

What Drives Consumer to Purchase Second-Hand Clothing? An Investigation of External and Internal Factors

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Introduction. The fashion industry has a significant negative impact on the environment throughout the entire lifecycle of a product, from raw material extraction to disposal (Leal et al., 2019), resulting in it being considered one of the most unsustainable industries. It is the second-largest contributor to environmental pollution (Chaturvedi et al., 2020). In 2018, only 2.5 million tons of textiles were recycled while landfills received 11.3 tons of textiles in the United State (Environmental Protection Agency, 2022). To address these issues, the sustainable fashion movement has gained momentum, leading to an increase in second-hand shoppers (Koay et al., 2022). The second-hand clothing industry is growing at a rapid rate. More young consumers are interested in environmentally friendly fashion, partially reflected by the influence of the vintage trend (Koay et al., 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic has also played a role in this growth, as consumers looked for alternative shopping options due to reduced household savings (Kim & Kim, 2022). In 2021, the second-hand market was valued at 96 billion U.S. dollars and this value is estimated to reach 218 billion U.S. dollars by 2026 (Smith, 2022). Despite the growth of the second-hand market, there is limited research using S-O-R as the theoretical framework to investigate the external and internal factors that influence second-hand clothing consumption. The purpose of this research is to investigate 1) how external environmental factors, consisting of product quality, information quality and service quality influence consumers internal emotional state and 2) how consumer perceived hedonic and utilitarian affect their purchase intention and word-of-mouth.

Literature Review. The S-O-R model serves as the theoretical foundation for this study. This theory assumes that unique environmental factors affect people's internal feelings and emotions, which will ultimately determine their actions (Saricam, 2022). Previous research suggested that product quality, information quality and service quality positively influence consumers' hedonic and utilitarian values. Product quality refers to the degree to which a product meets or exceeds consumers' expectations for its intended use (Fernando et al., 2018). High-quality products provide consumers with a greater sense of satisfaction, enjoyment, and pleasure as well as greater utility, leading to a positive impact on their overall hedonic and utilitarian experiences. Information quality refers to the accuracy, completeness, relevance, and timeliness of the information that consumers receive about a product or service (Kim et al., 2008). Accurate and relevant information about the features, benefits and aesthetics of a product helps consumer make informed decisions. As a result, consumers experience greater pleasure and joy and

perceive greater functionality and usefulness from using the product. Service quality is a measure of how well a company’s service meet or exceed customer expectations, including aspects such as courtesy, responsiveness, and reliability (Habibi & Rasoolimanesh, 2021). Consumers who receive high-quality service in second-hand stores can find unique and reliable products, which enhance the pleasure and functional benefits that consumers derive from the shopping experiences. The behavior response is measured by consumers’ purchase intention and word-of-mouth. Previous research has shown that consumers who have high hedonic and utilitarian values are more likely to engage in a positive buying behavior and share effective information with their friends and family about a certain product or brand (Hur,2020; Kuppelwieser et al., 2021; Lou et al., 2022).

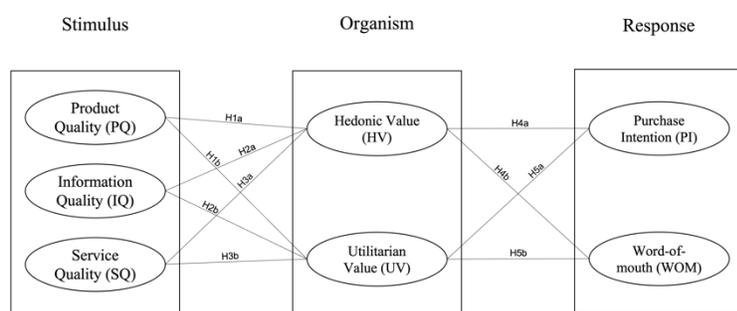


Figure 1. Research Framework

Methodology. Primary data were gathered from 448 consumers aged over 18, who have shopped second-hand products in the past via an online survey. All constructs were adapted from existing literature and are measured using a seven-point Likert scale. The statistical assumptions including normality, multicollinearity, and correlations

were examined (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1978). Unidimensionality, reliability, and validity of the investigated constructs were tested for proving model adequacy (Byrne, 1998). SPSS27 was used to run multiple regression to determine the proposed hypotheses (Figure 1).

Results and Findings. The results of the hypothesis testing presented in Table 1 indicate that all 10 hypotheses were statistically significant at the $p < 0.001$ level. These findings suggest that product quality (PQ), information quality (IQ), and service quality (SQ) have a positive influence on U.S. second-hand consumers’ hedonic value (HV) and utilitarian value (UV). Consumers who receive high quality of products, information, and services are more likely to experience greater

satisfaction, enjoyment, pleasure, and utility from their second-hand shopping experiences. Moreover, hedonic value (HV) and utilitarian value (UV) positively affect consumers’ purchase intention (PI) and word-of-mouth (WOM), indicating that consumers who perceive high levels of hedonic and utilitarian values are more

Table 1. Results of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis Supported:	Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Std. Coef. (β)	t-value	Sig at $p < 0.05$
H1a: Yes	HV	PQ	.246	5.868	<.001
H1b: Yes	UV	PQ	.287	7.445	<.001
H2a: Yes	HV	IQ	.216	4.430	<.001
H2b: Yes	UV	IQ	.253	5.642	<.001
H3a: Yes	HV	SQ	.424	8.513	<.001
H3b: Yes	UV	SQ	.385	8.402	<.001
H4a: Yes	PI	HV	.372	6.726	<.001
H4b: Yes	WOM	HV	.341	6.697	<.001
H5a: Yes	PI	UV	.374	6.756	<.001
H5b: Yes	WOM	UV	.458	8.988	<.001

likely to purchase similar products or services in the future and to share positive information about their experiences with others.

Conclusions and Implications. Overall, the findings of this study have several important implications. First, retailers should focus on improving the quality of second-hand products, providing accurate and relevant information about them, and offering high-quality customer service to enhance consumers' shopping experience. This could involve more rigorous quality control measures, creating more detailed product descriptions, providing additional services, and training staff to be more knowledgeable about sustainable fashion practices. In addition, educating consumers about the benefits of sustainable fashion practices is important. Retailers could provide educational materials or information on how to care for second-hand clothing to ensure that it lasts longer, and thus, reducing the negative impact of the fashion industry on the environment.

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