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Exploring the motives and barriers to online second-hand fashion consumption

A study of young Finnish and Polish consumers

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ABSTRACT:

As the fashion industry is currently focused on the endless increase of sales, it is one of the top contributors to the climate crisis. Billions of garments in use all over the world have a less than 15% chance of being recycled and the utilisation point of clothes is substantially low. To combat this, forms of collaborative consumption like online second-hand clothing platforms have been gaining popularity in the recent years.

This thesis aims to increase knowledge on young people's motives and barriers for the use of online second-hand clothing platforms. The theoretical framework of the thesis was built on existing literature on the topic of consumer motives and barriers for collaborative consumption. The theoretical motives of the thesis were to introduce second-hand fashion as a form of collaborative fashion consumption, and to explore possible motives and barriers for buying second-hand clothing offline and online. The chosen method for this study was qualitative. The empirical part of the study explored how the online platforms affect the motives and barriers to second-hand clothing consumption and whether the motives and barriers differ or align for Finnish and Polish youth. The data for this study was collected via semi-structured interviews of five young Finnish and Polish consumers. The collected data was analysed thematically.

The key findings of the study are that while the motives and barriers for buying second-hand clothing largely apply for the use of online second-hand clothing platforms, shopping second-hand clothing on online platforms also creates new motives and barriers related to the online platforms. Convenience and effortlessness as well as in-app features emerged as motives for the use of online second-hand clothing platforms. An array of barriers linked to the online platforms were also discovered. It was also found that the motives and barriers for the use of online platforms were generally similar for Finnish and Polish youth.

KEYWORDS: Consumer behaviour, motives and barriers, collaborative consumption, sustainable fashion consumption, online platforms

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TIIVISTELMÄ:

Muotiteollisuuden keskittyminen loputtomaan myynnin kasvattamiseen tekee siitä yhden suurimmista ilmastokriisin aiheuttajista. Maailmassa on tällä hetkellä miljardeja vaatekappaleita, joista alle 15 %:lla on mahdollisuus tulla kierrätetyiksi. Lisäksi vaatteiden käyttöaste on huomattavan alhainen. Tämän torjumiseksi yhteiskulutuksen muodot, kuten verkossa toimivat vaatteiden kirpputorit ovat kasvattaneet suosiotaan viime vuosina.

Tämän tutkielman tavoitteena on lisätä tietoa nuorten motiiveista ja esteistä verkossa toimivien kirpputorialustojen käyttämiseen. Tutkielman teoreettinen viitekehys rakentui olemassa olevasta kuluttajien motiiveja ja esteitä yhteiskulutukseen käsittelevästä kirjallisuudesta. Tutkielman teoreettisina tavoitteina oli esitellä käytetyt vaatteet muodin yhteiskulutuksen muotona sekä tutkia mahdollisia motiiveja ja esteitä käytettyjen vaatteiden ostamiseen niin ylipäätään kuin verkossa. Tutkielma on toteutettu kvalitatiivisena tutkimuksena. Tutkimuksen empiirisessä osassa tarkasteltiin verkkoalustojen vaikutusta käytettyjen vaatteiden kulutuksen motiiveihin ja esteisiin sekä eroavatko vai ovatko nämä motiivit ja esteet yhteneväisiä suomalaisten ja puolalaisten nuorten välillä. Tutkimuksen aineisto on kerätty puolistrukturoiduilla haastatteluilla, haastatteleamalla viittä nuorta suomalaista ja puolalaista kuluttajaa. Kerätty aineisto analysoitiin temaattisesti.

Tutkimuksen keskeisiä tuloksia on, että vaikka käytettyjen vaatteiden ostamisen motiivit ja esteet pätevät suurelta osin verkossa toimivien vaatteiden kirpputorialustojen käyttöön, luo käytettyjen vaatteiden ostaminen verkkoalustoilla myös uusia verkkoalustoihin liittyviä motiiveja ja esteitä. Kätevyys ja vaivattomuus sekä sovelluksen ominaisuudet nousivat esiin motiiveina verkossa toimivien vaatteiden kirpputorialustojen käytölle. Myös useita verkkoalustoihin liittyviä esteitä havaittiin. Lisäksi huomattiin, että verkossa toimivien vaatteiden kirpputorialustojen käytön motiivit ja esteet olivat yleisesti ottaen samankaltaisia suomalaisilla ja puolalaisilla nuorilla.

AVAINSANAT: Kuluttajakäyttäytyminen, yhteiskulutus, motiivit ja esteet, kestävä muodin kulutus, verkkoalustat

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1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the thesis. First, topic of the thesis is given background, and the research gap is identified. Then, the research question and the other objectives are presented. Also, terms and concepts central to the study are defined. Finally, the structure of the study is established.

1.1 Background of the study

The fashion industry is one of the top contributors to the climate crisis, with it causing an estimation of 10% of global carbon emissions – more than international air traffic and maritime shipping combined (European Parliament, 2024). In addition, the fashion industry is a major consumer of water, as well as a big polluter of waters (Niinimäki et al., 2020, p. 189). On top of environmental sustainability issues, the fashion industry is also extremely unsustainable socially, with most of the biggest players of the industry taking part in unethical labour practices, and the line of work creating health risks to tens of millions of people working in the early stages of the value chain (Global Fashion Agenda & The Boston Consulting Group, 2017).

The fashion industry is currently focused on the endless increase of production and sales which has caused the fast pace of manufacturing, poor quality and the subsequent short life of the items that all lead to unsustainable level of consumption (Niinimäki et al., 2020, pp. 189-190). This fast fashion model of operating is the core of the sustainability issues of fashion (Niinimäki et al., 2020, pp. 189-190). According to Barnes and Lea-Greenwood (2006, p. 259), “fast fashion is a business strategy which aims to reduce the processes involved in the buying cycle and lead times for getting new fashion product into stores, in order to satisfy consumer demand at its peak”. The main goal of fast fashion brands is to optimize supply chain in a way that allows new products to be designed and produced as quickly and cheaply as possible for masses of consumers to buy them at a lower price (Papadopoulou et al., 2022, p. 354). Technological advancements and globalisation have

fuelled the development of fast fashion (Ertekin & Atik, 2020, p. 362). Nowadays it is possible to produce clothing at an extremely fast pace and the shelf-life of a piece of clothing can be only weeks in some cases (Sull & Turconi, 2008, p. 5).

To combat this, the concepts of sustainable fashion and sustainable and collaborative fashion consumption have gained popularity in recent years (Arrigo et al., 2021, p. 1).

Although research on sustainable fashion consumption is increasing, in relation to its sizable impact, much is yet to be discovered (Papadopoulou et al., 2022, p. 355; Grazzini et al., 2021, p. 2). In the last decade there has been a significant rise in articles about fashion sustainability, but a lot of the studies remain disconnected and fragmented (Grazzini et al., 2021, p. 2).

Busalim et al. (2022, p. 1823), found that the attitude-behaviour gap remains largely understudied in the sustainable fashion context. Most of the existing research has been conducted in the United States, with only few being cross-national and inspecting the international dimensions of sustainable fashion (Rahman et al., 2023, pp. 16–17; Arrigo et al., 2021, p. 27). Also, most of the existing research about sustainable fashion consumption has also mainly focused on “offline” shopping (Kim et al., 2021, p. 2).

Specifically on the topic of collaborative fashion consumption, Arrigo et al. (2021, p. 27) were able to identify multiple research gaps. In their article, Arrigo et al. (2021, p. 26) found that the existing literature could be dealt into three main research themes: customer perspective, business perspective and circular economy and sustainability perspective. Arrigo et al. (2021, pp. 27-28) suggested directions for future research under every theme. For the customer perspective, the effects of self-expression on consumption could be studied more and expanded on (Arrigo et al., 2021, p. 27). Studying younger generations, such as Gen Z and doing comparative studies between generations was also proposed, as studies have already been done on Millennials (Arrigo et al., 2021, p. 27). For the business perspective, exploration of online platforms is put forth (Arrigo et al., 2021, p. 28). The study found the third perspective of circular economy and

sustainability perspective to be the most understudied, therefore presenting the most opportunities for exploring collaborative fashion consumption's effects in diminishing fashion industry's negative environmental impacts (Arrigo et al., 2021, p. 28).

As of right now, there are billions of garments in use all over the world, of which less than 15% are likely to be recycled (Kim et al., 2021, p. 1). In addition, the degree to which clothes are being used is significantly low (Dao & Joyner Martinez, 2024, p. 1; Iran & Schrader, 2017, p. 475). Digitalisation is a widely recognised catalyst for innovation and change in many industries (Charnley et al., 2022, p.1). Online platforms have had a significant role in driving growth in other resale markets, such as technology (Charnley et al., 2022, p. 1). The number of cross-national studies on the topic of collaborative fashion consumption have been limited, with none focusing on Finnish and Polish consumers (Arrigo et al., 2021, p. 27). Therefore, a cross-national study of Finnish and Polish consumers on online second-hand fashion consumption would be useful.

1.2 Research question and objectives of the study

The purpose of this thesis is to extend the knowledge on motives behind sustainable fashion consumption especially on online second-hand clothing platforms. Specifically, the research question is:

How do the motives and barriers for the use of online second-hand clothing platforms differ or align for Finnish and Polish youth?

Objectives of the thesis are to

1. Introduce the concept of collaborative consumption, specifically examining second hand fashion
2. Explore possible motives and barriers to second-hand fashion consumption overall and online

3. Empirically examine and compare motives and barriers to the use of online second-hand clothing platforms for Finnish and Polish youth

1.3 Definitions of central terms and concepts

Sustainability

Sustainability is a wide concept with many possible interpretations depending on the context (Portney, 2015, pp. 1–2). Since the 1960s, sustainability has evolved from a marginal ecological idea to mainstream movement (Caradonna, 2014, pp. 176–178). The United Nations Brundtland Commission defined sustainability as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” in 1987, which has become largely accepted as the basis for any other interpretation of sustainability (Portney, 2015, p. 6).

Most often sustainability is seen as consisting of three dimensions: environmental, economic and societal (Brundtland, 1987; Purvis et al., 2019, pp. 681–682). Even though the environmental dimension is usually the main focus of today’s concerns, according to the Brundtland Commission of 1987, sustainability can only be achieved when taking into consideration all three dimensions – economic growth, environmental protection and societal improvement.

Circular economy

(Portney, 2015, pp. 1–2) describe circular economy as “a collection of concepts and vague ideas from several fields and semi-scientific concepts” that is being advocated by EU along with other national governments and organisations around the world. Circular economy is a sustainable approach to economic growth that emphasizes the importance of high-quality materials and promotes the reuse of them (Korhonen et al., 2018, p. 37). A strong feature of the circular economy approach is the social objective of sharing

economy, in which commodities and services would be shared instead of owned, for more sustainable consumption culture (Korhonen et al., 2018, p. 41).

Sustainable fashion consumption

A single, standardised definition for sustainable fashion doesn't exist as such (Farley Gordon & Hill, 2014, p. xv). The term is usually used to refer to clothing that features one or more aspects of sustainability (Goworek et al., 2012, pp. 936–937). The concept of sustainable fashion consumption can mean the purchasing of sustainable clothing or sustainable use of clothing.

