







“Identifying predictors of consumer willingness to purchase second-hand or rent clothing online”

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IDENTIFYING PREDICTORS OF CONSUMER WILLINGNESS TO PURCHASE SECOND-HAND OR RENT CLOTHING ONLINE

Abstract

The most recent developments in the sustainable fashion indicate the need to further study circular consumption. Ethical identity is linked to decision-making as morally correct or incorrect in relation to perceived brand value and demographics of today's modern consumers. The study focuses on the role of ethical intensity, perceived social and emotional value and demographic characteristics in relation to consumer willingness to rent or purchase second-hand clothing online. The study employed an online survey to collect data in the United Kingdom and Lithuania. These two countries are relevant for this study because they both are situated in Europe. They both have options for consumers to shop second-hand or rent clothing online, which allows for meaningful data comparison. The study's findings suggest that demographics, that is, gender acts as significant predictors for consumer willingness to purchase or rent second-hand clothing online in both countries, while age is only significant for Lithuania but not for the UK. Ethical intensity is an important driver of consumer willingness to rent or purchase second-hand clothing online in the UK but not in Lithuania. Perceived social and emotional value is the strongest significant predictor in the consumer willingness to rent or purchase second-hand clothing in both countries. By examining the abovementioned drivers, the study contributes to knowledge on how to better predict consumer decision-making. Specifically, the study introduces ethical intensity construct to the online second-hand and rental clothing context to aid the explanation of consumer willingness to purchase second-hand or rent clothing in the online context.

Keywords

ethical intensity, innovativeness, perceived value,
sustainable clothing, circular society, ethical, responsible,
individual

JEL Classification

M30, M31, M39

INTRODUCTION

The fast fashion industry is one of the biggest polluting industries in the world (Fashion Innovation, 2024) and has become a huge problem for policymakers aiming to achieve sustainability goals by 2050 (EC, 2024). The fast fashion industry, characterized by its rapid production of low-cost clothing, has emerged as a significant contributor to environmental pollution. This trend, driven by consumer demand for affordable and trendy clothing, has led to several detrimental consequences. First, the fast fashion industry generates massive amounts of textile waste, often ending up in landfills or being incinerated. This waste contributes to greenhouse gas emissions and environmental pollution. Second, the production of textiles requires large quantities of water, which can be contaminated with chemicals and dyes. This pollution may harm aquatic ecosystems and pose risks to human health. Third, resource depletion refers to the production of clothing that relies on natural resources, such as cotton and polyester. Overconsumption of fast

fashion can lead to the depletion and land degradation. Fourth, the transportation of clothing around the globe, as well as the energy used in production and manufacturing contribute to greenhouse gas emissions, exacerbating climate change.

Given the significant environmental impact of the fast fashion industry, policymakers are facing increasing pressure to address this issue and achieve sustainability goals by 2050. This includes reducing consumption by promoting sustainable consumption patterns, such as buying fewer clothes and choosing higher-quality, longer-lasting items. Reducing overall consumption of clothing is a fundamental step toward sustainability and circular consumption. This can be achieved by being more mindful of purchasing decisions and focusing on quality over quantity. Investing in higher-quality garments made from durable materials can extend the lifespan of garments, reducing the need for frequent replacements. Repairing damaged clothing or repurposing it for new uses can help reduce waste and extend the life of garments.

The growing interest among consumers in second-hand shopping, which refers to goods, which not only offer economic value to a company, but also create environmental and social benefits to society. Supporting second-hand markets, such as thrift stores and charity shops, can help to reduce demand for new clothing and divert waste from landfills. Also, exploring rental services can provide access to variety of styles without the need for ownership.

