative concepts in order to improve the retail industry.

Finally, the conclusion can be made that Antwerp does offer potential for made to measure women suits from a macro perspective. All the basics in order to successfully start up a business such as a well operating economy, wealthiness of the province and potential of the population are present within the province of Antwerp. However, certain aspects should be taken into consideration regarding the eventual product. The bad retail environment, changing consumer behavior and difficult accessibility towards the city are factors will have an impact on the establishment of the business plan. Furthermore, in-depth branch and consumer analysis, supported by surveys and interviews are needed in order to understand the branch and the potential consumer.
BRANCH ANALYSIS
A. TREND ANALYSIS
Borrowed from the men, Chanel introduced the first female suit in 1914. In that time, fashion often served as a political statement against certain habits and believes. Therefore, the suit represented female empowerment and gave women the opportunity to be part of what previously was called a ‘man’s world’. However, it was the American designer, Marcel Rochas, who first introduced the pantsuit in the 1930s. From that moment on, many designers, such as Yves Saint Laurent, created their vision on the suit and soon it became one of the most prominent ways of dressing.

Until the day of today, suits play a leading role in the collections of the most significant designers over and over again. Also, within today’s emerging street style branche, the most significant influencers of today are spotted in all types and styles of suits. Due to the permanent role of suits within every trend report and their significant impact on women’s history and daily lives, suits can be described as an iconic piece of clothing. However, the popularity of the suit fluctuates throughout the time.

By taking a closer look into recently updated trend reports, brand campaigns and stores, the conclusion can be made that suits are in trend more than ever, especially in the most colorful colors. However, not only a suit in its entirety seems to be trending, also suited blazers and trousers on its own, are all in fashion at the moment. As Elisabeth Favril, owner of one of the most prominent womenswear stores in Belgium, stated: ‘We are currently living in a suit fashion. People are buying suits more than ever before’. Therefore, the demand for women suits has increased significantly over the passed few years.
Earlied conducted trend research has shown that suits are in trend for the upcoming SS’19 and AW’19. Therefore, suits are available in all types of colours and shapes designed by the most prominent designers. However, trend analysis should not be done from a fashion perspective only, but also from a business perspective. Therefore, the following part of the trend analysis will focus on upcoming trends within the made to measure industry.

The changing yet complex consumer behavior contributes to the change of business strategies within the made to measure business. With made to measure being a sustainable way of producing clothing, the desire for made to measure clothing is increasing which is associated to the emerging popularity of durable products among the consumers of today. But, at the same time people expect to have perfectly made products fast, efficient and 24/7 accessible.

Most of the made to measure brands are aware of this shift within consumer behavior. However, most of the brands do not believe in innovation of the made to measure business since tailoring is a traditional, handcrafted business. According to Allison Mc Greal, owner of AMG Suits in Brussels, tailoring should stay close to its basics and roots. “The purpose of tailor made clothes is to realise a person’s desire to create a unique piece of clothing. However, most of the people who visit my atelier come because they like the personal and relaxed atmosphere. Together with a glass of wine, we create the most beautiful suits. This amazing part of tailoring can not be done online or through technology.”