Online second-hand clothing platform

In collaborative fashion consumption, the emphasis in consumption is in the access to already existing clothing rather than buying new fashion products (Iran & Schrader, 2017, p. 472). Online collaborative fashion consumption is a model in which two or more individuals engage in a joint activity to save resources through shared use (Brand et al., 2023, p. 275). There are three models of collaborative fashion consumption: renting, swapping or buying used goods, e.g. buying second-hand (Brand et al., 2023, p. 276). An online second-hand clothing platform is an e-commerce platform where old, unwanted and pre-owned clothes are resold, either from peer-to-peer (consumer-to-consumer) or from business-to-consumer (Brand et al., 2023, p. 276; Kim et al., 2021, p. 2; Arrigo, 2021, p. 20).

1.4 Structure of the study

In the first chapter of the study, the thesis is introduced. The topic of the thesis and the research question and objectives are presented. Central themes and concepts of the study are provided.

The second chapter of the thesis consists of the literature review. First, collaborative consumption and specifically second-hand fashion are introduced. Then possible motives and barriers for second-hand fashion and for the use of online second-hand clothing platforms are explored. At the end of the chapter, the theoretical framework of the thesis is presented.

The methodology of the research is shown in the third chapter. The design of the research, data collection method, selection of interviewees and data analysis are established. A way to evaluate the quality of the study is also provided at the end of the chapter.

The fourth chapter presents the findings, which are analysed according to the interview guide and the theoretical framework. The final chapter concludes the thesis by discussing and summarising the findings, and exploring managerial implications and limitations of the study as well as offering suggestions for future research.

2 Literature review

In this chapter the first two objectives of the thesis are explored. The concept of collaborative consumption is introduced, focusing on second-hand fashion specifically. Motives and barriers for consuming second-hand fashion are examined. The chapter also takes a look at second-hand consumption on online platforms. At the end of the chapter, the theoretical framework of the study is presented.

2.1 Collaborative fashion consumption

A clothing item's sustainability is not only comprised of the production of the item but also of its use and the discarding of the product (Iran & Schrader, 2017, p. 470). Sustainability efforts in the fashion industry can be categorized into three groups: consumption, production and legislation (Iran & Schrader, 2017, p. 470). In the production phase a clothing item can be made more sustainable by improving the materials, manufacturing processes and labour conditions (Iran & Schrader, 2017, p. 470). However, as the sustainability of a clothing item consists also of its use and discarding, consumers with their intentions, behaviours and habits are a significant factor in reducing the harmful effects of the fashion industry (Iran & Schrader, 2017, p. 471). Therefore, the legislative efforts have often been emphasised, as they are one of the most efficient ways to shift both consumption and production towards a more sustainable direction (Iran & Schrader, 2017, p. 470).

Sustainable and slow fashion as concepts are not polar opposites to fast fashion, but instead a different approach where designers, buyers, retailers and consumers are more aware of the impact of products on employees, communities and ecosystems (Busalim et al., 2022, p. 1805). Without radical changes to the current "take-make-waste" model of operating, the negative environmental impacts of fashion industry are going to grow exponentially (Charnley et al., 2022, p. 2). To enforce the triple bottom line of sustainability meaning planet, people and profit, sustainable practices are needed (Islam et al.,

2021, p. 332). Slow fashion aims to lengthen the lifetime of an item through quality (Busalim et al., 2022, p. 1805). Sustainable fashion does not only concentrate on what is being consumed but also on how it is being consumed (Busalim et al., 2022, pp. 1805-1806). Studies have recognized many sustainable fashion practices such as ethical clothing, slow fashion, eco-fashion and more (Busalim et al., 2022, pp. 1805-1806). Even though it is challenging to achieve circular economy in the fashion industry, circular economy models like sourcing manufacturing materials from waste, upcycling and recycling clothes as well as reselling and renting clothes are on the rise due to pressure from governments, citizens as well as the environment (Charnley et al., 2022, p. 3; de Aguiar Hugo et al., 2021, p. 13).

In recent years, the idea of collaborative consumption has attained popularity as it offers a more environmentally friendly and sustainable alternative to consumption (Arrigo, 2021, p. 1). It has moved from a community practice to various business models (Arrigo, 2021, p. 3). Collaborative fashion is often linked with the concept of sharing economy, where instead of owning goods, they can be accessed by borrowing which cuts down costs and the levels of consumption (Arrigo, 2021, p. 1). Sharing economy and circular economy also offer solutions to a more sustainable value chain, because circular economy uses design principles that make it possible to avoid waste and pollution, as products and materials are kept in use (Charnley et al., 2022, p. 2). According to Iran and Schrader (2017, p. 475) "eco-efficiency is gained, when either the input of environmental resources results in more product-uses, or when a certain number of product used is realized with a lower environmental burden". Both are possible through collaborative consumption (Iran & Schrader, 2017, p. 475).

Also, according to Iran and Schrader (2017, p. 471) the primary idea of all collaborative consumption concepts and practices is to push the idea of using instead of owning products. This significant paradigm shift in consumers' attitudes is almost as significant as the industrial revolution (Arrigo, 2021, p. 1; Brand et al., 2023, p. 275). Based on previous studies by Belk (2014), Botsman and Rogers (2010), Fraanje & Spaargaren (2019), Ertz et

al. (2016) and Benoit et al. (2017), Arrigo (2022, p. 2) defines collaborative consumption as “people sharing and collaborating to meet a specific need”. Brand et al. (2023, p. 276) define collaborative clothing consumption as a shared thought model to achieving a sustainable value network through sharing, borrowing, swapping and renting. In collaborative fashion consumption, value and growth are created by how many times a clothing item can be used, rather than continuously creating new ones (Brand et al., 2023, p. 276).

Botsman and Rogers (2010, p. 30) divide collaborative consumption into three systems: product service systems, redistribution markets and collaborative lifestyles. In product service systems companies provide access to goods as a service instead of selling them to be owned (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, p. 30.) In redistribution markets are systems where used products that are no longer necessary in one place are moved to where they are needed (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, p. 30). Swapping and second-hand sales are an example of redistribution markets (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, p. 30). In collaborative lifestyles people with similar interests and needs come together to share and exchange assets other than products like skills, space or other resources (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, p. 30). Due to the nature of the exchange, collaborative lifestyle systems are often local, but they can also happen on a global scale (Botsman & Rogers, 2010).

In the fashion context, collaborative consumption can also be categorised by the consumer-provider relationship, organizer, compensation for participation and acquisition and sub-type (Iran & Schrader, 2017, p. 470). Consumer-provider relationship can be peer-to-peer or business to-consumer, organizer can be peers or a business, compensation for participation and acquisition can be none, monetary or non-monetary (Iran & Schrader, 2017, p. 470). The sub-type of collaborative fashion consumption refers to the form of collaborative fashion consumption, which can be gifting, sharing, lending, swapping or second-hand buying, selling and renting (Iran & Schrader, 2017, p. 470).

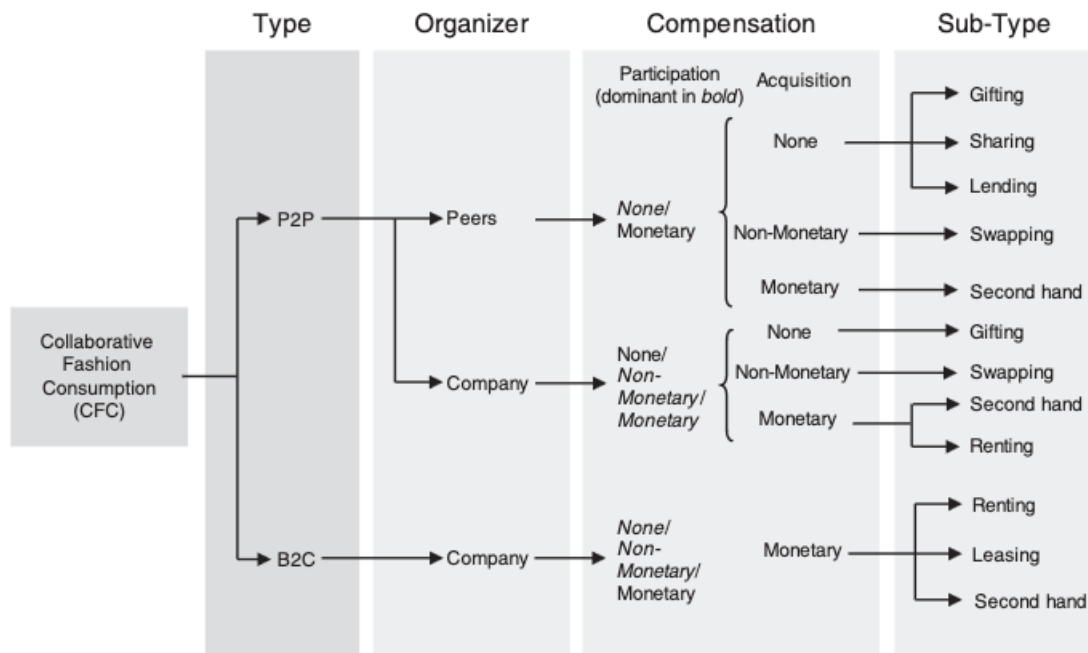


Figure 1. Typology of collaborative fashion consumption (Iran & Schrader, 2017, p. 473).

As of right now, the utilisation degree of clothing is very low (Dao & Joyner Martinez, 2024, p. 1; Iran & Schrader, 2017, p. 475). To be able to improve that, consumers play a crucial role (Iran & Schrader, 2017, p. 471). When they decide to buy second-hand garments instead of buying new or they decide to re-sell their unused clothes, they begin participating in collaborative fashion consumption (Iran & Schrader, 2017, p. 471).

Collaborative fashion consumption should not be a separate part of fashion, but a part of its concept and lifecycle (Charnley et al., 2022, p. 17). However, implementing sustainability in the fashion industry has been challenging, with barriers on both technical and managerial as well as consumer levels, despite many initiatives towards sustainability (de Aguiar Hugo et al., 2021, p. 13; Islam et al., 2021, pp. 342–434). To truly achieve sustainability within the fashion industry, manufacturers, buying firms and other multi-level stakeholders will need to cooperate (Islam et al., 2021, p. 434).

As the awareness on environmental issues is rising, companies are starting to adapt circular economy concepts more (D'Adamo et al., 2022, p. 46628). Although this can be a

sign of an industry wide transformation, it also poses the threat of mere greenwashing, if companies only market second-hand possibility without changing the process for new clothing (D'Adamo et al., 2022, pp. 46628–46629). Besides the risk of greenwashing, the threat of second-hand fast fashion is substantial (D'Adamo et al., 2022, p. 4629). Collaborative fashion consumption can also fuel to the trend of increased buying and disposing by providing the consumer an easy way of disposing their unwanted clothing and receiving compensation for it (Iran & Schrader, 2017, pp. 477–478). Collaborative fashion consumption is also often a cheaper way to consume clothing and therefore can enable and lead to people buying more products (Iran & Schrader, 2017, p. 477). Ideally, the second-hand market would support and complement the traditional market, with the value chain actors commitment to lengthen the life cycle of a clothing item and the consumers learning more sustainable consumption thinking (D'Adamo et al., 2022, p. 46629). Collaborative fashion consumption should substitute the need to purchase new clothes at least partially, for eco-efficiency to be achieved (Iran & Schrader, 2017, p. 477).