Although policymakers and business leaders attempt to encourage society to reduce pollution and waste from the fast fashion industry, many consumers are not convinced about the benefits of circular consumption and slow, and sustainable fashion (Forbes, 2024). Thus, the scientific problem as a whole refers to the second-hand shopping habits of consumers and how increase their willingness to rent or purchase second-hand clothing online.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

The study employs Haidt's theory to explain ethical consumer decision-making in the context of online clothing rental or purchasing second-hand garments. Haidt's theory offers valuable lens to understand ethical consumer-decision making such as choosing to rent clothes online or shop second-hand instead of buying new clothes. Haidt's theory suggests that people are motivated to live up to their perceived moral character (Haidt, 2003). Consumers who view themselves as environmentally conscious might feel a moral obligation to minimize clothing waste. Renting clothes or choosing to shop second-hand online aligns with their ethicality by promoting resourcefulness and reducing environmental impact. The desire to gain approval from valued social groups also plays a role (Haidt, 2003). If the consumer's social circle prioritises sustainability, renting clothes can be seen as a way to gain their approval to avoid disapproval for excessive consumption. The act of renting clothes online or purchasing second-hand can trigger ethical emotions such as elevation, a

feeling of being uplifted by doing good. This emotional response reinforces the decision to rent or purchase second-hand and strengthens the association with ethical consumerism. Seeing others (friends, influencers) rent clothes online provides social evidence that it is an acceptable and potentially trendy practice.

Haidt's theory highlights the interplay between ethical identity, social identity, and emotions in ethical consumer decision-making (Haidt, 2003). Understanding how these factors influence the choice to rent clothes online or shopping second-hand instead of buying new ones provides valuable insights into ethical consumer behavior.

A theoretical framework has been proposed to establish a role of ethical intensity, perceived value, innovativeness, demographics, and their effect in relation to consumer willingness to shop second-hand or rent clothing online. The hypotheses are developed in relation to the constructs as predictors for consumer willingness to shop second-hand or rent clothing online.

Ethical intensity has been identified as an important predictor of sustainable consumption behavior among individuals in different contexts (e.g., Culiberg et al., 2022; Bray et al., 2011; Chen et al., 2009; Barnett, 2001; Singhapakdi et al., 1996). Ethical intensity refers to as ‘the underlying characteristics of an issue that may directly affect the ethical decision-making process at various stages’ (Jones, 1991, p. 368). Ethical intensity considers six factors or six dimensions explaining the potential for positive or negative consequences, how close the issue feels to the individual and its environment, whether the issue affects a single person or a large group; it also considers the length of time the consequences last and how certain someone is about the potential outcomes (Jones, 1991; McMahon & Harvey, 2006). The literature refers to these dimensions as (1) magnitude of consequences (MC), (2) probability of effect (PE), (3) temporal immediacy (TI), (4) concentration of effect (CE), (5) social consensus (SC), (6) proximity of effect (PX) (Jones, 1991; Cialdini et al., 1991).

Regarding (1) magnitude of consequences (MC), which refers to “the sum of harms (or benefits) done to victims (or beneficiaries) of the moral act in question” (Jones, 1991, p. 374), or in other words is a severity of consequences for other impacted by a moral decision. In the context of purchasing second-hand or renting clothing online, consumers weight the potential harm of traditional clothing production against the lesser harm associated with renting clothes or purchasing second-hand. This motivates their online behavior.

Regarding (2), probability of effect (PE), which refers to “the probability that the act in question will actually take place and the act in question will actually cause the harm (benefit) predicted” (Jones, 1991, p. 375). In the context of purchasing second-hand or renting clothing online, consumers may consider the transparency of the rental service regarding sourcing and sustainability practices. High transparency increases confidence that the service minimised negative effects throughout the clothing lifecycle. Consumers may also consider the scale of the rental platform’s operations. Larger platforms with a significant shift away from traditional purchases could have a higher probability of positive impact by reducing overall demand for new clothing production.

In terms of (3) temporal immediacy (TI), which refers to ‘people valuating events with a greater temporal proximity more than distant events’ (Jones 1991, 375). In other words, temporal immediacy is the tendency to prioritise closer events over distant ones. In the context of online second-hand clothing or clothing rental online, these services cater to immediate fashion needs. Consumers gain access to trendy pieces for specific occasions without the long-term commitment of ownership. This aligns with the focus on temporal immediacy, where the satisfaction of wearing the garments for a particular event outweighs potential long-term concerns about its production. The negative environmental and ethical impacts of clothing production often occur far removed from the point of consumption. Temporal immediacy can downplay these concerns in favour of the immediate benefit of enjoying the rented garment.

