LOVED CLOTHES LAST

The perceptions of second hand clothing within generation Z

RESEARCH REPORT

Iliana Holtland
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LOVED CLOTHES LAST

How is second hand clothing perceived by Generation Z?

Research report

Iliana Holtland

500704929

Coaches: Anja Köppchen & Jan Piscaer

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Fashion & Management
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Research report ‘Loved Clothes Last’ – Iliana Holtland
Foreword

This thesis is written in the context of my graduation from the Fashion & Management programme at the Amsterdam Fashion Institute.

From a young age I love fashion, fascinated by the ever-changing and dynamic industry. However, during my studies at the Amsterdam Fashion Institute, I became aware of the major footprint the fashion industry leaves on the planet and the darker side of the industry. As a consequence, I decided to buy my clothing second hand as much as I can because of the harmful production processes that are eliminated in buying second hand clothing and recycling. I love shopping second hand and I want to show more people around me how fun (and environmentally friendly) it can be. Therefore, I decided to focus my research on the second hand clothing market in the Netherlands and what possibilities there are for making it more attractive for young women.

For the title of my report I was inspired by Fashion Revolution. This organization believes in valuing people, the environment, creativity and profit in equal measure. They want collaboration across the value chain of the fashion industry. From farmer to consumer, in order to make transformation happen. They have a bi-annual magazine, of which one is called LOVED CLOTHES LAST. This magazine is about the issue of waste and mass consumption and wants to inspire people to buy less and care more about the fashion industry. As this is not the exact same as the project I am conducting, I have chosen to use this sentence for my report, because it fits with my research.

I would like to thank the people around me for helping me in my graduation project. First of all, I would like to thank Anja Köppchen and Jan Piscaer for the helpful guidance and feedback on my work and ideas. Second, I would like to thank my sisters for always giving me tips and ideas to think about. I would also like to thank the retailers and entrepreneurs who took the time to answer my questions in the interviews. Moreover, I would like to thank all respondents for participating in my survey and finally, I would like to thank the people I talked with about my graduation project in focus groups, one-on-one discussions and informal talks. I was motivated by their enthusiasm!
Summary

This research explores how second hand clothing is perceived by generation Z, specifically women between the age of 18-23 years old. The fact that the clothing industry is the second most polluting industry in the world, next to oil was my reason to explore an alternative. The clothing mountain of textile waste in the Netherlands is getting bigger and fashion companies continue producing big amounts of clothing. The aim of this research is to extend the lifecycle of clothing and make second hand clothing more attractive for generation Z.

First, the second hand industry in the Netherlands is being studied to illustrate how it looks and the developments. This is done through literature research, shop visits, observations and interviews. After that, the question is raised why generation Z buys fast fashion. Personal factors for doing so are analysed and factors of the fast fashion industry that make people buy something. Moreover, the psychological factors for buying second hand clothing are studied through literature research, a survey and informal talks. The final chapter is about the motivators/drivers for buying second hand clothing amongst generation Z, this information is mostly gained from field research.

Several clothing sell points are observed and visited in the first part of this report: thrift stores, second hand clothing stores, second hand clothing websites and second hand clothing events. Currently the biggest second hand clothing sell point are thrift stores; in 2016 there were 516 second hand clothing stores in the Netherlands (Hegger, 2016) and in 2017 there were over 1000 thrift stores (Kleinjan, 2017). On one hand, the thrift stores are delivering a positive social contribution to society. However, the potential future of these stores is under pressure and unclear because of several reasons related to turnover, competition and municipalities. The majority of generation Z, also called millennials, is buying fast fashion (de Lenne, 2017). They find the low prices in combination with fashionable items attractive. Besides that it is quick and therefore easier to find a nice item at, for instance, Zara then searching longer for a nice item at a thrift store. Moreover, the fast fashion industry triggers consumers to always buy something new as the smart supply chains make it possible to design fashionable products and have it in store or on the website in the shortest amount of time possible. Impulse reaction are a result of the accessibility and availability of products in the fast fashion industry.

Generation Z is a generation of activists and therefore sensitive for environmental and social concerns. 60% say they are interested in buying certified/environmentally friendly clothing. However, their actual purchasing behaviour shows only 37% is doing so (Atamian Hahn-Petersen, 2018). According to Atamian Hahn-Petersen (2018) the reasons for this issue are product availability and lack of clear marketing. Marketees need to respond to millennials’ need of ease of use, price and value when shopping. Desired factors of the fast fashion industry should be integrated in second hand shopping to make it attractive for them. Other factors that play a role in generation Z buying fast fashion are influencers. They can drive their followers to make a certain buying decision. Influencers have the power to change someone’s image about for instance second hand clothing.

