

# Analysis of Customers' Perception towards second-hand Garments in Pakistan's Apparel Industry: A Qualitative Study

Zunaira Sajjad<sup>1</sup> | Faiza Khalid<sup>2</sup> | Haiq Munir<sup>3</sup> | Shazadi Rameen Arshad<sup>4</sup> | Fatima Waseem<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Lecturer, Air University School of Management, Air University Islamabad

<sup>2,3</sup>Department of Engineering Management, National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST)

<sup>4,5</sup>Department of Engineering Management, National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST)

## Correspondence

Zunaira Sajjad

([mujahidshah287@yahoo.com](mailto:mujahidshah287@yahoo.com))

Submitted: March 03, 2021

Revised: May 14, 2021

Accepted: June 23, 2021

Published online: June 30, 2021

## ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the factors influencing the purchase decision of second-hand clothing shoppers in Pakistan.

The qualitative approach was adopted for this study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 50 respondents. A thematic approach was used for the analysis of data.

The paper reveals that factors such as price, quality, hygiene, brand, social influence, and environmental factors affect the purchase decision of customers. The findings indicate that majority of the customers prefer buying second-hand clothes because they are cheaper and usually of good quality as compared to the local brands. Hygiene and social influence were found to be the main reasons due to which people tend to avoid buying second-hand clothes. Interestingly the study revealed that a very limited number of people buy second-hand clothes due to environmental reasons as the majority of them are not concerned about sustainability and are unaware of the adverse impact that their purchase decision has on the environment.

The paper fills the gap in the literature by adopting a qualitative approach offering an in-depth understanding of factors impacting customers' purchase decisions regarding second-hand clothing. This study enriches our understanding by exploring these factors in a developing country's context.

**Key Word:** Sustainability, purchase intention, second-hand clothes, apparel industry

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

In modern times the greatest challenge to mankind is the climatic changes and environmental pollution (Yoon & Yoon, 2018). To overcome these challenges, the world is moving towards sustainable consumption as it aids in reducing pollution, deforestation, and depletion of natural resources (Chua et al., 2019). The overall level of consumption of resources along with the depletion of resources is usually driven by cultural, personal, and social factors (Hammad et al., 2019). Consumption habits of individuals have a significant impact on the environment and its adverse effects can be reduced by changing the daily consumption habits of individuals and by motivating them to adopt sustainable forms of consumption (Saleki et al., 2019; Yang & Ha-Brookshire, 2020).

Over the last decade, the debate on sustainable fashion has greatly emphasized the significance of eco-friendly materials, transparent supply chains, and handling overconsumption of products by adopting new business models like resale or renting (Moll, 2021). According to ThredUp (2019), in the last three years, the growth of the second-hand apparel market was 21 times faster than the retail market and it is anticipated that it'll double its global value to 51 billion dollars by 2023. For this market to flourish, there is a need to educate the consumers regarding the value of clothing to bring a change in their consumption mindset. This change in their mindset to contribute towards the overall well-being allows them to self-restrict themselves from buying new products and give old products a second life (Borusiak et al., 2020). A joint effort between the companies and governments is required in this regard (Silva, Santos, Duarte & Vlačić, 2021). The use of second-hand clothing promotes sustainability all around the world (Ek Styv\_en & Mariani, 2020). Reusing and recycling the clothes

increases their lifespan and eventually leads to a reduction in waste (Cervellon, Carey & Harms 2012). A study conducted by Yang et al. (2017) revealed that clothing consumption led to wastage of more than 15 million tons of clothes in landfills on annual basis, exerting immense pressure on the environment. Past researches reveal multiple benefits of second-hand clothing such as environmental (Barnes et al., 2013), financial (Xu et al., 2014), and psychological benefits (Tian et al., 2001). Acceptance for second-hand apparel shopping is increasing day by day as it does not only prove to be cost-effective but consumers are also inclining towards ethical shopping (McGoldrick & Freestone, 2008). By buying these used products, consumers can avoid contributing to the negative impact which the production of new products may cause on the environment (Graafland, 2003). Ethical consumers prefer shopping at second-hand apparel stores as they prove to be sustainable since they only sell used goods (Thomas, 2011).