In terms of (4) concentration of effect (CE), it ‘depends on the number of beneficiaries (or victims) of an act’ (Jones, 1991, p. 375). In other words, concentration of effect dimension refers to the number of people affected by a potential moral issue. In the context of second-hand purchasing or renting clothing online, it relates to how the perceived impact spreads across different groups. Fast fashion production often harms a large number of people, including factory workers in developing countries and the environment through pollution. Online clothing rental or purchasing second-hand clothing concentrates its effects on a smaller group, potentially impacting the rental platform’s employees and the limited number of people involved in garment care and maintenance.

Regarding (5) social consensus (SC), which is understood ‘as the social agreement about the valence of the proposed act’ (Jones, 1991, p. 374) or in other words, refers to how strongly society agrees on whether an action is right or wrong. In the context of online clothing rental or second-hand purchasing, this dimension is linked to the growing societal acceptance of sustainable consumption practices. The increasing awareness of the fashion industry’s environmental and ethical issues is leading to a wider social acceptance of renting clothes as a more responsible choice. This social acceptance empowers consumers to make rental choices without feeling as they are going against

the social norm that is acceptable to their society members (Goldstein et al., 2008). Consumers who are highly sensitive to social consensus may feel pressure to conform to pro-environmental behaviors. The growing social acceptance of clothing rental can influence them to perceive renting as the more morally correct option compared to traditional clothing purchases.

Regarding (6) proximity of effect (PX), which refers to “feeling of nearness (social, cultural, psychological, or physical) that the moral agent has for victims (beneficiaries) of the evil (beneficial) act in question” (Jones, 1991, p. 376). In other words, proximity of effect reflects perceived closeness of the potential harm or benefit caused by clothing consumption choices. Consumers consider how distant the consequences are from themselves, both geographically and socially. Traditional clothing production often occurs overseas, creating a physical and psychological distance from the negative consequences (e.g., pollution, labor exploitation). Renting clothes or purchasing second-hand clothing online can make these consequences seem closer to home as consumers are directly connected to the rental platform that sources the garments.

Ethical intensity plays a key role in consumer willingness to rent or purchase second-hand clothing online because consumers who have high moral intensity will be more willing to adopt such behavior as they will perceive it as ethically correct. For instance, high ethical intensity about negative environmental impact of fast fashion to the world could lead consumers to see clothing rental as a way to reduce their personal footprint and contribute to a more sustainable future (Hogh & Kang, 2019). Concerns about unethical labor practices in clothing production (Dissanayake et al., 2017) could lead consumers to avoid traditional clothing purchases and choose rental services that prioritize ethical sourcing.

The paper will now introduce perceived social and emotional value and consumer willingness to purchase second-hand or rent clothing online. Since the study investigates ethical intensity in the context of purchasing second-hand or renting clothing online, the perceived value dimensions that are most linked with ethical intensity are per-

ceived social and emotional values. Thus, the focus is on these two values only, while economic, functional, or green value will not be investigated in this study.

Perceived social value has been identified as playing an important role in the context of ethical consumption (Ghali, 2021). Veblen (1899) was among the first in sociological studies to introduce the concept of social value since he noticed that consumers acquire goods and services not only for their economic or functional value, but also for their social and emotional value. Perceived social value refers the ‘status and esteem that consumers seek through their purchase’ (Juscius & Šneiderienė, 2013) and that extends to ethical consumer decision-making that explains ‘social representation that influences behavior’ (Cabrera & Williams, 2012). Other studies suggest that consumers perceive social value ‘as their self-image’ that is reinforced when purchasing and consuming ethical brand. According to Griskevicius et al. (2010, p. 1), perceived social value represents ‘a way for consumers to build self-esteem, create a social bond, assert themselves, and give a social dimension to their consumption’.

Perceived emotional value highly links with the sustainable consumption behavior (Jung & Jin, 2016). Perceived emotional value refers to ‘the perceived utility acquired from an alternative’s capacity to arouse feelings or affective states’ (Sheth et al., 1991, p. 1). Emotional value suggests ‘enjoyment and positive emotional experience’ (Baek & Oh, 2021, p. 2) gained from renting clothing online service.