Based on the survey, motivators for generation Z to buy second hand clothing are because they love treasure hunting. It is a recreational event, searching for a long time and finding something gives them a satisfied feeling. Generation Z cares about social and environmental concerns. Therefore, second hand clothing is an alternative for fast fashion which is more environmentally friendly. Demotivators are people think it is dirty and they do not take the time and make an effort to search for a nice item.

Buying second hand clothing would become more attractive for generation Z when a physical store is located in a city centre. In the physical store consumers can see, feel and try on the items. Opportunities for second hand stores are in the field of marketing. The image and appearance of the store could be made more attractive by presenting the clothes in a new and ‘cleaner’ way. This conclusion is made based on the survey.
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1. Introduction

1.1 Rationale
The Dutch consumer buys 46 new clothes annually per person, they own 173 items in their wardrobes from which 50 not worn in the past year and throw away 40 items per year (Maldini et al., 2017).

For this reason, the focus of my research will be on studying possibilities of extending the lifecycle of clothing, but keeping the item in its original function. The clothing industry is the most polluting industry in the world, next to oil (Conca, 2015). One World researched the Dutch consumer and green fashion, they talked to 1200 people and state that 68% of the Dutch consumers are saying that water pollution caused by clothing production in third world countries should be prevented. However, the research revealed that only a small part of the Dutch consumers is taking water/nature pollution into consideration when buying clothes. Organic cotton, lyocell, bamboo and linen are sustainable alternatives for cotton; only 5% of the Dutch consumer buys clothing made of sustainable alternatives (Hogeling & van Gent, 2014).

Even if consumers would take into account the sustainability of fabrics, durable materials and quality of clothing, the question remains: is the system of constantly producing, buying and throwing away (new) clothing items really necessary?

In my personal life I have been triggered to explore an alternative. Since three years I have been buying my clothes second hand. The main reason for this is, I do not support unethical fast fashion systems and the pollution created by buying a lot of newly produced clothes. However, I do love to buy new clothes every two months; thus buying second hand clothing makes it cheap, more sustainable and fashionable for me to meet my personal demands. People are telling me that they like how I look and it excites me that I can say I bought it second hand. When they hear that, they’re like “oh if it can be like that, I would like to buy my clothes second hand too!” This experience inspired me to research the perceptions people have with second hand clothing.

After having talked to around 35 women around me, whom include friends, colleagues, family and women employees in second hand and fast fashion stores, I decided to narrow down my target group on women between the age of 18-23. These women are likely to spend the most of their money on fashion and accessories (Wander, 2017). Mostly, they are studying or just started working, therefore they do not have a big budget to spend (Wander, 2017). They are part of generation Z and also called post-millennials. They are known as the boundless generation, open for new things. This generation of activists wants to change the world and generate a positive impact on the planet (Ubels, 2017). 66% of global millennials are willing to spend more money on fashion labels that are sustainable (Atamian Hahn-Petersen, 2018). Moreover women are responsible for 70-80% of all clothing purchasing globally. Not only do they buy for themselves, sometimes they are also the influence behind someone else’s purchase (Brennan, 2015).

The problem addressed in this research is the amount of clothing left unsold and thrown away. The Dutch fashion sector has 21.5 million items of clothing left unsold annually. This means a turnover loss of €313,5 million for wholesalers, stores and producers (Awareness Fashion 2016). Besides, the Dutch consumer throws away 40 items per year (Maldini et al. 2017).

1.2 Aim
The aim of this research is to extend the lifecycle of clothing. By convincing Dutch consumers to wear items for a longer period of time or more often. This project aims to minimize the clothing mountain of unused clothes in the Netherlands. Research shows extending the lifecycle of clothing by a further nine months would reduce carbon, waste and water footprints by around 20-30% each (Gracey & Moon, 2012). The assumption is that this can be achieved by making clothing items being worn by different people through a system of reselling.

1.3 Product
The product of this research will be a retail environment offering second hand clothing. The focus of this retail...
environment will be on the image, the minimal look and cleanliness of the store. This retail environment is a fashionable place where people can resell and buy second hand clothing. It will be focussed on attracting women from generation Z. The aim with this store is to make second hand clothing more mainstream.