Other negative effects of collaborative fashion consumption can be additional transportation or the need for more care for a clothing item, both of which can increase the CO₂ emissions of a clothing item (Iran & Schrader, 2017, p. 478). For example, if a piece of clothing is rented, to get it to the renters, additional transportation is necessary as well as washing and potentially ironing it after the renting period is over, whereas if it was in the use of one person, it wouldn't need to be moved at all or washed as often (Iran & Schrader, 2017, p. 478). While collaborative fashion consumption has the potential to solve sustainability issues within the fashion industry, the final environmental effect can't be guaranteed and depends on the framework (Iran & Schrader, 2017, p. 477–478).

2.2 Motives and barriers to second-hand clothing consumption

Consumers have substantial power in lessening the harmful effects of fashion consumption: they choose whether to buy new or used clothes, they decide how to take care of their clothing and they determine how to discard them after they've been used (Iran &

Schrader, 2017, p. 471). Growing awareness on environmental issues has driven consumers to prioritising access instead of ownership (Brand et al., 2023, p. 275). Still, many consumers seek traditional attributes in the fashion products when shopping (de Aguiar Hugo et al., 2021, p. 8). Many justify unsustainable clothing consumption choices because they don't have to face the consequences (de Aguiar Hugo et al., 2021, p. 8). Consumers' low acceptance of more sustainable fashion consumption modes like second-hand fashion is the main barrier according to experts and policymakers (Charnley et al., 2022, p. 3). The social setting is extremely crucial in collaborative consumption, since consumers are urged to actively avoid and even shun possessiveness and encouraged to welcome and embrace sharing and access to shared goods (McNeill & Venter, 2019, p. 369). Therefore, to increase second-hand clothing consumption, it is necessary to know the motives and barriers to it.

McNeill and Venter (2019) explore consumers' motives and barriers to collaborative fashion consumption through identity theory. To understand what motivates fashion consumers, it is vital to understand identity construction in social settings as fashion consumption is fundamentally linked to self-concept and social identity (McNeill & Venter, 2019, pp. 368–369). Self-identity is validated by social interaction, thus making the development of self-identity go hand in hand with the development of social identity (McNeill & Venter, 2019, p. 369). Clothing, while being a basic need, is a way to stand out from others but also a way to blend in, which results in many ending up overconsuming in search of ideal identities (McNeill & Venter, 2019, pp. 368–369). Using physical items to express identity causes consumers to develop strong emotional attachments to them (McNeill & Venter, 2019, p. 369). According to McNeill and Venter (2019, p. 369) consumption actions that are made in order to support and build our identities are driven by internal and personal motivations, such as esteem and status needs. In their research, McNeill and Venter (2019, p. 376) identified four key aspects of sustainability in relation to building fashion identity: emotion, pleasure and hedonism; fitting in and social norms; expressing individuality and standing out; and the social implications of sustainable behaviour. They discovered that each aspect could drive engagement with a

different form of collaborative fashion consumption behaviour, which they used to create a conceptual model (presented in the figure below) that could be used in determining how to market different kinds of collaborative fashion consumption (McNeill & Venter, 2019, p. 376). Every aspect was found to have a positive effect on second-hand clothing consumption, meaning that second-hand clothing consumption can be motivated through emotion, pleasure and hedonism; fitting in and social norms; expressing individuality and social norms; expressing individuality and standing out; and the social implications of sustainable behaviour (McNeill & Venter, 2019, p. 376).

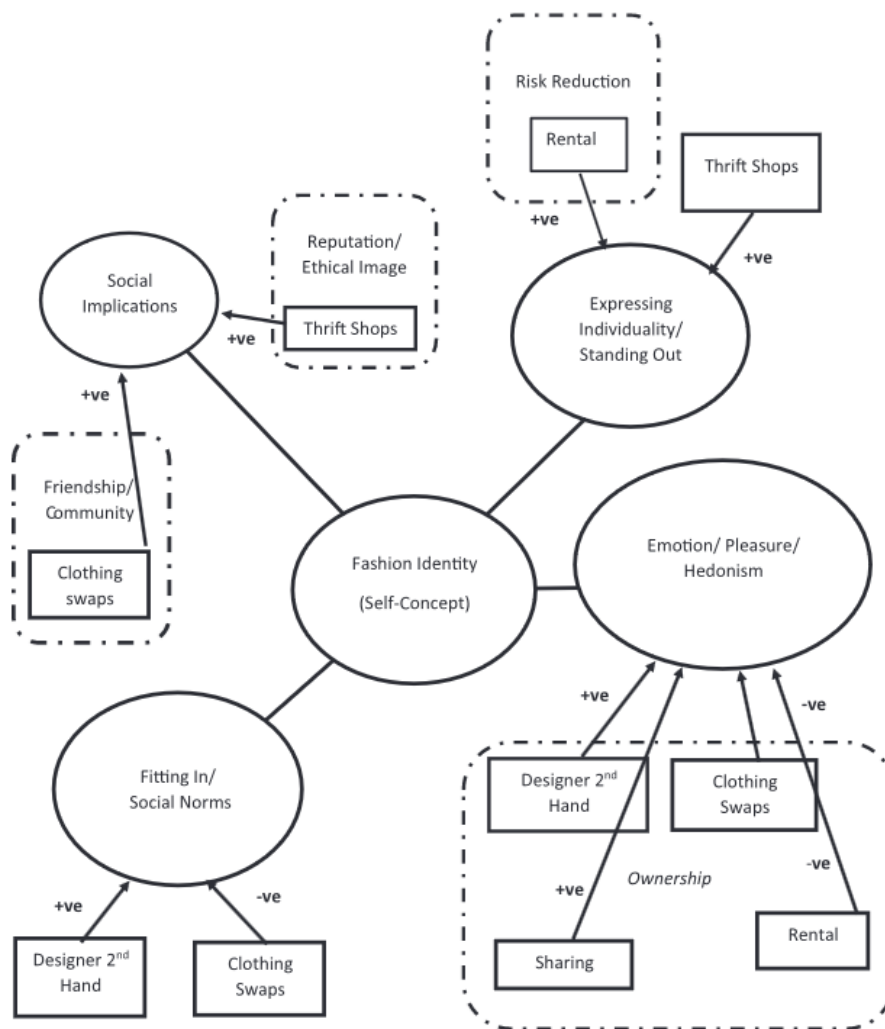


Figure 2. Collaborative shopping mode and fashion self-concept (McNeill & Venter, 2019, p. 373)

De Aguiar Hugo et al. (2021, p. 10) also argue that the current state of consumer culture is a barrier, as consumers are extremely attached to fast fashion consumption and don't understand the negative impacts of excessive consumerism, which is why the concept of slow fashion hasn't become the norm yet. Part of this problem is 'fast fashion mentality': the habit of discarding clothes after little and buying new instead of fixing old, because that is easier and often cheaper too (de Aguiar Hugo et al., 2021, p. 11). They suggest raising awareness on environmental issues a way to combat this (de Aguiar Hugo et al., 2021, p. 10). According to them younger generations take sustainability and circular economy more into account, which is an indication that they are important strategic elements in creating lasting competitive advantages in the fashion industry (de Aguiar et al., 2021, p. 10). Kim-Vick and Cho (2024, p. 443) agree that consumers who are concerned with environmental issues are more inclined to be positive towards collaborative fashion consumption. Koay et al. (2022, p. 1370) make the same discovery. According to them, moral norms are positively connected to consumers' intention of purchasing second-hand fashion (Koay et al. 2022, p. 1370). Consumers with high morals and awareness on environmental issues often feel guilty if they don't buy second-hand fashion (Koay et al. 2022, p. 1370). Others also found awareness on environmental issues to be a motive as well, but also that it might not be the most significant driver (Brand et al., 2023, pp. 277–284; Wang et al., 2022, p. 164). Hedonism, economic benefits, convenience, community and materialism were found to be far more influential factors by Brand et al. (2023, p. 284). De Aguiar et al. (2021, p. 12) too, note that consumers feel that they will not make a difference, as most people continue buying fast fashion.

Machado et al. (2019, p. 384) also explore consumers' motives to buying second-hand fashion beyond ecological, such as psychological and material, focusing on the overlapping of economic, critical, hedonic and recreational dimensions. The economic dimension of second-hand fashion contains the concepts of frugality, bargain, quality and durability (Machado et al., 2019, p. 384). The critical dimension of second-hand fashion includes the concepts of environmental and ecological awareness as well as the rejection of mass production and the traditional production chain (Machado et al., 2019, p. 385).

The hedonic and recreational dimension consists of treasure hunting, social and family relationships being strengthened by pleasant visits to thrift stores, nostalgia and the wish of uniqueness (Machado et al., 2019, pp. 385–386). In the overlap of economic and critical dimensions, ties between financial reasons, quality and durability, critical and ethical consumption were found (Machado et al., 2019, p. 391). In the overlap of economic and hedonic it was found that financial, personal reasons and social relations were connected (Machado et al., 2019, p. 385). A relationship between personal reasons and critical and ethical consumption was found in the overlap of critical and hedonic dimensions (Machado et al., 2019, p. 391). The conclusion of the study was, that all the concepts are connected to each other and that the overlap of the dimensions motivates consumers to buy second-hand fashion (Machado et al., 2019, p. 391). Machado et al. (2019, p. 391) argue, that by purchasing second-hand fashion, consumers enter a virtuous cycle, which then results in their engagement in a slowing cycle, which indicates, that circular economy is beyond business models and emphasizes the consumer's active role in the system. According to them, buying second-hand clothing makes consumers active players in circular economy, who start promoting second-hand fashion to others as well (Machado et al., 2019, p. 391). The consumers' role is especially emphasised, because in the second-hand market they are customers, sellers, partners and suppliers all at once (Machado et al., 2019, p. 391). The discoveries of their research is presented in the figure below (Machado et al., 2019, p. 392).