In the context of shopping second-hand or clothing rental online, perceived social and emotional value can be a significant driver for consumers choosing this option over traditional clothing purchases. In other words, access to a wider variety of clothing, rental services, or purchasing second-hand in the online context can make users more fashion-forward and up to date with the latest trends. Renting or purchasing second-hand clothing allows consumers to keep their wardrobe updated with the latest trends without the financial burden of buying all the new styles. Rental services can offer access to unique designer labels that might not be readily available for purchase, allow-

ing for individual expression and a sense of exclusivity. This can be socially rewarding, as people often seek approval from their style choices from their peers and relatives. Purchasing second-hand or renting clothes online can also reduce decision fatigue as curated rental options for instance can simplify the decision-making process compared to browsing vast selections in traditional stores.

It has been acknowledged that consumer innovativeness is related to consumer decision-making but only in the context of new product adoption among consumers (Jain et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022) rather than in the context of second-hand clothing or rental behavior. Innovativeness refers to a consumer's willingness to embrace new experiences in their choices (Wang et al., 2022). Consumers who are considered highly innovative might be more likely to see purchasing second-hand or renting clothing online as a new concept. Consumers with high innovativeness will be likely to eagerly consider novel options such as renting clothing online or purchase second-hand. Such consumers are more likely to have intrinsic motivation and less influenced by opinions of the society members (Bossle et al., 2016). Consumers who can be described as having low innovativeness, may be more influenced by external social circles. External influence from the society or family members might persuade such consumers to try new things because they are more easily influenced by others' behavior that they can observe (Kamalul et al., 2018).

It has been acknowledged that demographics play an important role in consumer decision-making. Age influences consumer choices in the context of sustainable fashion consumption in various ways (Haines & Lee, 2022). For instance, younger generations, typically more fashion-conscious and open to new trends, may be more receptive to renting clothes to experiments with styles without a significant investment. In terms of gender, females are traditionally more eager consumers of sustainable fashion apparel (Srivastava et al., 2021) and might find renting more appealing to access a wider variety for various occasions. In terms of income, while cost-savings can be a motivator for renters (Kumar & Yadav, 2021), those with higher income, may use renting to access luxury garments they would not necessarily purchase.

Generalising the literature review it can be stated that several predictors influence consumer willingness to purchase second-hand or rent clothing online. These predictors are as follows: innovativeness, ethical intensity, perceived social and emotional value, as well as demographics. Thus, the objective of this study is to compare the effects of these predictors when renting or purchasing second-hand clothing online.

Based on the considerations mentioned earlier, the following hypotheses are put forward:

H1: Ethical intensity dimensions (i.e. (1) magnitude of consequences, (2) probability of effect, (3) temporal immediacy, (4) concentration of effect, (5) social consensus, (6) proximity of effect) will predict consumer willingness to purchase second-hand or rent clothing online.

H2: Perceived social and emotional value will predict consumer willingness to purchase second-hand or rent clothing online.

H3: Consumer innovativeness will predict consumer willingness to purchase second-hand or rent clothing online.

H4a: Consumer age will predict consumer willingness to purchase second-hand or rent clothing online.

H4b: Consumer gender will predict consumer willingness to purchase second-hand or rent clothing online.

2. METHODOLOGY

Participants were selected using quota sampling. The data were collected using 'Norstat' market research company and 'Amazon MTurk' market research platform through an online survey in two countries under investigation: Lithuania and the United Kingdom. Measures for the survey were adapted from previous studies. The 6-item scale measured dimensions of perceived social and emotional value of purchasing or renting second-hand clothing online was adapted from Baek and Oh (2021). Consumer willingness to pur-

chase or rent were measured on the 9-item scale adapted from Aycock et al. (2023) and Baek and Oh (2021). Consumer innovativeness scale comprised 12 items and was adapted from Englis and Phillips (2013). Ethical intensity scale comprised of 12 items and was adapted from McMahon and Harvey (2006).