1.4 Questions
How is second hand clothing perceived by generation Z?

1. What does the second hand clothing industry look like in the Netherlands?
2. Why does generation Z buy fast fashion?
3. Which (psychological) factors play a role in buying second hand clothing?
4. What are motivators/drivers for buying second hand clothing, specific to women generation Z?

1.5 Methodology
1. What does the second hand clothing industry look like in the Netherlands?
   First of all, data are being collected through literature, articles and a documentary about the second hand industry in the Netherlands (VPRO, 2017). The documentary is used to illustrate the number of thrift stores, visitors, the amount of employment created and the quantity of CO2 saved. Literature and articles are used for additional data about the number of second hand clothing stores and why the Dutch consumer thinks it is important to buy second hand clothing. Next to that, a report studying the thrift store industry (Janssen, Hillen & Reinders, 2014) is used to illustrate the thrift store market and its challenges for the future. Moreover, field research is done in thrift stores/second hand stores, websites and clothing events in order to analyse the second hand clothing industry. This is executed through store observations, visits and interviews. The thrift stores visited are Dorcas Genemuiden, Steenwijk and Zwolle centre. The second hand clothing stores visited are Appel & Ei and Finders/Keepers. The websites analysed are Marktplaats, United Wardrobe, Rebelle and The Next Closet. The event visited is IJ-hallen.

2. Why does generation Z buy fast fashion?
   This section contains a theoretical and field research part. In the theoretical part the buying behaviour amongst generation Z in the fast fashion industry is being studied. The reasons why people buy new clothing, what feeling it gives them and personal characteristics. The field research consists of a survey sent out about fast and second hand fashion. This is followed by a focus group aimed for a more specific discussion about why people buy fast fashion.

3. Which (psychological) factors play a role in buying second hand clothing?
   This question is studied through literature research on buying behaviour and psychological factors of consumer behaviour, their background and attitudes. Furthermore, this sub question involves the explanation of the following factors: environmental concerns, altruism and perception. This is supplemented with a focus group about perception.

4. What are the motivators/drivers for buying second hand clothing specific to generation Z?
   This question refers to the buying behaviour of generation Z and through what they get influenced. Next to that, the reason why they are shopping in specific stores or what holds them back to do so. Why they do or do not buy second hand clothing and when it would become (more) attractive for them. Moreover, the outcomes of conversations about treasure hunting, dirtiness and places to buy second hand clothing are explained. This information is gathered during shop visits, observations, interviews, informal talks and a survey. In order to get a confidence level of 95%, I needed to reach 384 people. This number of people is based on the fact that there are 625,019 women between 18-23 years old in the Netherlands (CBS, 2018). Only 115 people responded to the survey, therefore this has a confidence level of 75%. Besides the respondents on the survey, around 40 people are reached in informal talks, interviews, focus groups.

1.6 Structure
The following chapter discusses the second hand clothing industry in the Netherlands; what the developments, upcoming threats, challenges and opportunities are. Chapter 3 draws a picture of why people
buy fast fashion and studies buying behaviour of young women in the fast fashion industry. Chapter 4, studies the (psychological) factors that play a role in buying preowned clothing. In chapter 5 the personal motivators/drivers for generation Z to buy second hand clothing are analysed. Finally, the combination of answers to these chapters leads to a concluding answer to the main question: How is second hand clothing perceived by generation Z?

2. Second hand clothing industry

*What does the second hand clothing industry look like in the Netherlands?*

In this chapter Dutch thrift stores are visited and studied. After that, other types of second hand clothing stores are analysed and finally second hand clothing events are observed.

2.1 Thrift stores

For this section the Dutch documentary ‘Het success van de kringloopwinkel’, which means the success of the thrift store has been watched (VPRO, 2017). It consists of five episodes in which VPRO (the television channel) conducted a research about the thrift stores in the Netherlands and especially the people working here. They have targeted and visited two stores and talked to 30 people, which is why this series adds valuable information to this research. Most information in the first part of this chapter is collected from this documentary, unless stated otherwise.

The thrift stores in the Netherlands achieve social success. These stores have offered employment for 15000 people. More than half of the people working in the thrift stores have a distance to the labour market because of physical disability, mental disability or an addiction background (Zwaart, 2015). Both people and items get a second chance. Each year the thrift stores collect 200 million kilogram textiles, furniture, books and tableware, which would otherwise have been thrown away or burned. This results in a CO2 saving equal to the heating of 46,000 houses. There is not a lot of information available about the turnover of thrift stores. They use the sales turnover besides moneybox for the future, to cover costs for staff, housing, logistics and support for people with a disability (Arts, 2015).