Finally, the conclusion can be made that the made to measure business does not offer great opportunities for the implementation of current trends since made to measure is such a tangible way of producing clothing. The definition of made to measure literally states ‘the art of making clothing specifically to a customer’s desires and needs’ meaning that made to measure does not implement current trends but produces clothing in order to create unique garments. However, the made to measure industry does react on the changing consumer behavior by implementing innovative technologies in order to ensure convenient and durable clothing. Therefore, the implementation of 3D measuring techniques and vegetable fabrics is trending among the tailors of today.
Atelier NA is a brand located all over the world, including Belgium, offering made to measure suits for men in a unique way. Instead of using the traditional method of measuring bodies by hand, Atelier NA uses a 3D body scanning technology. The machine digitally rebuilds the body in less than one second. In this way, Atelier NA succeeded in combining traditional tailoring with technology.
People are becoming more and more conscious about the environment and their personal health. Therefore, people are more aware of what they eat but also what they buy, especially when it comes to clothing. Since the fashion industry is one of the most polluting industries, changes are desperately needed. Also because of the increasing demand for durable products, brands are forced to implement sustainable oriented strategies into their businesses. Therefore, the use of vegan fabrics are one of the biggest trends among several tailors.\(^4\)
C. COMPETITOR ANALYSIS
In order to understand to what extent there could be a potential for made to measure women suits, competitive analysis is an essential part of the market research. This research implies in-depth analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the rival firms located in Antwerp. Out of earlier conducted research, it became clear that tailoring for women is, in terms of suits, very rare to be found in Belgium. Throughout the whole country, only AMG suits, which is located in Brussels, offers made to measure women suits as its core business. In Antwerp, not one brand nor store offers made to measure suits for women. Only, Xandres and Hugo Boss, offer made to measure women suits as an extra service to their ready to wear collection. However, their focus is mainly on ready to wear.

Although Antwerp barely offers made to measure suits, many stores do offer ready to wear suits for women from all types of brands. This is mainly a result of the suit trend which is enormously popular right in this moment of time. However, certain stores such as Wellens always offer a range of basic, ready to wear suits. Therefore, these stores can be described as indirect competitors. However, their range of suits is rather limited to seasonal trends. Furthermore, brands offering made to measure suits for men can also be described as indirect competitors. Tisser which is a made to measure suit brand for men, located in a small town in the province of Antwerp, recently offers made to measure women suits. However, this is not their main focus.

Also, Café Costume, which is one of the biggest brands in Belgium, specialized in made to measure suits for men is a possible indirect competitor. They are located in Antwerp and related to the Van Gils family who are the owners of ‘The Makers’. The makers provide manufacturing of made to measure suits for men to a wide range of brands spread throughout Belgium and the Netherlands. Recently they added a range for women as well. Therefore, the assumption can be made that Café Costume is considering made to measure for women what makes them an indirect competitor as well.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>COMPANY</th>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
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<tr>
<td>XANDRES</td>
<td>Well known brand</td>
<td>Mainly focus on ready to wear</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Good price/quality ratio</td>
<td>Traditional and conservative housestyle</td>
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<td>HUGO BOSS</td>
<td>Well known brand</td>
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<td>Good price/quality ratio</td>
<td>Traditional and conservative housestyle</td>
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<tr>
<td>FILL ROUGE</td>
<td>Tailoring for women, broad perspective</td>
<td>Traditional and conservative</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Great consumer database since 2008</td>
<td>Very unknown rather small business</td>
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<tr>
<td>THE SUITLAB</td>
<td>Wide range of tailoring for men and women</td>
<td>Commercially oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central location</td>
<td>Not fashionable nor innovative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMG SUITS</td>
<td>Innovative and groundbreaking concept focussing on women suits only.</td>
<td>Rather basic and traditional housestyle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Great database including female celebrities</td>
<td>Expensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TISSER</td>
<td>Well known brand for its made to measure men suits. Recently started with made to measure suits for women.</td>
<td>Located in a very unknown, small town in Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Great consumer database</td>
<td>Not fashionable nor innovative</td>
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In order to understand to what extent the Antwerp market offers potential for made to measure women suits, in depth branch analysis in the form of general trend analysis and competitor analysis is needed. Out of earlier conducted emperical research substantiated by interviews with people working in the fashion industry of Antwerp, it became clear that the suit is the main trend of the season. Elisabeth Favril, owner of Wellens Women, expects that this trend will last for a while. "Suits have always been a must have in a woman’s closet but right now people are demanding a suit more than ever before." But not only Elisabeth notices the demand for women suits, also Lonneke Nooteboom, one of the most prominent stylists of the Netherlands and Belgium, confirms that suits are trending. "I always tell my clients to have good basics and one of them is a good suit". Therefore, the conclusion can be made that there is a high demand for women suits. However, this demand is generally related to this current “suit trend” which should be taken into consideration for the eventual product.

