

**THE SECOND-HAND FASHION MARKET: WHAT ABOUT THE ECOLOGICAL DARK
SIDE?**

Sihem DEKHILI¹

University of Strasbourg, University of Lorraine, CNRS, BETA, 67000 Strasbourg, France
sihem.dekhili@unistra.fr

Mohamed Akli ACHABOU
IPAG Business School Paris, France

Thuy-Phuong Nguyen
Foreign Trade University, Ho Chi Minh City Campus, Vietnam

Aline PEREIRA PÜNDRICH
EM Strasbourg Business School, HuManiS, France

¹ Corresponding author

THE SECOND-HAND FASHION MARKET: WHAT ABOUT THE ECOLOGICAL DARK SIDE?

In France, the second-hand clothing market is estimated at 1 billion Euros in turnover: the French companies Videdressing and Vestiaire Collective are among the leaders, along with the Lithuanian online store Vinted, which has been growing significantly in the last two years with 1.5 million visitors and 23.000 new French members every day (Von Bardeleben, 2019). Some traditional French brands, concerned about such expansion, have been forced to adopt similar practices by offering their own second-hand platform, as in the case of Galeries Lafayette, Petit Bateau and Decathlon; by allocating new aisles for second-hand clothes, like supermarket giant Auchan; or even by promoting ‘swap days’ among their own clients, like kid’s clothes Okaïdi do in their stores (Sicard, 2020).

Such significant development the second-hand clothing business experiences can be linked to several reasons. First, it offers a new form of value to consumers by adapting their buying behavior to their financial possibilities. Second, consumers have strongly increased their interest for sustainable consumption, particularly sustainable fashion. Third, the second-hand clothing has become trendy and fashionable (Ferraro et al., 2016).

Beyond the motivations that push consumers to turn to the second-hand market, an important question arises: does this market really have a positive ecological impact? Few studies have investigated the environmental impacts of the emerging sustainable practices in fashion consumption (Camacho-Otero et al., 2019). In this study, we propose to determine if selling used clothes on online platforms is synonymous of a limitation of consumption or if it enhances clothing over-consumption.

To fulfill the objective of this research, we used a 3 x 2 between-subject factorial design of “facility to sell: no information, low facility, high facility” x “exchange mode: high transport footprint impact, low transport footprint impact”. For the purposes of this study, we consider Vinted as a site where consumers may sell and purchase second-hand clothes.

We applied the criteria of sample selection in order to include individuals who are used to purchase or sell second-hand items via online platforms. Additionally, we targeted respondents aged between 24 and 42 years-old, i.e., millennials who represent 33% of second-hand clothing buyers (Herrmann, 2020). We carried out the data collection from French participants in April 2020 through the Easy Panel Consulting Group. A total of 554 participants took part in the survey, although only 531 responses were brought into the analysis due to the unengaged responses.

We used MANOVA analysis to evaluate the effect of information on facility to sell regarding 1) consumer’s sell intent of used clothes; 2) their purchase intent of second-hand clothes; and 3) their purchase intent of new clothes, by considering the footprint of transport when selling used clothes and by taking the control group into account.

Our hypotheses supposed that information on facility to sell would impact positively on the consumers' sell intent (*H1*), their purchase intent of second-hand clothes (*H3*), as well as on their purchase intent of new clothes (*H5*). Such positive impacts increase when the exchange mode has low (vs. high) footprint (*H2, H4, H6*). The results obtained support *H3* and *H6*; the other hypotheses have been rejected. In effect, consumers received information on high facility to sell had a significant higher purchase intent of second-hand clothes than ones who have received low facility ($M_{high\ facility}=5.553 > M_{low\ facility}=5.182, p < .05$) or were not exposed to any information ($M_{high\ facility}=5.553 > M_{no\ information}=5.226, p < .05$), which led to confirm *H3*.

We tested the interaction impacts of facility to sell and exchange mode on purchase intent of new clothes (*H6*) and found significant differences among groups ($F(2,525)=4.910, p < .001$). The effect of exchange mode is more significant when there is lack of information on facility to sell ($M_{low\ footprint}=5.258 > M_{high\ footprint}=4.705, p < .05$). In this paper, we do not include moderators' effects.

These first results show that the facility to sell offered by sites such as Vinted are currently true catalysts for increasing consumer intention to purchase additional second-hand clothes. Thus, like Leismann et al. (2013), we believe that the sharing economy, which is supposed to promote more responsible consumption, can also have counterproductive effects.

References

- Camacho-Otero J., Boks C., Pettersen I. N. (2019). User acceptance and adoption of circular offerings in the fashion sector: insights from user-generated online reviews. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 231, 928-939.
- Ferraro C., Sands S., Brace-Govan J. (2016). The role of fashionability in second-hand shopping motivations. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 32, 262-268.
- Herrmann G. (2020), *Millennials: The Vinted Generation*, available in June 2021 at <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/millennials-vinted-generation-gilles-herrmann/?originalSubdomain=fr>
- Leismann K., Schmitt M., Rohn H., Baedeker C. (2013). Collaborative consumption: towards a resource-saving consumption culture. *Resources*, 2, 3, 184-203.
- Sicard C. (2020), *Decathlon, Auchan, Petit Bateau... Ces marques qui proposent des vêtements de seconde main*, February 26th, Business Insider France, <https://www.businessinsider.fr/decathlon-auchan-petit-bateau-ces-marques-qui-proposent-des-vetements-de-seconde-main/#decathlon-offre-la-possibilite-dacheter-en-magasin-des-produits-doccasion-en-les-reservant-en-ligne>
- Von Bardeleben E. (2019). *La mode profite de l'occasion*, April 29th, Le Monde, available in April 2020 at https://www.lemonde.fr/m-styles/article/2019/04/29/la-mode-profite-de-l-occasion_5456057_4497319.html