The thrift store industry provides a positive impact on people and the environment and makes a major contribution to Dutch society. The aim is to offer employment to people with a distance to the labour market and the reuse of goods and raw materials.

On the other hand, a report from a cooperation between Accenture, Social Enterprise Lab and Branchevereniging Kringloop bedrijven Nederland (Trade association for recycling companies in the Netherlands) about the development of the thrift stores until 2020 revealed that after a period of growth in recent years, the expectation is that the turnover in this sector will be stagnating (Janssen, Hillen & Reinders, 2014). This expectation is based first of all on the fact that the turnover decreased with 3% between 2012 and 2014. In combination with 5% inflation, the decline is actually 8%. And second of all:

1. The negative image of the sector and the unprotected name, everyone can start a thrift store. The image cannot be changed, because many thrift stores do not have a social objective. This makes it impossible to create a clear identity.
2. Rapidly changing consumer requirements, including omnichannel retail and a seamless shopping experience. Which means digital tools for customers, the use of technology, data, algorithms and advanced forecasting capabilities. Yet, the thrift store is not meeting these demands. The consumer of the future is well informed and more price-conscious than ever. This is where the competitor of the thrift store is responding well: Primark and Action. The unique selling point of thrift stores is low prices. But price oriented retailers Primark and Action have stores on A-locations, low prices and are introducing
100-150 new articles every week. They have become competitors and with that, the thrift store is losing 
is unique selling point.
3. Quality is reducing in thrift stores as private suppliers try to sell something first via Marktplaats or other 
second hand platforms.
4. The unstable relationship with municipalities that are an increasingly important factor for waste and the 
social agenda. Municipalities focus on the decrease of social contributions rather than giving money to 
the thrift store for the employees with a disability/distance to the labour market. Besides, there are higher 
costs associated with the collection of waste for thrift stores than commercial waste processors. 
Municipal services work together to a limited extend, where thrift stores are suffering from.

This industry has to reinvent itself in order to adapt to the current Zeitgeist.

2.2 Second hand clothing selling points
Second hand clothing stores in the Netherlands have also seen growth over the past years. In 2012 there were 
457 second hand clothing stores and in 2016 this number increased to 516 (Hegger, 2016). Between 2006 and 
2016 the number of second hand clothing stores increased with 32.9% (Terra, 2017). Furthermore, 27% of the 
Dutch consumer frequently buys second hand clothing and 78% below the age of 35 think it is important to reuse 
clothing (Carabain, Spitz & Keulemans, 2012).

Over the past years, I have done research on different kinds of second hand clothing sell points, both on the 
internet and through field research. They are dividable into four categories, which can also be combined: 
traditional thrift stores, second hand clothing stores, second hand clothing web-shops and markets/events. Below 
a short explanation about the categories and following up the outcomes of the visits, interviews and observations 
used to map the second hand clothing industry in the Netherlands. The extensive version of the shop visits is in 
my process book.

Thrift stores
Thrift stores are ‘traditional’ second hand shops that exist in almost every little village and big city. The 
Netherlands counts over 1000 thrift stores (Kleinjan, 2017).

The reason why I have chosen to observe the thrift stores in Genemuiden, Steenwijk and Zwolle is because they 
are known in the region for their cleanliness, this is concluded after having talked to around 40 people in this 
region about thrift stores over the past 2 years. These stores are chosen because the goal is to find out what is 
still missing in the ‘popular’ and big thrift stores that holds generation Z back to shop here. The clothes in these 
stores go through a damage/clean check in order for the employees to decide if it can go into the store or not. 
This results in a clean looking store, which is highly favoured by the customers and this is where the term 
cleaness is referred to. The thrift store in Genemuiden is a charity store. All the money goes to Dorcas, an 
international organization for development cooperation (Dorcas, 2015). They aim to improve the living conditions 
and the living environment of vulnerable Roma-children. Customers go specifically to Dorcas stores to support 
this organization. The thrift store in Steenwijk looks like a department store, extensive space with a 
comprehensive collection of items. Besides sustainability, collecting and selling goods, they are also concentrated 
on the social activities. These activities include taking care of the development of employees with a distance to 
the labour market because of depression, addiction or because they are refugees. They also have a Repair Café 
where people can come with their broken goods to repair them instead of buying something new. The thrift store 
in Zwolle is a busy one, located in the city centre.