Fast-changing fashion trends have increased the consumption of clothes all over the world. Consumers belonging to developed countries often find themselves with more clothing than they need, with the clothes going out of fashion in a matter of weeks. Since they can afford new clothes, they get rid of the old ones, dispose of them for recycling, discard them as waste or donate them to various charities (Cline, 2012). Most of these clothes end up in the local markets of developing countries. The majority of consumers of second-hand products belong to Asia, Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and the Caribbean (de Brauw & Giles, 2018). Pakistan imports used clothes, shoes, toys, and kitchenware from Canada, the USA, Australia, Europe, the Middle East, and New Zealand (Bashir, Lodhi & Atif, 2016). According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, the import of worn clothing stood at 340,812 tonnes in July-April FY20, valuing \$149 million. Pakistan is a developing country and the majority of its population lie below the poverty line. Since people have a limited number of resources, a huge percentage of the population buys second-hand products (Bashir, Lodhi & Atif, 2016).

The objective of this research is to determine the factors influencing customers' perception towards the purchase of second-hand clothes in Pakistan. Previous researches have been conducted on the purchase intention of consumers while buying second-hand products such as mobile phones, automobiles, etc. (Bashir, Lodhi & Atif, 2016). The research on the apparel industry is still lacking in the literature. Most of the researches conducted in the past have quantitatively explored various factors motivating consumers to purchase second-hand clothes including economic motivations (Xu, Chen, Burman, & Zhao, 2014), ecological motivations (Borusiak et al., 2020), fashion motivations (Ferraro, Sands & Brace-Govan, 2016), recreational motivations (Guiot & Roux, 2010) and ideological motivations (Padmavathya, Swapana & Paul, 2019). These studies lack an in-depth understanding of the factors that have an impact on customers' perceptions regarding the purchase of second-hand clothes. This qualitative attempt intends to fill this gap by providing a deeper insight into this phenomenon. Lastly, this study also contributes to the literature by providing a developing country's perspective regarding this phenomenon. Most of the studies carried out have focused on western geographical regions (Guiot & Roux, 2010; Alam, 2015). There is a contrasting difference between culture, technological advancement, and availability of resources between these countries and a developing country like Pakistan. This study enriches our understanding by exploring factors such as price, brand, hygiene, quality, environment, and social influence like in a developing country's context.

The next section includes the literature review. Study design, sampling, and data collection are explained in the third section. Then, the results are reported based on thematic analysis, which leads to the discussion of the

findings and practical implications. The final section indicates the limitations of this research and recommends future directions.

## **2 | LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 | Sustainability**

The textile industry comprises a significant portion of the world economy and thus is a highly growing sector (Acharya & Gupta, 2016). This eventually results in increased disposal of solid waste which is one of the huge challenges for the environment (Pinheiro & Francisco, 2018). However, both pre-consumer and post-consumer waste can be re-used in industries. This can increase the revenue and can prove to be beneficial for third parties involved (Yan, 2019). It can also aid in providing economic, environmental, and social benefits (Bukhari, 2018). Proper disposal of textile waste is critical for a sustainable environment. Fast fashion leads to increased textile generation and clothing consumption which eventually leads to more textile waste generation. Most of the textile manufacturing companies are heading towards zero-waste generation but post-consumer waste is still a problem to be addressed for a sustainable environment. There are many factors influencing clothing disposal behavior such as lack of knowledge regarding environmental concerns (Krishnaraj, 2020). It is necessary to manage clothing waste in a better way to avoid land fillings and hazardous gas emissions from the waste. Textile reuse and recycling are good approaches for reducing environmental waste. This study is about consumer perception for reused clothes as reusing is more beneficial than recycling as later involves more effort and cost sometimes (Sandin & Peters, 2018). Climate change effects such as global warming and the greenhouse effect can also be minimized by reusing/recycling used clothes.