Regarding the ethical intensity construct, EFA of the 12-item ethical intensity scale was conducted, but only one factor emerged. Since 12-item ethical intensity scale was expected to measure the six ethical intensity dimensions predicted by Jones (1991), the theory states that the scale is expected to be a 6-scale measurement instrument (McMahon & Harvey, 2006, p. 397). During EFA, five factor solutions were requested reducing several items on the scale to four. At the beginning of EFA, two items (11 and 12) were dropped. These items comprised concentration of effect (CE), which is defined as 'the impact of a given magnitude of harm (benefit) in relation to the number of people affected' (Jones, 1991, p. 375). Both items had negative factor loadings and their correlations with the total of the other items were very low. Following the same logic, another two items (7 and 8) were dropped. They comprised Social Consensus (SC), which is defined 'as the social agreement about the valence of the proposed act' (Jones, 1991, p. 374). Again, the negative or rather small (below 0.4) (Hatcher, 1994, p. 90) factor loadings indicated that dropping these items will improve both factor structure and alpha coefficient for the measurement scale. Again, another four items (1, 3, 6, and 10) were dropped further. This improved the structure of the factor. It also increased alpha coefficient. After 8 items were removed from the analysis, 'the factor structure became cleaner, and the alpha increased considerably' (McMahon & Harvey, 2006, p. 398).

Cronbach's alpha coefficients for both countries exceeded the 0.70 cut-off point suggested by Nunnally (1978). This suggests a high degree of homogeneity between the items and indicating that the items measure the same phenomenon in both countries under investigation (McMahon & Harvey, 2006, p. 398).

Since the two dimensions (CE and SC) and other 4 items were dropped, a 6-factor solution as was advised in theory, was no longer expected, but

a factor should have had a conceptual meaning (McMahon & Harvey, 2006, p. 398). Given that the remaining items that loaded on the same factor comprise different ethical intensity dimensions (PE, TI, PX and MC), they indicate conceptually similar meaning. Thus, the 1-dimension factor is labelled as 'Magnitude of consequences and harm to the environment and the society'.

The exclusion of the concentration of effects (CE) item was based on the confusion among respondents what these items could measure. CE is defined by Jones (1991, p. 374) 'as the 'impact of a given magnitude of harm (benefit) in relation to the number of people affected'. Thus, it is important to consider 'given magnitude' and its impact on 'the number of people affected' (McMahon & Harvey, 2006, p. 398). CE items used in the study were not effective in measuring CE among the respondents. These CE items did not reflect 'the given magnitude' element (McMahon & Harvey, 2006, p. 398). Instead, the CE items measured 'magnitude of consequences' (MC). This is apparent when the items showed negative correlations with the MC items. These misinterpretations of items suggested those items to be dropped from further investigation to achieve higher clarity among what each item measures. Although Jones's (1991) proposed 6-factor structure was not supported by this study in two countries (the UK or LT), items that loaded on one factor seem to have a valid conceptual explanation for the online context of purchasing or renting second-hand clothing. At a first glance, it might be difficult to provide interpretation for MC, PE, TI and PX items and treat it as 1-factor. However, after a careful examination of factor loadings, alpha coefficients, and conceptually relevant interpretability element consideration for both countries in the context of online purchasing/renting second-hand clothing, 1-factor solution was deemed suitable to further examine the effects of ethical intensity on consumer willingness to purchase/rent second-hand clothing online.

The EFA further extracted 2 factors for 'Innovativeness' construct. These are labelled as F1: 'Affinity of new idea and early product adoption' and F2: 'Distrust in new products'. The next step was to run EFA for perceived value dimensions, which resulted in one factor, labelled as 'Perceived social and emotional value'. After performing EFA,

in the UK and in Lithuania, EFA returned three factors, labelled as F1: 'Willingness to recommend', F2: 'Willingness to share' and F3: 'Willingness to purchase/rent second-hand clothing'. After conducting EFA, the result of the study is presented further.

3. RESULTS

In both countries, a correlation with consumer willingness to purchase or rent second-hand clothing online is observed. The strongest positive correlation is observed between perceived social and emotional value and consumer willingness to purchase or rent second-hand clothing online in Lithuania ($r = .729$, $p = 0.01$) and in less strong correlation in the UK ($r = .652$, $p = 0.01$).