All three thrift stores look organized and offer a big number of items, which are checked before it went in the 
store, which results in a store with items that are in good state. They have different focus points where they invest 
money in. Furthermore, all kind of visitors are seen, from refugees with a low budget, to conscious people with a 
bigger budget who aim to recycle.

Second hand clothing stores
Second hand clothing stores are often located in the city centre. For this research report I have visited two types, 
namely a second hand store which functions as a platform for reselling and buying second hand clothes (Appel & 
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E) and a vintage/retro store with a specific group of customers (Finders Keepers). Other examples are Overijsselse Diva, Episode, Zipper, Kaufhaus.

Appel & Ei in Zwolle operates as a physical platform for buying and reselling clothing. Consumers can donate clothing and receive 40% of the selling price. The clothes go through a check where they pay attention to: is it damaged? Is it clean (washed)? Is it maximum three years old? The store looks new with attention for visual merchandising. Finders Keepers in Zwolle is a second hand vintage/retro store. The owner was missing the type of clothing that the nine streets in Amsterdam are offering, therefore she decided to start her own store. Her underlying aim with the store is to decrease the clothing waste mountain in the Netherlands. Mainly art students are shopping here, as well as older women looking for 70’s blouses. Both retailers see an increasing line in customers shopping second hand clothing and the acceptance of this.

There are different types of second hand stores, but they do not attract the mainstream as they offer a specific collection of items.

**Websites**

Examples of websites focussed on reselling (clothing) items offering second hand goods are: United Wardrobe, Marktplaats, The Next Closet and Rebelle.

Marktplaats is a Dutch market place for buying and reselling any type of goods, no focus on specific product groups and therefore very general. United Wardrobe is a platform for buying and reselling clothing. Based on the survey, the positive aspect of United Wardrobe is the many search functions that allows to search for specific items. Negative point is, the seller has to include the shipping costs in the selling price, this makes the item more expensive for the customer. The Next Closet and Rebelle are both platforms for buying and reselling second hand designer items.

United Wardrobe is very popular amongst millennials and Marktplaats is for everyone. The Next Closet and Rebelle offer more expensive and exclusive items than Marktplaats and United Wardrobe. This shows that besides thrift stores, there are other different types of second hand stores that attract different types of people.

**Second hand clothing events**

Examples are flea markets during events like Kingsday where individuals can sell their goods in a central place in their city or town. Fashion Flea Market is an initiative from students of the Amsterdam Fashion Institute. It is a small flea market on the campus where people can rent a stand or a clothing rack to sell their clothes and accessories. The IJ-hallen is a big flea market happening once a month at the NDSM-werf in Amsterdam. People from all over the country (and even from abroad) are visiting this market. People willing to sell goods can rent a stall. There are 750 stalls per event (IJhallen, 2018).

IJ-hallen attracts 30.000 visitors every month, all others are small events.

### 2.3 Conclusion

There are several second hand clothing points in the Netherlands through which second hand clothing can be sold and bought, both online and physical. For instance, thrift stores, Appel & Ei, Finders Keepers, The Next Closet, Rebelle, United Wardrobe, Marktplaats and IJ-hallen. Currently, one of the main second hand clothing sell points are thrift stores. In 2016 the Netherlands counted 516 second hand clothing stores (Hegger, 2016) and in 2017 there were over 1000 thrift stores (Kleinjan, 2017). However, the potential future of thrift stores is unclear. On one hand, thrift stores have shown to be successful in their contribution to society. They often offer employment to people with a distance to the labor market. But, on the other hand, the turnover of these stores is expected to stagnate in the future for several reasons: the negative image of the sector, rapidly changing consumer requirements, where these stores are not able to respond to as well as their competitors, and the reduce of quality and unstable relationships with municipalities. In other words, the thrift stores need to adapt to the current Zeitgeist in order to stay relevant in the future.
3. Fast fashion

Why does generation Z buy fast fashion?

The fast fashion industry is known for the combination of rapid production capabilities with enhanced product design capabilities. The goal is to design cool and popular products that fit the newest consumer trends and meet consumer demands. This chapter analyses five different reasons why generation Z buys fast fashion.

3.1 Factors for buying fast fashion

Based on the survey, the main reasons why women from generation Z buy fast fashion is because it is fashionable (58%) and cheap (53%). Following up on this survey, a one-on-one interview has been held with Myrna (22 years old) on April 5, 2018. The goal was triggering to dig deeper and let her think about why these reasons are so important. She is buying fast fashion because it is quick, easy, fashionable and cheap. The question was raised why she does not buy second hand fashion and she started questioning herself. She wants to buy second hand fashion because she knows about the bad footprint the fashion industry leaves behind on the planet. However, the easiness of finding a nice item quickly at, for instance, Zara is winning over searching for a longer time at a second hand store.