### **2.2 | Reverse Logistics**

Reverse Logistics (RL) extends the life cycle of a product and helps in increasing the profitability and decreasing the landfills (Pinheiro & Francisco, 2018). RL is the reverse flow of End-of-Life and End-of-Use products. As clothes are discarded before their end-of-life so it is important to gain value from those clothes. Collection of used clothes from the users is difficult (Paras, Pal & Ekwall, 2018). Most of the people donate their used clothes to charitable organizations to be reused by underprivileged people, or send as exports to developing countries for resale and thus generate funds for development projects. Re-usage of clothes saves up to 60-85% processing of new garments and reduces waste. The overall impact of reuse of clothes on Acidification, Global warming, Nutrient enrichment, Ozone depletion, and photochemical oxidant potential are much more beneficial as compared to recycling (Farrant, Olsen & Wangel, 2010). Different ways for the collection of used clothes from consumers are proposed by Yan (2019) keeping in view the impact on the environment. Sustainability is the main issue due to which all this process is carried out, however, there are many barriers to sustainable RL (Cullinane, Browne, Karlsson & Wang, 2017). RL should be effective to provide customers a better experience to reduce economic and environmental burdens and lead to cost-effective, ecological, and innovative waste disposal (Bukhari, 2018). Clothes reuse highly depends upon RL as it provides the channel for the collection of used clothes (Paras, Pal & Ekwall, 2018). It is very important to design effective RL for consumers and make them aware of RL networks for the collection of used clothes so they may improve their disposal behavior.

### 2.3 | Consumer Behavior

Consumer behaviors consist of activities regarding purchasing, using, taking care, and disposing of products and their desires and expectations that fulfill their needs. Consumer behavior is affected by many factors such as lifestyle, self-concept, social influence, ethical self, economic, recreational, and fashion motivations (Haraldsson & Peric, 2017). Studies show that consumers have less knowledge about the environmental effects of disposal of clothing waste and this niche should be filled with proper instructions. This can be done through tags by the manufacturers (Krishnaraj, 2020). Knowledge about environmental concerns is necessary for consumers as they have to play their role in sustainable waste disposal.

Ethical consumerism is environment-friendly shopping behavior. Demand for ethical consumerism has increased with the increase in demand for second-hand shopping (Haraldsson & Peric, 2017). Ethical concerns mean avoiding fast fashion, whereby environmental concerns address environmental sustainability, for example, recycling and reducing waste to landfills (Kiehn & Vojkovic, 2018). Ethical consumers prefer buying greener products and choose second-hand products to decrease their consumption levels which ultimately lead to a decrease in manufacturing waste and costs for a greener environment. Hence, they try to be real and authentic with their ethical self (Haraldsson & Peric, 2017).

### 2.4 | Motivations and barriers for second-hand shopping

Second-hand shopping has value all over the world as a person who has stopped using a product to buy an updated model (in case of electronics, furniture, toys, etc.) or is updating his/her closet (in case of apparel and clothing) can resale that product which can be used by other people who may like it or don't have enough money to buy a new one. Second-hand clothing is imported by developing countries and resold to inhabitants at a low cost. This indicates that financial instability can be a factor for second-hand shopping. Various categories of motivation for second-hand shopping include economical motivations, recreational motivations and fashion motivations (Haraldsson & Peric, 2017), critical motivations i.e., avoiding conventional channels, ethical consumerism, and being environment friendly by preferring the concept of recycling (Guiot & Roux, 2010; Ferraro, Sands & Govan, 2016), ideological motivations (Padmavathya, Swapana & Paul, 2019). Value of secondhand well-known brands over cheap brands, pester power of children who get information of different brands from their well-to-do classmates and then urge to have products of those brands tend to be more influential in the outer world (Mukherjee, Datta & Paul, 2020). Some gain nostalgic pleasure and feel a sense of harmony among family by exchanging their used clothes instead of throwing them (Guiot & Roux, 2010). Some may become happy by recreating new ones by using second-hand and seek happiness through recreation by making their personal and unique style apart from mainstream (Guiot & Roux, 2010). Many people find secondhand shopping interesting as it's like a treasure hunt for them as they have to find the best for themselves from piles of stuff out there (Ferraro, Sands & Govan, 2016; Guiot & Roux, 2010). Fashion is an important motivation in secondhand shopping as people especially youngsters are more inclined to secondhand shopping which makes it popular and hence, can no longer be stigmatized (Weinstein, 2014; Ferraro, Sands & Govan, 2016). Second-hand shopping is becoming popular these days as many people are getting awareness about environmental issues (Haraldsson & Peric, 2017). Thus, from various studies, we come to know that environment and non-wastefulness, cost, uniqueness and style, fashion and trendiness are the main factors for secondhand shopping

(Laitala & Klepp, 2018). Now there are many reasons for second-hand shopping like ethical consumption, urge towards a green and sustainable environment apart from financial instability.