To test the hypotheses, regression analysis is run in both countries: the UK and Lithuania. The determinants explained a large proportion of the variance of consumer willingness to purchase/rent second-hand clothing online in both countries. Ethical intensity was a significant factor in the UK but not in LT (LT: $\beta = .015$; UK: $\beta = .231^{**}$). Thus, hypothesis *H1* was partially supported. Perceived social and emotional value were the strongest significant predictors in both countries (LT: $\beta = .688^{**}$; UK: $\beta = .599^{**}$). Thus, the hypothesis *H2* was fully supported. Further, the results find that innovativeness was not a significant predictor of consumer willingness to purchase/rent second-hand clothing online both countries (LT: $\beta = .062$; UK: $\beta = .057$). Thus, hypothesis *H3* is not supported. Finally, the results suggest that the demographics acts as a significant predictor for consumer willingness to purchase/rent second-hand clothing online: the results confirm that age (LT: $\beta = -.063^*$; UK: $\beta = -.008$) is a strong predictor in Lithuania but not in the UK. Further, gender (LT: $\beta = -.119^{**}$; UK: $\beta = -.59^{**}$) is a strong predictor of consumer willingness to purchase second-hand or rent clothing online in both countries, Lithuania and the UK. Thus, hypothesis *H4a* is partially supported, while hypothesis *H4b* is fully supported.

4. DISCUSSION

This study sought to identify predictors of consumer willingness to purchase second-hand or rent clothing online. The results suggest that demographics has a small, but significant effect on

consumer willingness to purchase/rent second-hand clothing online in Lithuania but not in the UK. There might be several reasons why demographics might influence online choices differently in those two countries. For instance, rental services and second-hand purchasing behavior is less well established in Lithuania than in the UK. For this reason, age might be a bigger differentiator in Lithuania, as younger consumers are typically early adopters of new trends. Gender roles and clothing expectations can influence what is considered acceptable. In some cultures, there might be stronger social norms around women renting clothes for special occasions compared to men. The finding on gender effect on consumer willingness to purchase or rent second-hand clothing online is in line with earlier research by Shrivastava et al. (2021) on females and their role in clothing rental market. Another study by McKinney and Shin (2016) similarly concluded that females are looking for 'fit, garment style and design elements' when selecting their clothes in the online environment.

Innovativeness did not seem to have any significant influence on consumer willingness to purchase/rent second-hand clothing online in the context of both countries under investigation. This finding is in contrary to previous studies (Jain et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022) in the context of consumer decision-making. Consumer innovativeness refers to a personality trait that is characterised by an openness to try new things and desire for unique experiences (Wang et al., 2022). This aligns well with novelty seeking as purchasing second-hand or renting clothing online allows for trying different styles and trends appealing to those who enjoy fashion experimentation. This study also contradicts the previous study by Bossle et al. (2016). For younger, but fashion-oriented consumers, second-hand clothing or rental services might provide a way to access a wider variety of clothes at a lower cost compared to buying new outfits they might only wear a few times. This finding also contradicts Diprose's et al. (2019) finding in the context of sustainable consumption decision-making among younger consumers. Although consumers who are receptive to new ideas are more likely to be drawn to the sustainable aspects of clothing rental or purchasing second-hand as they can contribute to reducing clothing waste and promoting

a more circular fashion economy, this finding contradicts previous studies, which confirm that consumers higher in innovativeness contribute to sustainable consumption more eagerly (Alzubaidi et al., 2021).

Ethical intensity influences consumer willingness to purchase second-hand or rent clothing online in the UK, but not in Lithuania. Ethical intensity refers to the perceived importance of ethical issue. If consumers perceive buying second-hand clothing as ethically significant, they are more likely to be willing to do so. This was an expected finding in the UK and is in line with previous studies (Hong & Kang, 2019), which confirmed significant effects of ethical intensity on fashion choices. This might have occurred due to potentially higher environmental consciousness among the UK respondents. The UK has a strong tradition of environmental activism and a growing awareness of the environmental impact of fast fashion. This may lead to consumers in the UK perceiving second-hand clothing as an ethically significant act that contributes to sustainability. Moreover, thrifting has become a popular trend in the UK, with many people seeing it as a way to express their individuality and save money. This may also contribute to the perception of second-hand shopping as ethically positive act. Also, the availability and quality of second-hand clothing is more readily available and of higher quality in the UK and consumers may be more likely to perceive it as a viable and desirable option.