3.2 Trends

According to The Business of Fashion, three categories of trends will define the fashion industry in 2018; the global adoption of disruptive technologies, artificial intelligence and advanced analytics. These trends are changing the industry and consumer demands. Ease and comparison make consumers walk away from a brand easily and give their short-term loyalty to another brand. The speed of the industry is shaking up the system; speed in standards, analytics, lead times and responsiveness (BoF team & McKinsey and Company, 2018). The rapid speed of information and changing fashion trends are factors ensuring consumers demand for affordable options and shop more often (Hoffman, 2007).

Fashion has been characterized with factors such as low predictability, high impulse purchase, shorter life cycle and high volatility of market demand (Fernie and Sparks, 2004). Retailers and companies need to take the ‘speed to market’ approach to stay relevant in this highly competitive industry (Christopher et al, 2004). Trends alternate quickly and every 6 weeks the fast fashion chains provide their customers with new collections. The combination of fashionable items and low prices is attractive for younger people. 96.9% of Dutch, Belgian and German people between the age of 18-26 buy fast fashion (De Lenne, 2017). This industry wants to stimulate consumers to always buy something new. This results in consumers having an impulse reaction in their buying behaviour. With fast fashion comes fast consumption; each year 330 million pieces of clothing are being sold in the Netherlands (Kay, 2017).

3.3 Impulse buying

The impulse reaction leads to impulse buying, an unplanned decision made just before a purchase. Emotions have a strong connection to impulse buying (Rook 1987). Impulsiveness can be intuitive by nature, related to a person’s character, external factors or low self-consciousness (Mendenhall, 2014). With impulse buying, there are three factors of personal psychological attitude: desire for pleasure, lack of self-control and need to impress others (Mendenhall, 2014). Impulsive buyers do experience pleasure but they also feel guilt, as they know they had lost self-control. However, they do continue shopping, as the pleasure is rewarding (Li, 2011). Advertisers play a big role in convincing consumers to buying something in an impulse.

3.4 Conclusion

Based on the survey, the main reasons why generation Z buys fast fashion is because it is fashionable and cheap. The fast fashion industry is known for the ability to design fashionable, low priced products and have it in store or on the website in the shortest amount of time possible. Smart supply chains make it possible for this industry to take on a ‘speed to market’ approach. This results in an industry that always triggers consumers to buy something new. Trends such as the global adoption of disruptive technologies, artificial intelligence and
advanced analytics will change consumer demand in a direction that always demands something new and therefore the industry is changing to be able to respond to these demands. Consumers experience impulse reactions in their buying behaviour because of the accessibility and availability of products.

4. Psychological factors in buying behaviour
Which (psychological) factors play a role in buying second hand clothing?

There are several factors that play a role in buying second hand clothing for consumers. In this chapter the different factors are being analysed and explained.

4.1 Social and environmental concerns
Environmentally friendly shopping behaviour provides positive emotions. It results in a more positive self-image (Venhoeven, Bolderdijk & Steg, 2016). Confidence of own worth and expression are important personal characteristics for people aged 14-25 (Brazeale and Lueg, 2011). These young people connect the identity and image of a retail store/brand to their own identity. Customers feel responsibility, social justice, sense of accomplishment and value for money when shopping in an environmentally friendly way. Millennials care about social and environmental concerns. However, there is still a gap in buying behaviour. When it comes to shopping, 60% of millennials are interested in certified/environmentally friendly clothing, but only 37% says they actually purchased them (Atamian Hahn-Petersen, 2018). Product availability and lack of clear marketing seem to be the issues behind millennials not actually choosing sustainability in fashion. Millennials are attracted to ease of use, price and value when shopping; marketeers need to respond to this need (Atamian Hahn-Petersen, 2018).

Moreover, the background characteristics of young people such as age, gender and education play a role in their conscious mindset. These factors determine how much they know about environmental concerns and what they want to do about it. An important factor in sustainable behaviour of young people is the degree of altruism (Hogeling & van Gent, 2014). Altruism means the concern for another person’s welfare; doing something that brings advantages to someone else. Altruism is encoded in the brain, research shows that the areas of the brain turning on during altruistic acts are the same areas of the brain that are turned on in response to food, sex and material gains. The results suggest that altruistic characteristics are set in the brain and even pleasurable (Wslasoff, 2016).