Along with the people who consider second-hand shopping beneficial many avoid it due to many reasons. There are many barriers in second-hand shopping; some consider secondhand clothes to be of low quality, may pose health risks, and are considered a taboo in society (Sandes & Leandro, 2016). Most of the consumers are not happy with the shopping experience as there is no fixed size for everything and shopping from a secondhand store is cumbersome. Many people generally prefer new clothes secondhand as they never have experienced secondhand shopping (Laitala & Klepp, 2018). Some consumers assume that the second-hand clothes may have been contaminated during their prior use and hence don't have high expectations for these clothes (Pretner, Darnall, Testa & Iraldo, 2021).

Although the textile industry is flourishing day by day its adverse impact on the environment cannot be ignored. There is a dire need to promote sustainable practices for the reuse or recycling of clothing waste to avoid landfills. In this study, we have addressed the reuse of post-consumer clothing waste by analyzing the consumer perception towards second-hand clothing to become familiar with factors that have an impact on their purchase decision.

### **3 | METHODOLOGY & DESIGN**

A descriptive qualitative design was used for this study as the aim was to gain firsthand knowledge regarding the experience of the participants about the concept under investigation. The primary data collection was done through personal interviews. The purpose of conducting personal interviews was to gain a deeper understanding of the customer's notion regarding the purchase of used clothes. A convenience sampling technique was employed in this study. 50 interviews were conducted and each interview lasted for 10-15 minutes. For qualitative research, the sample size can be identified by the researcher based on their assessment of data collection (De Gagne & Walters, 2010). In this study, participants were included in the sample until data saturation was reached which means that the process of sampling continued until no new themes or codes emerged from the interviews (Javadi & Zarea, 2016). To ensure diversity, variables like age, gender, and salary were used. This ensured broader insight into the subject matter and improved the credibility of the study. The interview guide was prepared based on the literature review (Xu, Chen, Burman, & Zhao, 2014; Borusiak et al., 2020; Ferraro, Sands & Brace-Govan, 2016; Guiot and Roux, 2010; Padmavathya, Swapana & Paul, 2019). The questions were semi-structured and open-ended to allow participants to speak freely about their views. The questions included in the interview guide were related to price, brand, hygiene, and quality of second-hand clothes. Besides, they were inquired regarding their assessment of secondhand clothes, positive and negative credits associated with them, and regarding the reaction of their circle on purchasing secondhand clothes. Interviews were audio-recorded and then later transcribed verbatim. Before recording each interview, consent was taken from the participants. Thematic analysis was used for the analysis of data. The transcripts were imported into Nvivo software after converting them into rich text format. Thematic analysis was done by following the process described by Braun and Clarke (2006). The process began by reading and re-reading the transcriptions to get familiar with the data and identify the patterns and meanings in the data set. For each interview, initial codes were generated. These codes were then compared with other interviews to identify recurring codes. These codes were then organized into groups.

Themes were then searched and reviewed followed by defining and naming each theme. These themes represented the factors affecting the purchase decision of second-hand clothing shoppers.

## 4 | Findings

### 4.1 | Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The sample characteristics of this study include gender, age, and salary. Table 1 shows the demographic information of the respondents. 76% of the respondents were female whereas 34% of them were male. The majority of the respondents belonged to the age group of 18-30 yrs. The majority of the respondents had salaries ranging between Rs. 20,000-40,000.

Demographic Variables	Measure	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18-25	34	68%
	26-35	9	18%
	36-55	7	14%
Gender	Female	38	76%
	Male	12	24%
Income	>20k	20	40%
	20k-50k	22	44%
	50k-70k	1	2%
	Above 70k	7	14%

### 4.2 | Thematic Analysis

#### Theme 1: Economic Motivations

##### Price

Price refers to the customers' intentions to check the price tags before purchasing the products to get value for money. Value for money is the customers' desire to pay less and not to waste their money. The results of our study indicated that 80% of our respondents purchase second-hand clothes because of their reasonable prices. Most of the respondents believed that they were paying less and were able to buy more things while shopping for second-hand clothes. Two respondents reported the following:

*"Yes, I do prefer buying second-hand clothes because I find new clothes very expensive. Second-hand clothes are relatively cheaper. For example, if I buy new clothes I might be able to get just one dress for Rs. 2000 but if I buy second-hand clothes I'll be able to get clothes for me as well as my daughters in the same amount."* [R43]

*"I shop for second-hand sweaters mostly because you can buy more in less budget."* [R37]

Respondents who were fond of buying designer wear but weren't able to afford it had the opportunity to buy them second hand due to their economic prices as one of the respondents stated:

*"I like buying second-hand clothes as I can get expensive designer clothes at very affordable prices."*[R40]

##### Bargain Hunting

Bargain hunting refers to shopping for products at lower prices through the act of bargaining. 44% of respondents reported that they prefer buying second-hand products as they get the opportunity to bargain with the



shopkeepers to further lower the prices. This is not possible in the case of newly manufactured products as prices are usually fixed and shopkeepers are not willing to bargain. One respondent remarked:

*“In case of second-hand clothes, you can bargain the prices with the shop keepers. The more you bargain, the higher are the chances of you getting the clothes at much lower prices.”* [R11]

## **Theme 2: Fashion Motivations**

### **Originality**

Many people are concerned about the originality and authenticity to create a unique style by avoiding mainstream fashion. 46% of our respondents showed interest in buying secondhand clothes to create their style. Many find it interesting to shop secondhand clothes as they get a chance to find vintage variety. Respondents seemed to be enthusiastic about purchasing secondhand clothing to redesign them in their way. Two of the respondents remarked:

*“At times I buy them with this intention, as I always want to carry a different look. So, when I don't get it in new clothes then I go for the second hand.”* [R8]

*“Yes. Since you only get one piece per style and usually do not find other people wearing the same stuff as you. Also, you can mix and match them with your new clothes.”* [R41]

The other 54% of our respondents did not consider purchasing secondhand clothes for creating a personal style. Rather they were only concerned about buying clothes for daily use. For example:

*“Not really. If I am spending on secondhand clothes, I would solely be concerned with practical reasons like keeping warm or clothes for daily use.”* [R29]

### **Brand**

The brand is a distinctive identity for any product. Many people are brand conscious in our society. As obviously brand is a proof for a high-quality product. Many people go for branded clothes to have a nice and decent look in their outfits. Interview analysis shows that while purchasing secondhand clothes 19% of respondents were considering brands to have a promising quality product. Most people buy brands secondhand as they can get branded stuff at less price. For example:

*“I always prefer brands because their quality is better as compared to the local clothes. Usually, I am unable to buy new branded clothes because of their high prices but while purchasing secondhand clothes you can get branded clothes at very economical prices which are very stylish as well as very cost-effective.”* [R41]

*“I always look for specific brands because if you are purchasing secondhand clothes then at least it should be of some good brand otherwise it's not worth buying secondhand clothes.”* [R14]

But 81% were most concerned with the good quality of the secondhand clothes and also most people were concerned that the clothes shouldn't look worn out. A respondent remarked:

*“It does if you're quite into brands. But quality and look should be the focus, rather than the name of the manufacturer. Many local and indigenous brands offer good quality also.”* [R27]

## **Theme 3: Hygiene**

Hygiene was found to be one of the significant factors that influence customers' purchase decisions regarding secondhand clothes. Hygiene is not confined to the cleanliness of clothes, but the shopping atmosphere

of places is included in it as well. About 44% of the respondents showed deep concern about the health risks associated with secondhand clothes as they were unaware of the previous owner carried any infectious disease. The remarks of two respondents were:

*“They can be a risk to health as they might cause an allergy due to dust or the other person's germs.” [R8]*

*“It is not safe especially in the current pandemic situation.” [R20]*

The analysis of interviews showed that about 56% of the respondents thought that if the purchased clothes were washed properly with detergent before usage, they posed no risk to health. For example:

*“I think it will be safe if you wash them with good detergent before use.” [R3]*