Furthermore, trend analysis from a general perspective is not enough to conduct an in-depth branch analysis. Also, trends happening within the made to measure industry itself and competitor analysis are highly required. With consumers becoming more and more complicated, business strategies are forced to change. Therefore, also the made to measure and tailoring industry is slightly adapting to these changes. Online measuring, measuring through 3D body scans and durable products are “high in fashion” within the made to measure and tailoring industry. However, many tailors do not believe in trends when it comes down to tailoring.

Moreover, competitor analysis was done in order to understand the branch of tailoring within an Antwerp based market. Within the province of Antwerp, not one store nor brand offers made to measure women suits as its core business. During an interview with Angelique Van Gils, responsible for the manufacturing of made to measure women suits in Belgium and the Netherlands, it became clear that only one brand, in the province of Antwerp, is currently offering made to measure women suits. However, their main focus is still on made to measure suits for men. Only AMG suits, which is a made to measure brand located in Brussels, offer made to measure women suits as its core business in an innovative and fashionable way. Therefore, the conclusion can be made that the market of Antwerp only consists out of several indirect competitors of which the level of competition is, according to my opinion, not significantly high.

Finally, combining trend research together with in-depth competitor research, the eventual conclusion can be made that there is an actual demand for women suits. However, a demand for made to measure women suits can only be measured through goal oriented surveys and in-depth interviews. Although, surveys and interviews are required, earlier conducted research and interviews with people actively working in the branch of made to measure women suits show that the assumption can be made that made to measure women suits do have potential within an Antwerp based market. Especially, because there are almost no direct competitors meaning that there is an actual gap in the Antwerp based market.
CONSUMER ANALYSIS
INTRODUCTION

Earlier conducted macro analysis, interviews with people working within the industry and own experience within the made to measure branch, have shown that the most efficient target group would be a group of women with an age between 25 and 60 years old. In this way, a broad spectrum of women can be targeted. Since made to measure is relatively expensive and therefore belongs to the middle-high segment of the fashion industry, women actively working with a medium to high expenditure for clothing would serve as the perfect target group. Therefore, the ideal target group would start from an age of 30 since most of the women are actively working from this age. However, nowadays many women are actively working from a younger age, therefore starting the target group from an age of 25 would be efficient.

The following part of the report will therefore focus on the analysis of the purchasing behavior of women with an age between 25 and 60 years old meaning the generation X and Y of the population. Additional to this general research on purchasing behavior trends among generation X and Y, a goal oriented survey was done in order to understand the buying behavior of women specifically living in and around the city of Antwerp. Furthermore, interviews conducted with people from the industry with great experience with this specific target group, also contributed to the in-depth analysis of the buying behavior of women living in Antwerp.

Finally, in depth consumer analysis will serve as a base to describe the specific target group for made to measure women suits in order to develop the right strategy for the eventual product namely the business plan. Understanding the buying behavior of the right target group is of crucial importance in order to set up the right marketing and branding strategy for made to measure women suits.
Generation X, also seen as one of the most ‘forgotten’ generations, includes all the people born between 1966-176. However, Generation X should not be overlooked, especially when it comes down to their consumer behavior. In fact, this generation is the connection between the boomers, born between 1946-1965, and the Millennials or the so called ‘younger’ generation. Therefore, Gen X’ers are enormously mighty and influential, particularly since they are often financially supporting both aging parents as well as their children and have the majority of the decision-making power over many individuals. But, the fact that people of generation X have witnessed the technology revolution, meaning that they are old enough to remember the time before the internet and young enough to easily adapt to new innovations, is what makes them so special. They use both online as well traditional media channels such as print, radio and tv. However, according to several studies done by Millward Brown Digital, who surveyed 1000 consumers in three generations, and comScore, generation x generally spent their time online. In fact, 60% of generation x uses their smartphone on a daily basis and spend 37,4 hours per month online.