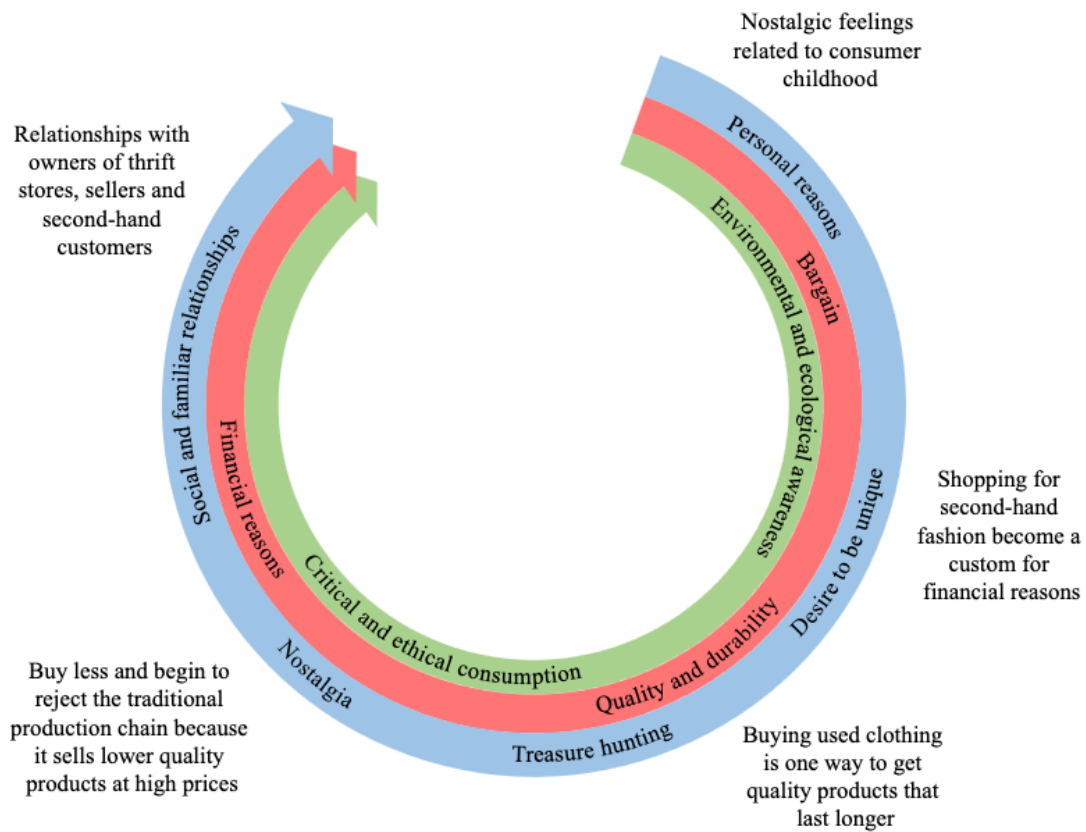


Figure 3. Virtuous circle of consumer engagement in circular economy (Machado et al., 2019, p. 392).

De Aguiar Hugo et al. (2021, p. 12) observe that implementing circular economy concepts into the fashion industry is a complex issue with no simple solutions. In addition to awareness on environmental issues, they identified that exclusivity and perceived product value to be the main factors in making sustainable fashion consumption a more viable option to consumers (de Aguiar Hugo et al., 2021, p. 12). Consumers are more likely to spend more on sustainable clothing as looking after the environment makes them feel better (de Aguiar Hugo et al., 2021, p. 12). Perceived value is very much linked with this, as consumers consider sustainable, more expensive and better made clothes to be more valuable (de Aguiar Hugo et al., 2021, p. 12). Especially second-hand clothes combine both of these factors for consumers: saving money with low priced clothing, exclusiveness from rarefied finds (de Aguiar Hugo et al., 2021, p. 12). Koay et al. (2022, p. 1359) echo this sentiment and according to them both consumers with low and high

income alike are interested in second-hand fashion for its ability to satisfy the need for exclusivity.

Kim-Vick and Cho (2024) examine Gen Z consumers' intention to adopt online second-hand luxury fashion goods through self-determination theory, which illustrates the relationship between human motivation and behaviour. According to them consumers' engagement with collaborative consumption is driven by both intrinsic and internalised extrinsic motives (Kim-Vick & Cho, 2024, pp. 443–444). Intrinsic motives are ideology and norms as consumers value using products over ownership (Kim-Vick & Cho, 2024, p. 443). Internalised extrinsic motives are the consumers' taste in luxury goods, consumption of which becomes more accessible through collaborative consumption modes (Kim-Vick & Cho, 2024, p. 444). Communicating status through luxury goods can be both intrinsic and extrinsic motive (Kim-Vick & Cho, 2024, p. 445). By emphasising their sustainability efforts, online collaborative redistribution channels of luxury goods can appeal to their customers motivated by intrinsic motives and also help them better understand the benefits of online collaborative consumption and circular economy (Kim-Vick & Cho, 2024, p. 452).

According to Koay et al. (2022, p. 1359) consumers have begun to understand the consequences of fast fashion in recent years and to shift from single-use fashion to second-hand fashion. In their empirical study on Chinese university students about the buying of second-hand clothes explored through theory of planned behaviour and theory of consumption values, Koay et al. (2022, p. 1359) divide consumers' general motives to buying second-hand fashion into economic and recreational categories. Consumers' attitudes towards second-hand fashion affects their intentions to purchase second-hand fashion (Koay et al. 2022, p. 1359). The results of the study by Koay et al. (2022, p. 1368) indicate that attitudes towards second-hand fashion are an important predictor of intention – if a consumer has a positive attitude towards second-hand fashion, they are more likely to purchase it. According to them, consumers often have positive attitudes towards second-hand fashion as it is priced low and seen as better for the environment (Koay et

al. 2022, p. 1368). They also found injunctive and descriptive norms to be a factor, meaning whether it is socially acceptable to buy second-hand fashion and how people important to us think about second-hand fashion and if they consume it as well (Koay et al. 2022, p. 1368-1670). Another factor they found was behavioural control, as the forming of intention to buy second-hand fashion depends on consumers' ability, accessibility and resources to perform this behaviour (Koay et al. 2022, p. 1370). According to them only the environmental and emotional dimensions rather than epistemic and social value are significant when it comes to attitudes (Koay et al. 2022, p. 1370). Consumers who believe that buying second-hand fashion has positive impacts on the environment are more likely to establish a positive attitude towards second-hand fashion and to receive a positive feeling from buying it (Koay et al. 2022, p. 1370).

Economic benefits were listed among the main motives for second-hand consumption in many studies (Brand et al., 2023, pp. 277–284; de Aguiar Hugo et al., 2021, p. 11; Gopalakrishnan & Matthews, 2018, p. 366; Kim-Vick & Cho, 2024, p. 441; Koay et al., 2022, p. 1359). However, Wang et al. (2022, p. 163) found that other factors can be more influential than economic benefits. The thrill of treasure-hunting and being able to express their unique styles were discovered to be far more significant motives in their study of young Chinese consumers (Wang et al., 2022, p. 163).

Many studies recognised hygiene issues and lack of trust as barriers to second-hand fashion consumption (Brand et al., 2023, pp. 277–278; Charnley et al., 2022, p. 5; de Aguiar Hugo et al., 2021, p. 11; Koay et al., 2022, p. 1359). A lot of consumers are doubtful of second-hand fashion as they can't be sure of its origins and are unwilling to buy it in fear of some type of contamination (Brand et al., 2023, pp. 277–278; Charnley et al., 2022, p. 5; de Aguiar Hugo et al., 2021, p. 11; Koay et al., 2022, p. 1359). In addition, de Aguiar Hugo et al. (2021, p. 11) as well as Koay et al. (2022, p. 1371) identified the association of second-hand fashion as 'lower class' to be a barrier linked to the hygiene issues. Koay et al. (2023, p. 1371) address this as a negative attitude that needs changing. Brand et

al. (2023, p. 284) propose hygiene protocols and effective communication as a way to solve these concerns.

Charnley et al. (2022, p. 15) determine the biggest barrier in second-hand fashion consumption to be inconvenience. Brand et al. (2023, p. 277) on the other hand see convenience to be a motivational driver. In their study, Charnley et al. (2022, p. 15) suggest digital tools as a solution to overcoming inconvenience. Their suggestions to solving inconvenience as well as hygiene concerns are demonstrated on the figure below (Charnley et al., 2022, p. 16).

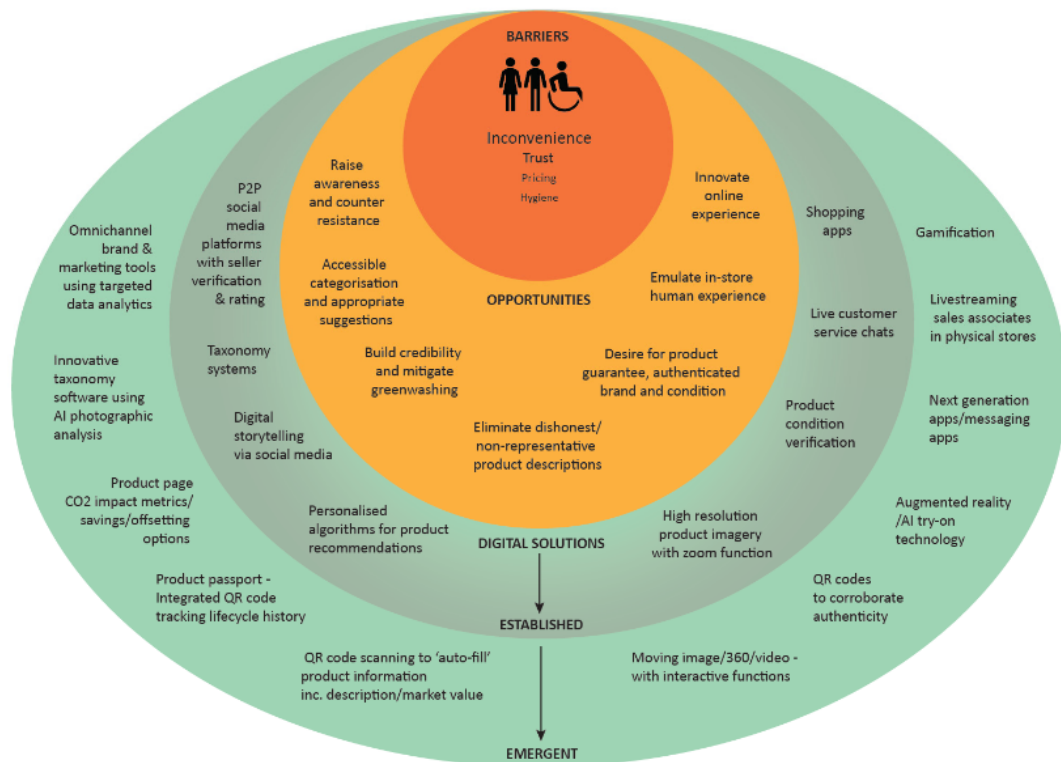


Figure 4. Recommended digital solutions to overcome certain consumer barriers and drive SHF opportunities (Charnley et al., 2022, p. 16).

2.3 Second-hand clothing consumption on online platforms

The resale of clothes has traditionally happened in brick-and-mortar stores like thrift shops and consignment stores, but it is moving to online platforms (Gopalakrishnan & Matthews, 2018, p. 361; Yeap et al., 2024, pp. 993–994). According to Yeap et al. (2024, p. 994) there are two reasons for the popularity of online platforms. The first reason is the democratisation of e-commerce through internet: at first, the internet made it possible for any business to sell their products online, then it made it possible for any individual to sell their products, and now anyone can sell their used goods to someone else via an online platform (Yeap et al., 2024, p. 994). The second, and possibly the more important reason is, that more sustainable fashion consumption is being called for (Yeap et al., 2024, p. 994).