However, in Lithuania, the finding was unexpected and insignificant, and it contradicts previous studies in the area. The finding might not be significant due to several reasons. For instance, the negative consequences of traditional clothing consumption (e.g., environmental impact, labor practices) might be perceived as abstract for consumers. Another reason might be that consumers might not be familiar and fully aware of ethical dimensions of the clothing industry or how their choices can contribute to positive change. Yet another reason could be explained using Haidt's theory, which proposes that moral judgements are made quickly and intuitively rather than through deliberate reasoning. Thus, this theory might help us to

better understand why ethical intensity might or might not influence online clothing rental decisions.

Perceived social and emotional value has the largest and strongest positive significant effect on consumer willingness to purchase second-hand or rent clothing online. Renting clothing online can satisfy social needs related to self-expression and social acceptance. Purchasing second-hand or rental services allow for wearing unique outfits for occasions. This potentially enhances individuality and build self-esteem, as in previous studies by Griskevicius et al. (2010) and Jusčius and Šneiderienė (2013). Keeping up with fashion trends can be a social motivator. Renting provides a way to wear trendy clothes without the commitment of buying them. Furthermore, the emotional experience of renting clothes can be key driver, as in previous research by Jung and Jin (2016). For instance, trying new styles and refreshing wardrobes can be exciting and contribute to novelty and excitement. The affordability and environmental benefits of purchasing second-hand or renting can generate positive emotions around responsible consumption.

Future research directions arise from limitations of this study. First, focusing on second-hand and renting clothing online respondents in just the UK and Lithuania limits the generalisability of the findings. Consumer behavior related to second-hand and rental clothing can vary significantly across countries. This limitation would be addressed by repeating the study with broader more diverse sample across different countries to address a more global perspective. Second, relying on self-reported data can introduce bias. People may overestimate their ethical consumption or downplay concerns about renting clothes or purchasing second-hand garments. Future studies might consider including observations of consumer behavior or experimental conditions where it would be possible to control for the mentioned bias. Third, the study only considered online behavior. Factors, influencing in-store purchases of second-hand clothing or rental services may differ. For this reason, future research might compare factors influencing online and in-store purchases of second-hand and rental clothing.

CONCLUSIONS

The study aimed to identify predictors of consumer willingness to purchase second-hand or rent clothing online. The study's findings confirm that demographics, ethical intensity and perceived social and emotional value contribute to predicting consumer willingness to rent or purchase second-hand clothing in the online context, but the strength of the influence varies slightly between two countries. In the UK and in Lithuania, gender is a significant driver of consumer willingness to purchase/rent second-hand clothing online. Females tend to be more engaged in online shopping, particularly for clothing. Further, in the context of online clothing purchases, ethical intensity could be related to concerns about the environmental impact of fast fashion, ethical sourcing of materials and fair labor practices. Finally, perceived social and emotional value was the strongest significant predictor in both countries for consumer willingness to purchase or rent clothing online. This is a significant insight that can inform various aspects of e-commerce strategy and marketing. The above determinants explained a reasonable proportion of the variance of consumer willingness to purchase/rent second-hand clothing online in both countries. All hypotheses but one were partially or fully supported by the findings in both countries.

The study provides managerial implications to business leaders and public policymakers. Business leaders are recommended to highlight ethical aspects of clothing they sell or rent in their retail outlets or second-hand shops. They are encouraged to emphasise the sustainability and environmental benefits of second-hand clothing and rental in their marketing campaigns. Business leaders need to promote innovation. They can develop innovative features that enhance the online second-hand and rental clothing experience. For instance, they can offer virtual try-on or quality guarantee along with insuring clothes in case of their damage when rented for an occasion or daily wear. Business leaders need to target specific demographics and tailor marketing messages to resonate with different gender groups and their perceived value preferences.

Public policymakers are recommended to promote sustainable practices. They need to encourage initiatives that raise awareness about the environmental impact of fast fashion. They also are encouraged to support second-hand clothing market. They need to develop policies that facilitate the growth of second-hand clothing businesses. For instance, they could offer tax breaks or reduce regulations on product quality to increase interest among business leaders to transition to second-hand or rental clothing markets.

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