

Consumer continuance in fashion resale practice: The motivations, barriers, and the role of resilience, and self-improvement

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Introduction and research background. The fashion industry, accountable for up to 10% of the world's carbon emissions (Niinimäki et al., 2020), is one of the most environmentally impactful industries in the world. Though there is growing recognition of the need for more sustainable and responsible practices, consumers' needs for novelty and newness outweigh their environmental concerns and the desire for sustainability. Due to the availability of fast fashion with the quicker turnaround of new styles and affordable prices, the usage of clothing has declined by almost 40% (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2020), with a large number of underused clothing products ending up in landfills.

Recently, the circular economy has been called out since it is considered an efficient strategy to extend the usage of already produced products, reduce the usage of new resources, and mitigate environmental impacts. Similar to collaborative consumption, the circular economy aims to maximize the usage and value of products and keep resources in use for as long as possible. As a side-shoot of circular economy, circular fashion recommends reusing and recycling fashion products, extending the lifespan of existing products, and keeping the circularity of those products as long as possible in an environmentally friendly and effective manner. Reselling is seen as one type of circular fashion.

Fashion resale refers to the buying and selling of pre-owned fashion products, such as clothing, shoes, and accessories. It is a sustainable and eco-friendly consumption that reduces the fashion industry's environmental impact by keeping clothes in the circular loop for longer. The fashion resale industry has been growing in recent years, especially with the wide use of the internet and the advancement of technology. Many online platforms, such as ThredUp, Poshmark, Depop, and The RealReal, emerged in the market, offering consumers various ways to buy and sell pre-owned fashion products. These platforms allow users to create profiles, upload photos of their clothing items, and sell them to other users. Some other features, such as secure payment systems, shipping and handling services, and buyer and seller protection, are also available on these fashion resale websites.

Though the online fashion resale market is booming (ThredUp, 2022) with all the benefits to consumers and the environment (Lou et al., 2022; Turunen et al., 2020), such as economic benefits and emotional benefits, this new business mode is still in its infancy. Several concerns about fashion resale have been pointed out, such as financial issues and performance risks for consumers to continue this sustainable fashion consumption (Jain et al., 2022, Lou et al., 2022). In addition, online resale shopping often involves different considerations than traditional retail shopping, such as paying attention to item condition, sizing, and shipping times. Some consumers who lack resilience may hesitate to try new shopping methods or experiment with different resale platforms and models. Furthermore, online fashion resale offers a unique opportunity to experiment with different styles,

colors, and patterns, which may attract consumers with a strong desire for self-improvement. Individuals may develop a greater sense of self-expression and confidence by trying new looks and taking risks with their fashion choices. Although some assumptions have been made, empirical evidence is lacking. The purpose of this study is to identify how these factors affect behavioral intention toward online fashion resale continuance.

Research method. A convenience sampling strategy with an online survey set up on Qualtrics was utilized to collect data. A consumer panel of the target population was purchased from an online research company. A quota was set for each of the age groups and genders to ensure a balanced sample. Screening questions were added to guarantee all the included participants have experiences with online fashion resale platforms. Data cleaning generated 155 usable samples out of returned responses, with an overall completion rate of 54.01%. Scales were adopted or adapted from previous research to measure fashion resale benefits and barriers (Jain et al., 2022, Lou et al., 2022; Turunen et al., 2020), consumer resilience (Milakovic, 2021), self-improvement (Zawadzka, 2014), and intention to continue sustainable clothing consumption.

Results. Descriptive findings show that around 47.7% of the participants have pre-owned items accounting for 10-40% of their wardrobe. The most popular online marketplace to acquire pre-owned fashion products are eBay, Facebook Market, and Poshmark. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) revealed three dimensions of customer value obtained from resale participation, functional value, economic value, and epistemic value, as well as two dimensions of risks, including performance risk and financial risk. EFA was also conducted to assess the dimension and construct validity of individual self-improvement and resilience. All the included constructs have good scale reliability and construct validity. The indicator was created for each construct for further analysis by averaging included scale items. Regress analysis results showed that functional ($\beta = .23$; $p < .002$), economic ($\beta = .52$; $p < .001$), but not epistemic value, motivate individuals to continue resale practices. Meanwhile, financial ($\beta = -.16$; $p < .006$), but not performance risk, discourage individuals from continuing their resale practices. Then a cluster analysis was conducted with self-improvement and consumer resilience as input variables. Emerged two groups (high vs. low) showed consistency between these two individual characteristics. Namely, individuals with high resilience tend to have a strong desire for self-improvement. Group-high members ($n = 95$; 61.29%), labeled as resilient self-improvement enthusiasts have higher scores in both resilience and self-improvement than the Group-low members ($n = 60$; 38.71%). MANOVA test (Wilks' $\lambda = .805$; $p < .000$) showed differences in intention to continue resale practices, perceived functional, economic, and epistemic value, and financial risk, but not in performance risk across two groups. The results indicate that resilient self-improvement enthusiasts tend to pursue functional ($\Delta = .71$; $p < .001$), economic ($\Delta = .88$; $p < .001$), epistemic value ($\Delta = .63$; $p < .001$) from sustainable resale practices, and hence have a higher intention ($\Delta = 1.29$; $p < .001$) to continue their sustainable consumption patterns.

Discussion and conclusion. The results of this study revealed that both benefits and risks of purchasing pre-owned fashion products exist from online fashion resale markets, consistent with previous research (Jain et al., 2022, Lou et al., 2022). However, individual fashion resale participants mainly focus on benefits with financial risks marginally affecting their continuance intention. Our study also confirmed the impacts of self-improvement and resilience on the intention of fashion

resale participation. The results supported the assumption that individuals with a stronger desire for self-improvement are more likely to pursue the values of purchasing pre-owned fashion through the online resale market. People striving for self-improvement may develop a greater appreciation for uniqueness and different styles, leading them to seek out more pre-owned fashion items with lower prices. Our study found that resilience is associated with an individual's sustainable consumption. Future studies can examine if consumers' active sustainable consumption engagement increases their resilience. In addition, future studies can examine if self-improvement motives can lead individuals to embrace the creativity and individuality of using pre-owned fashion clothing and accessories.

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