Online platforms in particular have had a significant role in helping expand collaborative consumption and the resale markets for used goods, with more environmentally conscious younger generations like Gen Z feeding the growth of resale platforms (Charnley et al., 2022, p. 1; Kim-Vick & Cho, 2024, pp. 440–441). Online collaborative consumption is an activity among peers where goods or services are acquired, provide or shared via an online platform (Hamari et al., 2016, p. 2049). Brand et al. (2023, p. 275) define online collaborative clothing consumption as a model where two or more individuals participate in a shared online activity to save resources through collaborative use of clothing.

Digital tools are the most efficient way to combat one of the biggest barriers to sustainable fashion – inconvenience (Charnley et al., 2022, p. 15). Digital tools have brought buying second-hand fashion to a new level, but they are still not being realised to their full potential in dismantling consumers' distrust (Charnley et al., 2022, p. 15). For example, consumers' trust towards online second-hand clothing could be increased by providing history for the product in a story form (Kim et al., 2021, p. 6).

According to Yeap et al. (2024, p. 994) customer-to-customer (C2C) platforms reflect consumers' adoption of technological applications into their lifestyles and their

development of awareness about sustainable agency. Yeap et al. (2024, p. 1009) found that sustainability motives, economic motives and situational frugality are the determining factors for Gen Y and Z consumers attitudes' towards purchasing second-hand clothing on online C2C platforms. The sustainability factor was shown to be an essential part of their purchasing decision, which came as a no surprise due to younger consumers being more aware of environmental issues (Yeap et al., 2024, p. 1009). Sustainability being a factor in their purchasing decisions indicates that they consider buying second-hand fashion a sustainable choice and that by doing so they can help diminish the negative environmental impacts of fast fashion (Yeap et al., 2024, p. 1009). Economic motives were also found to be a positive factor in attitudes towards buying second-hand fashion as Gen Y and Z consumers are often mindful spenders due to their general economic circumstances (Yeap et al. 2024, p. 1009). Zaman et al. (2019, p. 172) also found ecological consciousness to be a distinct trait for online second-hand fashion shoppers. In addition, Zaman et al. (2019, p. 172) discovered that nostalgia proneness and fashion consciousness were typical for online second-hand fashion shoppers. Hedonic motives were not found to have an important positive effect on Gen Y and Z consumers attitudes towards purchasing fashion on second-hand online C2C platforms (Yeap et al., 2024, p. 1009). This was credited to online environments not being as exciting as physical thrift stores, due to them having less stimuli (Yeap et al., 2024, p. 1009).

Yeap et al. (2024, p. 1010) found that attitude towards purchasing second-hand clothes is notably and positively related to the intention to purchase second-hand clothing on online C2C platforms. Buying second-hand fashion online is viewed positively by young consumers and their readiness to buy second-hand clothes in physical stores transforms into higher probabilities of buying second-hand fashion on online C2C platforms (Yeap et al., 2024, p. 1010). Perceived norms were discovered to be another important factor affecting the intention to purchase second-hand fashion on online C2C platforms (Yeap et al., 2024, p. 1010). If purchasing second hand clothing on C2C platforms is seen as acceptable and positive by their peers, Gen Y and Z consumers are more inclined to do so themselves too (Yeap et al., 2024, p. 1010). Another factor influencing Gen Y and Z

consumers attitudes towards buying second-hand fashion on online C2C platforms positively was their ability to use said platforms easily (Yeap et al., 2024, p. 1010). Hygiene and performance issues were found to be a factor negatively affecting consumers' attitudes (Yeap et al., 2024, p. 1010). Yeap et al. (2024, p. 1010) conclude, that the performance and social risk determine the relationship between attitude and intention to purchase second-hand clothing on online C2C platforms: if a product appears to be unclean or has to be repaired, the attitude may turn negative. Yeap et al. (2024, p. 1011) suggest that online platforms could improve the look and feel of the platforms in order to motivate consumers hedonically as well, as it was currently not found to be a significant factor for online second-hand consumers.

2.4 Theoretical framework

The first part of the chapter introduced the concept of collaborative fashion consumption. Characteristics of collaborative fashion consumption as well as its categories and purpose were explored.

After that, the theory focused on consumers' motives and barriers to collaborative fashion consumption, particularly to shopping second-hand fashion. Most prominent motives were found to be economic benefits, hedonism and environmental awareness. Barriers included fast fashion mentality, inconvenience and hygiene issues.

Finally, the theory examined second-hand fashion consumption on online platforms, and it was found that motives and barriers to buying second-hand fashion online are similar to the traditional ways of buying second-hand fashion. This study sets out to further explore what motives and barriers there are to shopping second-hand fashion online for young people in Finland and Poland. Figure 5 presents the summary of the theoretical framework. The motives and barriers found in the existing literature form a basis for the empirical study. The effect of the online platforms to the motives and barriers for second-hand clothing consumption will be explored.

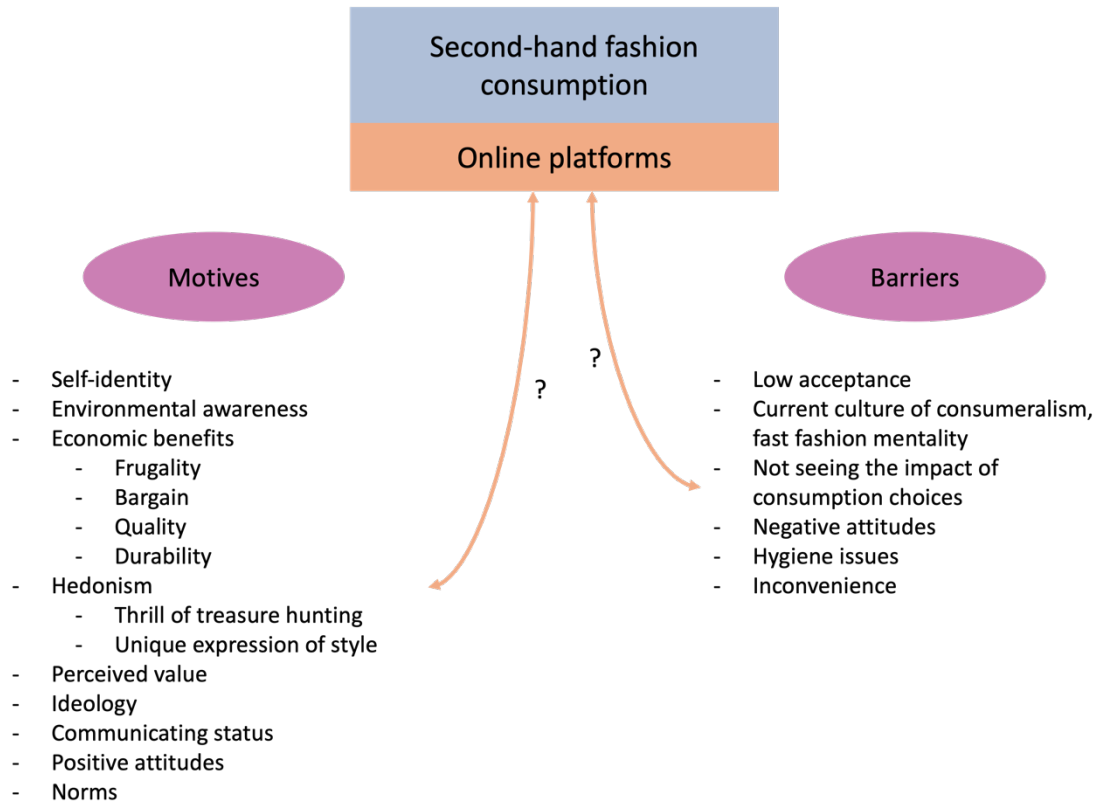


Figure 5. Summary of the theoretical framework

3 Research methodology

In this chapter, the research methodology is presented. The design of the research is introduced first. Then the methodology for data collection and the selection of interviewees as well as the data analysis are presented. At the end of the chapter, a way to evaluate the quality of the study is explored.

3.1 Design of the research

This study aims to find out if and how the motives and barriers to sustainable fashion consumption, specifically the use of online second-hand clothing platforms, differs between young people of different nationalities. Therefore, the nature of the study is exploratory as it intends to extend knowledge on a phenomenon (Saunders et al., 2023, p. 180). As such, the chosen method for this research is a qualitative study. Qualitative studies result in and utilise non-numerical data and can be conducted through any data collection procedures or analysis techniques (Saunders et al., 2023, p. 181). Qualitative studies are used to comprehensively understand and record attitudes and behaviour across a wide range of practice areas like politics, education and marketing (Mariampolski, 2001, p. 7). As this study only uses qualitative research method to collect data, it is a mono-method research (Saunders et al., 2023, p. 185).

3.2 Data collection

The data for this research is primary data, collected through semi-structured interviews as they are well suited for exploratory studies in order to gain further insights (Saunders et al., 2023, p. 450). Semi-structured interviews make it possible to gather rich and detailed set of data (Saunders et al., 2023, p. 450). The advantage of a semi-structured interview is the possibility to tailor each interview but still receiving fairly coherent material (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 82).

The interview medium was an online interview for convenience, as the distance between participants varied and it made collecting the data easier. The interviews were carried out as individual interviews (Mariampolski, 2001, p. 49). Individual in-depth interviews offer deep insights on motivations without peer influence which is well suited for the topic of this study (Mariampolski, 2001, pp. 49).

There are many ways to collect the data from the interviews, most common being videotapes, audiotapes and notes (Mariampolski, 2001, p. 246). In this study, to analyse the gathered data from the interviews, the interviews were audiotaped and transferred to transcripts. Permission to record the interviews was received from participants.

The interview guide is based on the theoretical framework, and it is divided into two sections. In the first part of the interview, the interviewees were asked more general questions about their motives and barriers to second-hand clothing. The second part of the interview focused on motives and barriers to the consumption of second-hand clothing on online platforms. The interview guide can be found in appendix 1.

3.3 Selection of interviewees

The target of this research is to explore motives and barriers to using online second-hand clothing platforms for young people and whether they differ between nationalities. Therefore, the target group for this research were young people from Finland and Poland who either have or have not used online second-hand clothing platforms. The interviewees had to be either Finnish or Polish and between 20-30 years old and have had an experience using or not using an online second-hand clothing platform. Interviewees were found through personal networks, for convenience. The demographics of the interviewees can be seen in the table 1 below.

	Age	Gender	National- ity	Education	Occupation
Interviewee A	29	Male	Finnish	Master's degree	Employed, student
Interviewee B	25	Female	Finnish	Master's degree	Employed, PhD student
Interviewee C	25	Female	Finnish	Master's degree	Employed, student
Interviewee D	24	Female	Polish	Master's degree	Student
Interviewee E	24	Female	Polish	Master's degree	Employed, student

Table 1. Demographics of interviewees

The interviews were held on weeks 12 and 13 of 2025 on Microsoft Teams (Table 2). All of the interviews lasted just under 30 minutes.