Finally, generation x values sincerity, authenticity and independence. They have experienced the transition from a rising economy to a more agitated one meaning that they are more skeptical about the sincerity of brands’ messages and highly brand loyal. Therefore, generation x tend to spend more money on niche products of high quality and personalized to its consumer. Once Gen X is convinced, they are the best and loyal consumers.

“I think that for luxury marketers, there is a greater concentration of affluents within Gen X because they have entered the prime earning potential of their careers.” - Noah Elkin
Coming to the following generation namely Generation Y, also known as the ‘millennials’, is the most discussed generation of all times. They are born between 1977 and 1994 and grew up with technology in an era of disruption and uncertainty. Therefore, they can be described as tech savvy while seeking for value and relevancy in times of terrorism and economic uncertainty. Due to their excessive exposure to technology and social platforms, they are used to the ability of having 24/7 access to information and products which results in an interesting but complicated purchasing behavior.

Millennials are more likely interested in brands that offer value, experience and durable products. In contrast to Gen X, Generation Y seems to be less brand loyal because of their love to explore different brands and products. Furthermore, millennials have an enormous desire to share what they do and buy products on social platforms which contributed to the enormous growth of influencer marketing and online shopping.

Finally, millennials are, in contrast to generation X, personality seekers. They select and consume products in order to define who they are, what is important to them and what they value. Therefore, products consumed by people from generation Y serve as an aspect to show their personality. What is more, Gen Y tends to reconsider what they buy in terms of price and quality. They want to make the best choice in order to make great investments for their future. Once Gen Y gained trust within a certain product, the price does not influence their purchase decision anymore.
The first part of the survey was set up with the purpose of understanding the purchasing behavior of women with an age between 20 and 60 years old, living in and around the city of Antwerp. Significant to notice is that most of the women who participated in the survey are looking for quality and trends while shopping. Also durability seems to be an important aspect within their buying decisions. Furthermore, most of the women tend to buy new clothing on a regular basis with the purpose of being up to date with the latest fashion trends. When it comes down to their expenditure, the majority tends to spend between 0-200 euro’s a month on clothing. Significant to notice is that 6% of the participants spend a 1000 euro’s or even more a month on clothing which at first does not seem a lot but relatively to the amount of participants (117) this is an impressive percentage.

Furthermore, the survey was done in order to get a deeper insight within the opinion of these women regarding suits and made to measure tailoring. Analysis of the survey has shown that most of the women do own a suit from a ready to wear brand. The main purpose for women to wear a suit is either because of the fashion aspect or for work related purposes. However, only 5% of the women own a tailor made suit. One of the most prominent reasons of not owning a made to measure suit is because of the price and the fact that women seem to think that made to measure suits are only available for men. Therefore, lack of knowledge about the actual concept of made to measure is prominently present among this target group.

Finally, the conclusion can be made that the participating women seem to be interested in the concept of made to measure women suits, especially because of the customization aspect that comes along with the process of made to measure tailoring. In fact, 71,6% of the participants are interested in made to measure suits. However, the majority of the participating women do not know what made to measure actually means.
Out of the earlier conducted research, the conclusion can be made that the ideal target group for made to measure women suits would be a range of women with an age between 25 and 60 years old. This target group includes two types of generations namely generation X and generation Y. Each generation is characterized by general habits and needs. Generation X is typified by the fact that they grew up in an age where technology barely existed whereas generation Y grew up with technology and are therefore used to 24/7 access of service and information. Although, both generations are raised within extreme opposite situations, they are both looking for value, sustainable and more personal products when it comes down to their purchasing behavior.

In order to understand the target group from a more detailed perspective, additional interviews and a goal oriented survey were done. Therefore, about 117 women with an age between 20-60 years old were surveyed through goal oriented questions. The first part of the survey was set up in order to understand their buying behavior. Additional to this part, questions regarding made to measure tailoring and ready to wear suits were asked. Out of the conducted survey the conclusion can be made that women with an age between 25 and 60 years old are mostly looking for quality and trends while shopping. What is more, buying new clothes is done on a regular basis with a relatively high expenditure each month. When it comes down to suits in specific, the majority of the women do own a ready to wear suit mostly because of the fashion aspect or for work related purposes. However, barely 5% of the participants owns a made to measure suit.