Another factor that influences buying behaviour of consumers is perception. Perception is the energy which makes people aware of the world around them and the understanding through senses (touch, taste, smell, sight and sound) (Tollington, 1998). Consumers make decisions based on the information received through the senses. In response to this, they figure out their needs, values and expectations (Durman, 2014). Marketeers use these senses to stimulate consumers to consider a product. Perception is another important psychological factor when it comes to influencing buying behaviour (Donner, 2017). It is an image in the head of the customer. An interview is done with Nadiah (23 years old) on April 2, 2018 to talk about the perception of specific brands. Nadiah does not like to buy her clothing from Primark as she is not attracted to the employees, the visual merchandise in this shop and the atmosphere. However, she does like to buy Primark clothing at a thrift store as she loves the image and feeling of thrift shopping. Next to that she does like to buy at Zara, although she knows this is not the most environmentally friendly way to buy clothing. She prefers the image, atmosphere and feeling she has with Zara over Primark. In her perception Zara is a more environmentally friendly in their supply chains than Primark. This way of thinking is caused by how Zara and Primark are positioning themselves in terms of store concept and employees. However, there is a lack of knowledge about the supply chains of these brands.

4.2 Conclusion
There are several psychological factors that play a role in buying second hand clothing. Generation Z is sensitive for environmental and social concerns. However, there is still a gap in their buying behaviour. Their actual buying behaviour is caused by how Zara and Primark are positioning themselves in terms of store concept and employees. However, there is a lack of knowledge about the supply chains of these brands.
behaviour shows only 37% of millennials purchases certified/environmentally friendly clothing, while 60% says they are interested in doing so. The level of altruism in the characteristics of young people determines how much social consumer behaviour they show. According to Atamian Hahn-Petersen (2018) product availability and lack of clear marketing seem to be the issues behind millennials not actually choosing sustainability in fashion. Marketeers need to respond to millennials’ need of ease of use, price and value when shopping. People make a (buying) decision based on the information received through their senses, perception is therefore another important factor in buying second hand clothing.

5. Motivators/drivers second hand clothing
What are the motivators/drivers for buying second hand clothing specific to generation Z?

5.1 Generation Z characteristics
Women between the age of 18-23 years old are part of generation Z. They are influenced by social media platforms, especially Instagram is highly favoured (Influencer Marketing Hub). Seeing influencers wearing something can drive them to also think about buying it. Generation Z is always looking at social networks on their smartphones and therefore it makes sense for marketeers to work with Instagram influencers, to promote their brand or product (Fromm, 2018). In May 2018, fashion blogger and Instagram influencer Moderosa (Roos-Anne van Dorsten) posted a thrift store challenge on her YouTube channel. The challenge was to get a nice outfit for a maximum of €25 euros. Posts like these can help generation Z to get more curious about second hand clothing, especially when it can be in a fun way like Moderosa is showing in her video (van Dorsten, 2018).

5.2 Reasons for and against buying second hand clothing
The most common reason why people like to buy second hand clothing is because they love treasure hunting. In a focus group with Danielle (23), Naomi (22) and Tessa (22) who love treasure hunting came forward that for these young women treasure hunting is an experience and an exciting activity. There is social interaction; meeting people with a disability, people who collect specific items and refugees. People like thrift store shopping because it is cheaper to buy items in a second hand store and they experience social benefits. The fact that they like these aspects is linked to their degree of altruism, which is developed in the brain. In the thrift stores categories are disorganized which results in an experiencing pleasure because products are anonymous and the environment is open for imagination and fantasy (Bardhi, 2003). The feeling of searching and the satisfaction of finding a desirable item is their motivation to go second hand shopping. They come home with different items than they would buy in new stores, it satisfies them to tell people it is from a thrift store. They are proud of this, as their perception of buying something second hand is positive, this refers to the pleasurable altruistic characteristics set in the brain. Besides that, treasure/bargain hunting is an important motivator for second hand shoppers, this is where second hand retailers compete with traditional retailers (Guiot & Roux, 2010).

Based on the survey, after treasure hunting, the most common answer why people like to buy second hand clothing was because not everyone else is wearing it. This need for uniqueness is a motivating factor. People feel fulfilment and pleasure after (Guiot & Roux, 2010; Palmer & Clark, 2005; Reiley, 2008). In the focus group came forward that young women get a satisfied and ultimate happy feeling when they have found a unique item in a thrift store.