	Date and time	Duration
Interviewee A	18.3.2025 at 19.30	24 min
Interviewee B	19.3.2025 at 16.00	27 min
Interviewee C	20.3.2025 at 12.45	26 min
Interviewee D	27.3.2025 at 10.00	20 min
Interviewee E	27.3.2025 at 8.45	22 min

Table 2. Dates and timings of the interviews

3.4 Data analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the collected data. Thematic analysis is a general analytic approach that provides a logical and simple way to analyse qualitative data (Saunders et al., 2023, p. 664). In a thematic analysis, the collected data is coded to identify themes and patterns relevant to the study (Saunders et al., 2023, p. 664). The coding process can be deductive or inductive (Saunders et al., 2023, p. 664). In a deductive approach, the themes are linked to an already existing theory and the interview questions as well as the collected data are organised accordingly (Saunders et al., 2023, p. 664). In an inductive approach, a pre-existing framework isn't imposed on the data, but the data is examined to find themes matching the theory (Saunders et al., 2023, p. 664).

The thematic analysis in this study was both deductive and inductive. The data was first categorised into two categories, general motives and barriers to buying second-hand fashion and motives and barriers to online second-hand fashion platforms, according to the interview guide. Then the data from the interviews with Finnish and Polish was cross-analysed to examine differences and similarities in the motives and barriers. Additionally, other possible emerging themes were also observed during the coding process.

3.5 Quality of the study

The intent of all studies is to deliver valid and reliable results (Mariampolski, 2001, p. 57). Validity refers to the ability of a research to correctly measure what it was meant to as well as the degree to which the findings of a research are correct (Saunders et al., 2023, p. 837). Reliability refers to the ability of a research to produce consistent, replicable findings (Saunders et al., 2023, p. 831). For the results of a qualitative study to be considered valid and reliable, errors and bias have to be minimised, and the concepts of validity and reliability adapted (Mariampolski, 2001, p. 57; Saunders et al., 2023, p. 217).

In the context of qualitative study, the goal is substantive validity, meaning that the results of the research are valuable to the design of products, programs or communications (Mariampolski, 2001, p. 57). The results of this study can offer valuable insight to online second-hand clothing platforms. However, due to the small number of interviewees, the results of this study are not generalisable.

In terms of reliability, a qualitative study does not fundamentally have to be replicable, as it is a display of the socially constructed views of certain participants at the time of the research (Saunders et al., 2023, p. 2018). Still, by documenting the research design, context and methods of a study in as much detail as possible, others are able to better evaluate it and even recreate similar studies (Saunders et al., 2023, p. 218). The research design, context and methods of this study have been documented in this and the following chapter in as much detail as possible. Based on the information available on this thesis, a similar study could be recreated.

4 Findings

The findings of the empirical study are presented in this chapter. The findings are analysed according to the interview guide, first examining the interviewees' motives and barriers to second-hand clothing in general, then their motives and barriers to the use of online second-hand clothing platforms and finally comparing the motives and barriers between the Finnish and Polish.

4.1 Finnish and Polish youth's experience and feelings towards second-hand clothing

The interviewees were first asked to talk about their experiences on buying second-hand clothing. The interviewees had varying degrees of experience with second-hand clothing, with most being active second-hand shoppers. Nearly all interviewees brought up where they usually shop second-hand clothing. Many interviewees also mentioned swapping and recycling clothing with friends and family. Only one of the interviewees considered themselves as not having much experience on buying second-hand clothing.

"I buy second-hand clothes from time to time. Sometimes I go to physical brick-and-mortar flea markets and sometimes I browse online. And then sometimes I might have swapped clothes with friends, for example." – Interviewee C

"Throughout all my childhood, I wore second-hand clothing from my family, so becoming older and started making my own money, I didn't have a problem with wearing second-hand clothing. It just changed from being given to buying with cheaper prices, but the quality is always what I'm looking for." – Interviewee E

In the first part of the interview, the interviewees were asked about their general feelings towards second-hand clothing and their starting points to second-hand clothing were explored. Only one of the interviewees did not consider themselves an active second-

hand clothing shopper, but all the interviewees exhibited positive attitudes towards second-hand clothing.

“Well, I don't think there's anything wrong with them, because of course the earth is being overloaded all the time. And it's just good that clothes are being recycled, and I have nothing against flea markets.” – Interviewee B

“I think second-hand clothes are a really good thing and it's good not to produce something new for nothing, if you can utilise something old. I see it exclusively as a positive thing.” – Interviewee C

“It's great because it's affordable and you can find pretty cool stuff. I feel good about it. I like it.” – Interviewee D

The interviewees had a range of priorities when buying clothing in general. Most wanted their clothes to be comfortable and fit well. Many mentioned that they wanted their clothes to be durable and made from good materials. Pricing was also brought up in a couple of answers. Other things that the interviewees saw as priorities when buying clothes were timeless design and buying only when necessary.

4.2 Motives and barriers to second-hand clothing for Finnish and Polish youth

The interviewees exhibited a variety of motives and barriers to buying second-hand clothing. The main motives that arose from the interviews were economic benefits, positive attitudes and environmental awareness, whereas inconvenience was seen as the main barrier to buying second-hand clothing. As most of the interviewees considered themselves to be somewhat active second-hand shoppers, the answers were more focused on motives than barriers. A table of the interviewees motives and barriers to second-hand clothing can be found in appendix 2.

4.2.1 Motives for buying second-hand clothing

A main motive in many previous studies (Brand et al., 2023; de Aguiar Hugo et al., 2021; Gopalakrishnan & Matthews, 2018; Kim-Vick & Cho, 2024; Koay et al., 2022), economic benefits stood out as the most usual motive for buying second-hand clothing. It was mentioned the most times out of any other motive across the interviews (Appendix 2). For many interviewees it was the main reason for buying second-hand clothing as opposed to the study by Wang et al. (2022 p. 163). Besides the lower price itself, bargain and quality as economic benefits were also specified.

“Primarily because it is cheaper and it feels like you get more value for money. The fact that spending fifty euros can get you a really good brand when buying used, versus that you do not get any terribly good brand when buying new, or least nothing this kind of big, significant piece of clothing.” – Interviewee A

“I’ve noticed that the quality of clothing nowadays is lower. The clothes are cheaper, but the material is also cheaper. So, one of the things that if you don't have a lot of money should be your priority, if you like to buy clothes, is to buy it at a fair price, but also have clothes that last, that are not going to be ruined, ruined in a year or two.” – Interviewee E

The second most mentioned motive was environmental awareness, which was identified as a motive in many previous studies (Appendix 2, Brand et al., 2023; de Aguiar Hugo et al., 2021; Kim-Vick & Cho, 2024; Koay et al., 2022; Machado et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2022). The interviewees were all aware of environmental issues and for most of them it was a secondary benefit of buying clothing second-hand.

“Well, I aim to buy second-hand clothes, and I consider it valuable, and I maybe buy mainly for environmental reasons or like sustainability reasons, I try to buy second-hand, so that I would not have to buy to buy something newly produced.” – Interviewee C

“I think that with fast fashion, it is one of the more ethical approaches to buying clothes that can still be from fast fashion stores. But it's a way of recycling and giving new life to those sorts of products.” – Interviewee E

“Secondarily, from time to time I might consider that it is maybe a more ecological solution and more sustainable consumption.” – Interviewee A

Positive attitudes, a factor explored in the prior study by Koay et al. (2022) were seen as a big motive as well, as it was the third most mentioned factor (Appendix 2). Positive attitudes were most prominent when discussing the shopping habits of the interviewees' families and friends, although the answers were mixed. This shows that positive attitudes are very tied to another motive, norms, which were studied by McNeill and Venter (2019), Koay et al. (2022), Kim-Vick and Cho (2024) in their research. All the interviewees said that their friends buy second-hand clothing with varying degrees, but answers concerning family differed. Most interviewees told that their friends had mainly positive attitudes towards second-hand clothing.

“It's pretty fifty-fifty. Some friends buy, some don't, but in our household, we are big fans of online second-hand shopping with my girlfriend. Similarly, my mother likes to shop second-hand.” – Interviewee A

“Well, principally, people have very positive attitudes, and in some circles perhaps even more so, that it is almost a matter of course that clothes are bought second-hand. And some buy sometimes and others then maybe less often, but principally, everyone still considers it as a good and recommendable thing and attitudes toward it are positive.” – Interviewee C

“A lot of my friends buy second-hand also on Vinted.” – Interviewee D

“My friends do, and it's mostly on online platforms.” – Interviewee E

Other motives for buying second-hand clothing were hedonism and self-identity, which were motives found in the studies by Brand et al. (2023), McNeill and Venter (2019) and Machado et al. (2019). When it came to hedonism, treasure-hunting thrill and finding unique style were mentioned as interviewee A told that buying second-hand clothing was a cheaper way to get the pleasure of shopping and finding a good quality clothing item for a cheaper price made him feel like a winner, while interviewee D said that buying second-hand clothing made it possible to find more interesting clothes than regular fast fashion chains like H&M.

*“It is a cheaper way to get that kind of good feeling that you get from shopping. It makes you feel like a winner when it is a good deal and the clothing item is promised quality.”
– Interviewee A*

“Well, there is more clothes to choose from, more interesting clothes to choose from than, for example in stores like H&M, which are not that interesting.” – Interviewee D

4.2.2 Barriers for buying second-hand clothing

The main barrier for buying second-hand clothing was inconvenience as discovered by Charnley et al. (2022). Interviewee B felt that shopping in flea markets was laborious and that was the biggest barrier to her buying second-hand clothing. Interviewee C also told that if she doesn't buy her clothes second-hand, it is usually because she does not have the time to look for a specific clothing item used, and it is easier to buy it new.

“Well, I have to admit that I don't have much experience in buying second hand clothes. I have bought accessories second hand, but clothes not so much, or not at all. And that's

because even though I've been to flea markets, I don't really bother to look around. That's probably my problem. I don't have the energy to look around, so I don't buy anything.” –

Interviewee B

“If I have time to look and I find something good that fits my criteria and is suitable for me, then I'll be happy to buy it second hand. But then if I don't find one, I buy it new.” –

Interviewee C

Interviewee B also discussed how not seeing the impact of one's consumption choices and not having enough knowledge on how sustainably clothes are made make it un motivating to make better and more sustainable consumption decisions, a barrier examined by de Aguiar Hugo et al. (2021).

“Does the environmental impact matter so much in the end? Is it different whether it is like some H&M shirt or a more expensive brand. So, I have to admit that maybe I do not think too much, because I do not know that how or where some product is made.” –

Interviewee B

In addition, Interviewee A touched on negative attitudes, low acceptance and fast fashion mentality as being barriers for buying second-hand clothing, which were barriers previously examined in studies by Charnley et al. (2022), de Aguiar Hugo et al. (2021) and Koay et al. (2022).

“Finnish people may be a bit proud, like they don't always realise that you can get something just as good second-hand. Perhaps if you did not used to get used clothes at home when you were younger or there has not been flea market culture, maybe you cannot think that used clothes could suit you and you always then prefer new. And there probably is not anything, but then if it is like fast fashion, then it is perhaps a bit silly, that then buy new clothes with terrible volume.” – Interviewee A

One of the main barriers for buying second-hand fashion in the literature review was hygiene issues and lack of trust (Brand et al., 2023; Charnley et al., 2022; de Aguiar Hugo et al., 2021; Koay et al., 2022). However, none of the interviewees mentioned that as an issue.