Within this target group, two types of ideal customers can be described. At first, women who are interested in having the ability to create pieces of clothing designed according to their own taste and secondly women with intensive professional careers who want to be fashionable and unique. They can both be described as fashion conscious and up to date with the latest fashion trends. What is more, they are willing to pay a higher price for the personal and customization aspect. Additional interviews in combination with answers given through the survey, shows that most of the women do not own a tailor made suit because they do not understand the concept of made to measure tailoring. Also, the price is an important factor. Many women seem to think that a tailor made suit only starts from a price of €1000. Therefore, the conclusion can be made that rebranding of the concept of made to measure tailoring is of crucial importance in order to successfully start up a business focusing on made to measure women suits. With an eye on the actual product, the business plan, focus on experience, marketing and branding is mostly important.
Out of the conducted market research, the conclusion can be made that Antwerp does offer potential for made to measure women suits. Macro analysis has shown that Antwerp is a well operating province and city in terms of economy. With Antwerp being the fashion capital of Belgium and internationally known for its prominent brands and designers, Antwerp serves as a great market for upcoming brands and concepts, especially within the fashion industry. What is more, the city and the province of Antwerp supports its young entrepreneurs in order to develop their fashion industry to a higher level. However, there is a downside to the story. On retail level, the fashion industry is not performing well. Because of the increasing e-commerce and the changing consumer behavior among people, shops are closing down which results in an increasing lack of occupancy. Therefore, change of the retail environment is highly necessary.

Furthermore, in terms of female population and their socio-economic status, Antwerp serves as an interesting market for made to measure women suits. Statistics show that people living within the province of Antwerp, especially the cities surrounding Antwerp, are wealthy and mostly working within the best paid job environments. Furthermore, women are highly educated and increasingly present within leading functions nowadays. However, this is mostly common from an age of 30 years old. Moreover, within the city of Antwerp, aging of the population is developing downwards as rejuvenation of the population is developing upwards. Therefore, the market of the city of Antwerp consists of rather young people whereas the cities surrounding Antwerp consists of a more older generation. Because of its central location, many business men and women choose to live in Antwerp. Therefore, Antwerp serves as a hometown for expats and young professionals which could be an interesting target group for made to measure women suits.

Additional to the macro analysis, a survey and several interviews with people from the industry were done in order to understand the market from a more detailed perspective. The combination of both primary and secondary market research shows that made to measure women suits could be of great success within an Antwerp based market. However, targeting the right target group with the right strategy is of crucial importance. Therefore, a survey was done in order to understand the buying behavior of women living in Antwerp with an age from 25-60 years old. At first, results have shown that most of the women are looking for trends and quality while shopping. Also transparency is an important factor. Women tend to be willing to pay more for brands who offer great qualitative, durable and fashionable clothing. Additional to these general results, questions regarding made to measure suits were asked which shows that almost every woman owns a suit. However, 98% bought their suit from a ready to wear brand. Barely 2% of the women owns a tailor made suit. This is because of the fact that most of the women seem to think that tailor made suits are only for men, too expensive or not being able to find one. However, most of the women seem to have great interest in made to measure suits especially for work related purposes and customization aspects. Therefore, branding and communicating the concept of made to measure suits in the right way is of crucial importance.

Out of the conducted macro analysis, survey and interviews the final conclusion can be made that Antwerp does offer great potential for made to measure women suits. However, it is important to set the right target group together with the right strategy. Results have shown that opening a store would not be efficient within today’s retail environment. Therefore, starting up a brand in the form of organized trunk shows and ‘shop in shop’ ideas, would be much more beneficial. Especially to start up a brand. In terms of target group, there are two types of women that could serve as a potential target group. On one hand, the woman who wants to be unique, has great interest in the latest fashion trends and has a relative high budget for clothing. But on the other hand, business woman who want to be fashionable but do not have the time nor the knowledge to be able to find the right and appropriate clothing.