Based on the survey, the reasons why generation Z does not buy second hand clothing is mainly because they think it is dirty (23%) and they do not know good second hand stores (21%). In a focus group, Nina and Valerie (19 and 23 years old) explain ‘dirty’ is the idea that someone else wore it, all the hands that touched the clothing and never knowing what kind of person wore it before them and what happened with the clothing. They love buying fast fashion or new clothing as this is not worn by someone they do not know and it is ensuring some kind of quality. Also, when buying clothes in a new store instead of a second hand store, it is possible to bring back clothing if it is damaged in an early stage of owning the item, or if customers change their mind within two weeks.

However, when they were showed new and second hand clothes on a rack outside of a store, they could not figure out what was bought new and bought second hand. Concluding; the ‘dirtiness’ is something in the head.

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Their perception with second hand clothing is negative. This example and the one mentioned before in this chapter show that perception is an important influencing factor in buying second hand clothing.

5.3 Places to buy second hand clothing
Based on the survey, respondents mentioned different types of places where they buy their second hand clothing. For instance, respondents mentioned vintage brands that used to have nice collections are only available via private individuals. Moreover, buying at Facebook groups is convenient for another respondent and cheap. Items that are expensive or out of stock are likely to be bought at Marktplaats and people like to buy at thrift stores because they look for stuff they can redecorate/upcycle themselves.

Furthermore, buying second hand would become more attractive for the respondents when the clothing is offered in a physical store that looks new, fashionable and has a clean environment. It should be located in a central place, accessible and advertised via social media channels. Finally, it should be made easy to find fashionable items for generation Z, that means the store needs to offer clothing that mainstream generation Z is interested in. Additionally, product variety, store cleanliness and organized product displays are the most important factors second hand retailers should focus on in order to influence the business’ success (Han, 2013).

5.4 Environmental practices as a motivator
Another important driver or motivator for buying second hand clothing is consumers caring for environmental practices, which is associated with a consumer’s degree of altruism. Buying clothing second hand is a more environmentally friendly way of shopping because the clothing is not going to waste, or ending up in landfill. It is being recycled/reused and therefore not using new raw materials to produce something new.

5.5 Conclusion
Generation Z is following influencers closely on Instagram, they play a big role in the decision making of this generation. Moreover, influencers on these types of social media can drive their followers to buy second hand clothing. Another reason for generation Z to buy second hand clothing is the love treasure hunting. The social interaction, search for one of a kind goods and satisfaction of finding something makes it a recreational experience. They are willing to make a bigger effort to find something and are open and curious for trying new things. The main reason why they do not buy second hand clothing is because they think it is dirty. However, this is the perception in the head and not concrete. Moreover, buying second hand clothing would become attractive for this generation when a physical store is located in the city centre. The store should look clean and organized. It should be accessible through social media channels. Besides that, it should be easy to find nice items. Second hand clothing is a more environmentally friendly way of shopping than buying something new, this is an important motivator for this generation of activists to buy something second hand.

6. Final conclusion

The main research question for this research is: how is second hand clothing perceived by Generation Z? Second hand retailers see a rising line in the acceptance of second hand clothing over the past 5 years. People are willing to generate a positive impact on the environment and they begin to see the advantages of second hand clothing. 60% of millennials are interested in certified/environmentally friendly clothing, however, this does not seem to result in the actual buying of environmentally friendly clothing. Only 37% actually purchased them. They are interested, but the ease and quickness of buying new clothing is winning over the search for good second hand items. Buying second hand clothing is not yet mainstream but when people are asked why they do not do it, they start thinking about it.
With buying second hand clothing, a customer eliminates the use of new resources, is extending the lifecycle and next to that, most of the time clothing is cheaper second hand. With second hand clothing, the goal is to value items in an optimal way. Therefore, it is important to continue with second hand clothing.

Opportunities for second hand stores are in the field of marketing. The image and appearance of the store could be made more attractive by presenting the clothes in a new and ‘cleaner’ way.

My goal is partly achieved. The question was how the second hand clothing industry is perceived amongst generation Z and what the possibilities are for making it more attractive for them. These answers are clear, in general generation Z is interested in second hand clothing and wants to buy it but there is a lack of clear marketing and attractiveness which makes them not buy it as much as they say they want to. On the other hand, I have not done anything yet, but inspiring people, to make the clothing mountain in the Netherlands smaller. There is still a way to go. However, in this research it is made clear how it can be done and what is needed to achieve interest of millennials for second hand clothing. My aim is that second hand clothing will become mainstream and that eventually fashion companies will stop producing extreme amounts of clothing.
7. Sources


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