4.3 Motives and barriers for the use of online second-hand clothing platforms for Finnish and Polish youth

The second part of the interviews focused on the motives and barriers for the use of online second-hand clothing platforms. All of the interviewees had experienced using an online second-hand clothing platform, with many being active users. The interviewees presented a range of motives and barriers for the use of online second-hand clothing platforms. Convenience and economic benefits were the leading motives, while inconvenience was the most notable barrier.

4.3.1 Motives for the use of online second-hand clothing platforms

The interviewees were first asked to tell what had made them start using online second-hand clothing platforms. Norms and positive attitudes were clearly visible as motives in the answers to this question, further confirming the results from previous studies (McNeill & Venter, 2019; Koay et al., 2022; Kim-Vick & Cho, 2024). Many interviewees said that they had started to use online second-hand clothing platforms due to a combination of seeing advertisements and recommendations from friends and social media. All the interviewees also considered the current state of second-hand shopping in their country to be a growing trend, especially on online platforms.

“My girlfriend encouraged me to download this online second-hand clothing app called Vinted.” – Interviewee A

“I probably saw Tise and Vinted on social media.” – Interviewee B

“Well, I've seen a lot of advertising about them, for example on social media or actually everywhere in general. And I've heard a lot of good experiences about them from my friends and I've heard good experiences about them on social media.” – Interviewee C

“I think that maybe I heard about it from a friend or just saw an ad.” – Interviewee D

“I do believe that especially young Finns appreciate and like online second-hand platforms and also a lot of people show up at physical flea markets, at least in the capital area. So, yes the culture is alive and well.” – Interviewee A

“I think it's quite popular at the moment at least as far as I can see, like on social media, for example on TikTok. I think that people go a lot, especially people our age, like 20–30-year-olds go to a lot of flea markets and shop on online second-hand platforms. I don't know about other age groups, but I would say that among young people it is very popular. Like my sister is going to Paris in April and when they planned the trip the first thing that they thought about was which flea markets they would like to visit there.” – Interviewee B

“I feel that it's [the state of second-hand shopping] probably quite good and maybe it's like it's increasing. I know people who have only recently started doing it, for example. So, I have a feeling that it's on the rise and I don't know, maybe it depends on where you look at it, but at least in my own immediate circle, it's common and people are positive about it, and I could see that it's on the increase.” – Interviewee C

“I think the physical stores are doing alright in the big cities, there are less of them in the smaller ones. And the online stores are doing really well here.” – Interviewee D

“It's increasing, definitely. In the last two years, I see more and more people making their own little stores online just to sell things that they haven't worn that much. I definitely think that it is growing.” – Interviewee E

Convenience and effortlessness emerged as the most significant motive for using online second-hand clothing platforms. This is well in line with the study by Charnley et al. (2022) where they suggested that digital tools can be used to combat inconvenience as a barrier to buying second-hand clothing. Most of the other motives that rose from the interviews can be seen as related to convenience and effortlessness. All of the interviewees found the second-hand clothing platforms easy to use, a factor discussed also in the study by Yeap et al. (2024). Many interviewees mentioned good in-app features like filtering which makes it easier to search for a certain product, larger product volume on second-hand clothing platforms and platform policies on security as positive attributes. The interviewees felt that using an online platform to buy second-hand clothing was much easier and convenient than in physical stores, as it can be done from the comfort of one's home, and the platforms also make it easier to search for a certain product by giving an access to a larger product volume with in-app features like filtering. Some interviewees also mentioned that some of the platforms have algorithms, that can start suggesting appealing clothing items for you, which was seen as a positive. Many of the interviewees had used more than one online second-hand clothing platform but Vinted stood out as the most popular platform among all interviewees. The interviewees didn't think that there were any notable differences in the different platforms, but most preferred Vinted, as they seemed to think that it had the largest volume of products due to its popularity.

“It's that kind of ease of use. It is nice, that you have hundreds of thousands of clothes at your fingertips, if you so want. Of course, you have to filter and know what to look for, so you can maybe get exactly what fits your own need, but it is pretty easy to search for anything. And maybe it is both blessing and a curse that it can recommend products based on your searches.” – Interviewee A

“[I like] that you can buy the stuff and immediately order it. Not to your house because I don't order it to my house, but to parcel locker that's near. And also the fact that for example on Vinted you can... If you like some stuff, it will show you something similar that could be something you like. Like what algorithm thinks is your taste.” – Interviewee D

“The use has not been like parallel, but more that when this other platform was starting to be marketed more, I downloaded it then and then I stayed using it and it feels like maybe it is currently more on the surface. So I think that maybe there are more people selling and buying, that there would be a bigger selection possibly, so that's why I have not returned back to this other platform. So it is not really related to the platform itself, but perhaps more about which platform has felt more relevant when it has been relevant for me to use it.” – Interviewee C

Economic benefits and environmental awareness, motives for buying second-hand clothing in previous studies (Brand et al., 2023; de Aguiar Hugo et al., 2021; Gopalakrishnan & Matthews, 2018; Kim-Vick & Cho, 2024; Koay et al., 2022) as well as for the use of online second-hand clothing platforms (Yeap et al., 2024; Zaman et al., 2019) were found to be strong motives for the use of online second-hand clothing also in this study. The motives were most present in the interviewees' answers to whether they would recommend using online second-hand clothing platforms to others. The interviewees again brought up the aspect of finding a bargain when shopping second-hand clothing on online platforms as well as the aspect that they saw it more environmentally sustainable.

“I would absolutely recommend online second-hand platforms. They can save you money and you can get high-quality stuff. And it's all around smart and saves the environment.” – Interviewee A

“Well, I would definitely recommend. It is always better that there is no need to produce something new, but instead you can buy it used and save the environment and money and so on.” – Interviewee B

“Yes, absolutely [I would recommend] because it is cheaper and you can buy anything you want. You can just write down some idea of a shirt or anything, any clothing and there is a big chance that you will find something you are thinking about and also you don't have to spend so much money on stores.” – Interviewee D

As opposed to the results of the study by Yeap et al. (2024), in these interviews, hedonism, especially treasure-hunting thrill, came up as a motive for the use of online second-hand platforms. Interviewee C, for example expressed that finding a certain clothing item, at a favourable price and used made her feel good, as she can feel that she has acted sustainably and also saved money but also mentioned making unexpected finds made her feel good too. Interviewee D told that browsing Vinted was similar to browsing a social media app to her. Interviewee E brought up concerns about people actually being motivated to use online second-hand clothing platforms by culture of consumption and fast fashion mentality, which can be seen as phenomena driven by hedonism – a concern also discussed in the studies by D’Adamo et al. (2022) and Iran and Schrader (2017).

4.3.2 Barriers for the use of online second-hand clothing platforms

Inconvenience was found to be the main barrier also for the use of online second-hand clothing platforms and most of the other barriers that emerged can be linked to it to a degree. Inconvenience was largely felt in situations where the purchase on an online second-hand platform might not have been fully successful, for example when communication with the seller had been difficult or the bought item did not match the description and the expectations. Difficulties when communicating with the seller as a substantial inconvenience was a sentiment shared between interviewee B, C and D.

Additionally, an issue related to the item not matching description that seemed complicated for the interviewees was the prospect of a difficult returning process, which was something that put the online second-hand clothing platforms at a disadvantageous position, when compared to a regular online store. Interviewee A told that he had had some less successful purchases but had not bothered to try to return any of them due to the assumed difficulty of the process and the inexpensiveness of the product. This is an issue derived from another issue: not being able to try the clothing before purchasing, which again was a characteristic that put the online second-hand clothing platforms at a disadvantageous position when compared to physical stores. Not being able to try the clothes on was a negative factor mentioned by interviewees C and E. An issue related to both of these issues that was brought up by interviewee E, was concern for security on the online second-hand clothing platforms.

“On the minus side is of course the fact that you do not get to try on [the clothes] so it limits a bit what I dare to buy.” – Interviewee C

“I’ve heard stories about schemes on these platforms. For example, items being ruined and the quality of the product not being the same that it is being advertised. I would advise people to be more careful with the type of products that they are buying.” – Interviewee E

A hypothetical dysfunctional online second-hand clothing platform was also seen as a barrier to using it. Interviewees A and B stated that they would not want to use a bad platform that would not be as easy to use and would not have as many suitable in-app features as the ones they had used.

“From the ones I’ve encountered, the weakest has been Tori. The user interface is somehow a little bit hard and off-putting, when talking about fashion consumption. But it has its own segments where it works better.” – Interviewee A

“If the app is bad, like antiquated, you probably don’t want to keep on using it.” – Interviewee B

Interviewee A and B also raised a few other minor factors that could be seen as barriers. While an advantage, interviewee A considered the volume of product on online second-hand clothing platforms as something that might feel like an inconvenience, as it can often cause the search for a certain product to take a lot of time. Interviewee B talked about not finding cheaper second-hand clothes being such a bargain due to shipping costs on online second-hand platforms often amounting to a significant increase in the price of a clothing item.

“It feels kind of pointless to buy like a five-euro shirt and then pay another five euros for the shipping. Like it should be something bigger to make it worth it, because I don't know if it makes sense to buy a shirt or pants or whatever if it is cheaper than the shipping.” – Interviewee B

4.4 Differences and similarities in the motives and barriers for the use of online second-hand clothing platforms for Finnish and Polish youth

The Finnish and Polish youth’s motives and barriers for the use of online second-hand clothing platforms aligned mostly, as both frequently mentioned same motives and barriers, but some differences can still be found for example in the prominence of the motives and barriers.

For Finnish youth the positive attitudes were the leading motive whereas for Polish youth it was convenience and effortlessness. The Finnish also seemed to show more appreciation for the good in-app features such as filtering compared to the Polish, which might explain why the security of using the platforms was only mentioned by the Finnish. Culture of consumption and the fast fashion mentality (D’Adamo et al., 2022; Iran & Schrader, 2017) as motives for the use of online second-hand clothing platforms were

only acknowledged by the Polish. On the rest of the motives, such as economic benefits, economic awareness and hedonism, the distribution of mentions is quite even. The overall distribution of mentions of motives can be seen in table 3 below.

Motive	Times mentioned	
	Finnish	Polish
Convenience and effortlessnes	5	9
The ease of use of the platform	4	6
In-app features	5	2
- Filtering, easy to search for products	3	0
Platform policies, security	1	0
Product volume	3	2
Economic benefits	6	5
- Bargain	4	1
Positive attitudes	8	4
Norms	1	4
Advertisement	1	1
Environmental awareness	5	4
Hedonism	2	4
- Treasure-hunting thrill	2	1
Culture of consumption, fast fashion mentality	0	3

Table 3. The distribution of motives for the use of online second-hand clothing platforms for Finnish and Polish youth

The mentions of barriers were more evenly distributed, as can be seen in table 4 below. Inconvenience as a barrier was emphasised more by the Finnish, which may be caused by one of the Finnish interviewees not being an active second-hand shopper, while all the Polish interviewees identified as somewhat active shoppers. Still, there were a few

barriers that were only mentioned by the other nationality. For example, it seems that the Finnish youth are not worried about security issues when using online second-hand platforms.

Barrier	Times mentioned	
	Finnish	Polish
Inconvenience	6	1
Difficult platform policies, product returns	1	1
Not being able to try the clothes on	2	1
Negative attitudes	1	1
Dysfunctional platform	1	1
Product volume	1	0
Low acceptance	1	0
Fast fashion mentality	1	1
Security issues	0	2

Table 4. The distribution of barriers for the use of online second-hand clothing platforms for Finnish and Polish youth

Overall, the motives and barriers for the use of online second-hand platforms for the Finnish and Polish youth were largely similar. The main motives for both were environmental awareness, economic benefits and positive attitudes and norms. Both the Finnish and Polish presented an array of barriers, with some similarities and some differences.

5 Discussion and conclusions

This chapter concludes the thesis. The findings of the study are discussed and summarised to present the discovered new information. The managerial implications as well as limitations of the research are presented and directions for future research are suggested.

5.1 Summary and key findings

The objective of this thesis was to explore the motives and barriers young Finnish and Polish people have for the use of online second-hand clothing platforms and find out whether they differ or align. This thesis contributes to the developing discussion on sustainable consumer behaviour.

The main research question of the thesis was *“How do the motives and barriers for the use of online second-hand clothing platforms differ or align for Finnish and Polish youth?”*

The main research question as well as the other objectives of the thesis formed a structure for the thesis. This study was an explorative one with primarily a deductive approach. The concept of collaborative consumption and possible motives and barriers for the consumption of second-hand clothing were explored in the literature review in chapter two. The theoretical framework of the study was built based on the literature review. The theoretical framework was then utilised in creating the interview guide for the data collection.

The interviewees motives and barriers for second-hand clothing overall was explored first, after which motives and barriers for the use of online second-hand clothing platforms specifically were examined. Finally, the motives and barriers for the Finnish and Polish interviewees were compared.

All of the interviewees were familiar with online second-hand clothing platforms, with most being active shoppers of second-hand clothing on online platforms. During the interviews, motives and barriers from the literature review as well as new ones were recognised.

The interviewees' motives and barriers for second-hand clothing and for the use of online second-hand clothing platforms were similar. Economic benefits, environmental awareness, positive attitudes and norms as well as hedonism, motives found in previous studies (Brand et al., 2023; de Aguiar Hugo et al., 2021; Gopalakrishnan & Matthews, 2018; Kim-Vick & Cho, 2024; Koay et al., 2022; Machado et al., 2019; McNeill & Venter, 2019; Wang et al., 2022) surfaced in the interviews as motives for both buying second-hand clothing as well as for the use of online second-hand clothing platforms. In addition, many motives related to the use of online second-hand clothing platforms were discovered, like convenience and effortlessness, ease of use of the platform and in-app features. The interviewees shared the sentiment that buying second-hand clothing was more convenient on online platforms than in physical stores, as you can do it from the comfort of your own home, and it is easier to find a certain product.

The interviewees' barriers to second-hand clothing varied more. Barriers found in the previous studies such as inconvenience, not seeing the impact of one's consumption choices, negative attitudes and low acceptance (Charnley et al., 2022; de Aguiar Hugo et al., 2021; Koay et al., 2022) were also present in these answers of the interviewees. However, for the use of online second-hand clothing platforms the answers were largely distributed. Only inconvenience stood out as the biggest barrier. The interviewees proposed matters such as difficult platform policies, not being able to try the clothes on, a dysfunctional platform, product volume and security issues as barriers. Hygiene issues and lack of trust, a main barrier in many prior studies (Brand et al., 2023; Charnley et al., 2022; de Aguiar Hugo et al., 2021; Koay et al., 2022) was absent as a barrier in these interviews.

Although mostly similar, some differences could be found when comparing the motives and barriers of Finnish and Polish young people. The most mentioned motive for the Finnish was positive attitudes, while for the Polish it was convenience and effortlessness. Additionally, the Finnish seemed to be more appreciate of functional in-app features like filtering. Only the Polish considered culture of consumption and fast fashion mentality as a motive in the context of online second-hand platforms. Even less differences could be found in the barriers, as the mentions were spread across different barriers, but some barriers like security issues were only mentioned by the other nationality.

As a result of this study, the motives and barriers for the use of online second-hand clothing platforms are more specified. The new motives and barriers as well as the differences and similarities that emerged from the interviews are illustrated in the revised theoretical framework in figure 6.

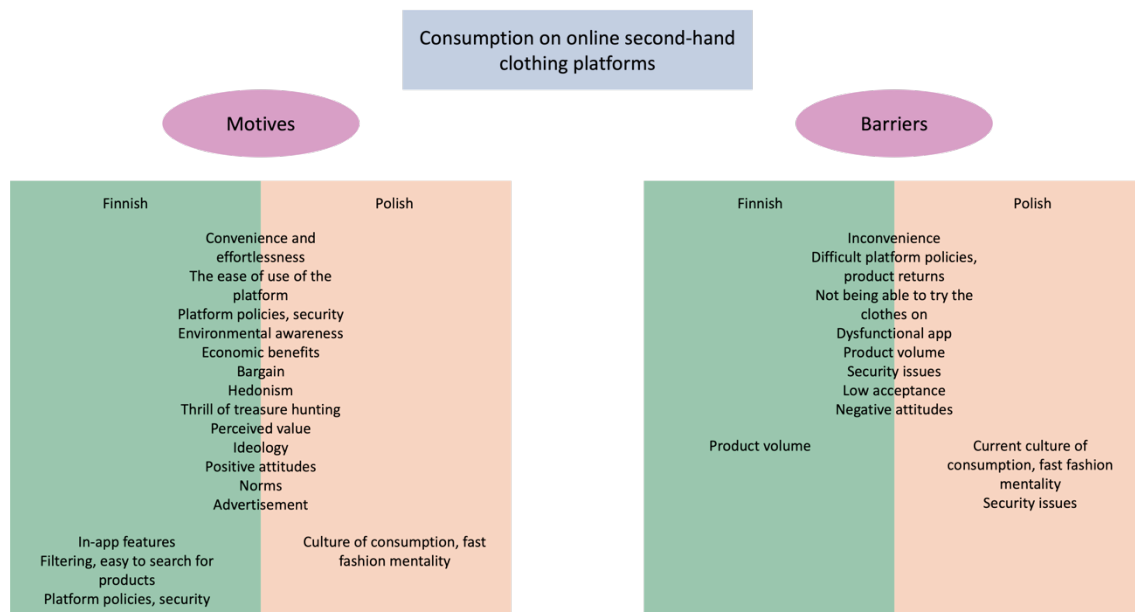


Figure 6. The revised theoretical framework

5.2 Managerial implications

This thesis is an exploration of motives and barriers to the use of online second-hand clothing platforms. It increases the understanding of consumer behaviour on sustainable

digital platforms. A general implication of the thesis is that online second-hand clothing platforms are becoming more and more accepted as due to economic benefits, positive attitudes and environmental awareness growing.

As further insights on the motives and barriers for the use of online second-hand clothing platforms were discovered in this study, this thesis enables online second-hand platforms to utilise them. Online second-hand platforms could seek to appeal to the motives risen in this study related solely to the use of online platforms, like convenience, ease of use and in-app features, as well as to the general motives presented in this thesis. Online second-hand platforms might also want to try to combat the barriers discussed in this thesis, like inconvenience and issues about the platforms, such as security and platform policies. These discoveries can be used in developing the platforms, their policies and in marketing.

5.3 Limitations and propositions for future research

This thesis, as any research, has its limitations. The first and foremost limitation of this study is the small number of interviewees. Thus, the findings in this study cannot be absolutely generalised for the entire populations of Finland or Poland. Another limitation of this study is that all of the interviewees were familiar with online second-hand clothing platforms, with many identifying themselves as active second-hand shoppers. The findings might be more varied if more people who were not as active second-hand shoppers had been interviewed. The interviewees in this study were also all young people, Gen Y and Z. The findings would be very different, if older people were involved. In addition, the interviewees were mostly female. Having more male interviewees might result in different findings.

However, these limitations present opportunities for future research. To be able to generalise the motives and barriers, a questionnaire study with a large sample could be conducted. An in-depth study with more interviewees with more varied second-hand

shopping experiences could also further the insight on motives and barriers. A comparative study on different generations could also give interesting insights. More cross-national studies on this topic as well as on factors affecting possible differences might also be useful.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Semi-structured interview guide

Motives and barriers to second-hand clothing

Could you please tell me about your experiences on buying second-hand clothing?

- How do you generally feel about second-hand clothing?
- Where did/do you shop?
- Why do/don't you buy second-hand clothing?
 - o Do your friends/family buy second-hand clothing?
 - o What is the most important aspect to you when buying clothes?
 - o Do you think about your environmental impact when shopping?

Online second-hand clothing platforms

- What made you start using online second-hand clothing platforms? / Why haven't you used online second-hand platforms?
- What online second-hand clothing platform(s) have you used?
- How often do you use online second-hand platforms?
- What do/don't you like about online second-hand clothing platforms?
 - o How do online second-hand clothing platforms differ from each other?
 - Which have you liked best/least?
- Do you feel that online second-hand platforms are easy to use?
 - o Why or why not?
 - o What do you think makes a good purchasing experience on an online second-hand clothing platform?
 - o How would you improve the online second-hand platforms you've used?
- How do you feel about online second-hand shopping compared to physical second-hand shopping?

- What would you say is the state of second-hand shopping in your country is right now online or in physical stores?
- Would you recommend online second-hand clothing platforms to others?
 - o Why or why not?
- Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experiences or opinions on second-hand clothing platforms that we haven't discussed?

Appendix 2. Mentions of motives and barriers for buying second-hand clothing

Interviewee A	Interviewee B	Interviewee C	Interviewee D	Interviewee E
economic benefits, bargain	inconvenience	environmental awareness	economic benefits	positive attitudes
positive attitudes	environmental awareness	positive attitudes	positive attitudes	norms
hedonism, treasure hunting thrill	economic benefits, bargain	environmental awareness	positive attitudes	economic benefits
economic benefits, bargain	norms	economic benefits	economic benefits	environmental awareness
economic benefits, bargain	positive attitudes	inconvenience	hedonism, unique style	positive attitudes
economic benefits, bargain	not seeing the im- pact of consump- tion choices	economic benefits	positive attitudes	positive attitudes
environmental awareness	inconvenience	hedonism	norms	economic benefits
hedonism		environmental awareness	economic benefits, quality	economic benefits
		economic benefits	environmental awareness	environmental awareness

low acceptance		environmental awareness		environmental awareness
fast fashion mentality		environmental awareness		economic benefits, quality, bargain
				environmental awareness

Total number of mentions

Motives

- Economic benefits 13
 - o Bargain 5
 - o Quality 2
- Positive attitudes 10
- Environmental awareness 12
- Hedonism 4
 - o Treasure hunting thrill 1
 - o Unique style 1
- Norms 3

Barriers

- Inconvenience 3
- Not seeing the impact of consumption choices 1
- Low acceptance 1
- Fast fashion mentality 1