#### **Theme 4: Quality**

Quality is referred to the degree to which the product satisfies a customer's requirements. Quality depends upon the perception of an individual as some customers may think a good quality dress will be durable or to some customers perceived quality may be important. The quality of clothes turned out to be an important concern of consumers. Our study indicated that about 52% of the respondents consider the quality of second-hand clothes very important as they are investing money and want to utilize it properly. Two respondents remarked:

*“Quality is very important to me whenever I go for shopping second-hand clothes. I want to buy clothes that are in good condition and less price.” [R10]*

*“Quality of used clothes is very important and usually the seller put a price according to the quality of clothes too.” [R33]*

Respondents who were financially challenged did not seem to care about the quality of clothes as they were only concerned about finding something they could wear. One of them responded:

*“For poor people like us, quality doesn't matter. I purchase second-hand clothes because I cannot purchase newly manufactured clothes.” [R19]*

#### **Theme 5: Environment**

The use of second-hand clothes helps the environment as it promotes sustainability by increasing their lifespan and eventually reducing waste. The results of our study reveal that consumers are not much concerned about the impact their purchases have on the environment and do not consider it while shopping for second-hand clothes. Only 44% of the respondents depicted pro-environmental behavior and were willing to buy second-hand clothes due to this factor. For the remaining 56% of the respondents, environmental impact turned out to be an insignificant factor that had no impact on their purchase decision. 5% of the respondents weren't even aware of the impact their purchase decision has on the environment, for example:

*“No, I don't think so my purchase has any effect on the environment because someday the other one has to throw these clothes.” [R1]*

One respondent stated:

*“It is one way to look at it but I am not thinking about the environment while purchasing secondhand clothes.” [R49]*



## Theme 6: Social Influence

The purchasing behavior of customers is greatly influenced by social dynamics. It includes reference groups, social circles, and even media. The results reveal that the purchase decision of buyers depends highly on the opinion of others. According to the results, 82% of respondents believed that buying and wearing second-hand clothes is considered taboo and the majority of the people associate it poor socioeconomic status, for example:

*“Yes it is considered a taboo. People think it is an insult to tell everyone that they wear used clothes. Though, almost everyone wears them”.* [R41]

*“It depends upon the class to which you belong. Among the lower and lower-middle class, branded clothing and luxury is not heavily sought after, so people consume second-hand items more; but coming to upper-middle and upper class, one's dressing is critically judged and is thought to reflect their status, and hence used items are a cause of shame.”* [R17]

Only 38% of our respondents felt confident in telling people regarding their second-hand purchases. One of the respondents stated:

*“Yes, I do. Because sometimes this boasts the confidence of less fortunate to wear second-hand clothes. Secondly, in my opinion, one should not hesitate in telling the truth. There is nothing wrong in wearing second-hand clothes.”* [R40]

However, 62% of the respondents felt shy or embarrassed by telling others regarding their secondhand purchases. According to the people will look down on them and will judge them based on it. Two respondents summarized their opinion as follows:

*“I only tell to people very close to me. I don't tell everyone about it.”* [R26]

*“I never tell others because it can give you an inferiority complex.”* [R31]

## 5 | DISCUSSION

The study revealed that price was one of the most significant factors due to which most of the people prefer shopping for second-hand clothes. While shopping for second-hand clothes, one can get value for money and also the opportunity to bargain for the prices. These results are consistent with the study conducted by Williams and Paddock (2003) in Leicester where the majority of the people preferred buying second-hand products due to economic constraints. Price sensitivity is a positive predictor of second-hand shopping behavior (Cervellon, Carey & Harms, 2012). Second-hand shopping eases the financial burden on the shoppers having economic constraints by enabling them to fulfill their needs within their budget. Initially, the concept of second-hand clothing was originated to fulfill the needs of less fortunate customers so that they can buy clothes at reasonable prices. Bargain prices are found to be one of the main motivations behind second-hand clothing shopping (Xu, Chen, Burman, & Zhao, 2014).

Fashion motivations play a vital role in the purchase of second-hand clothing. Many consumers tend to have their unique style and many urges to get branded clothes at a lesser price. Consumers are motivated by fashion as well as they also urge for a sustainable environment and feel contented by purchasing second-hand clothes for this particular cause (Haraldsson & Peric, 2017). Brands are a symbol of good quality. The results reveal that many consumers prefer second-hand shopping as they can get branded clothes at an economical price.

Second-hand clothes also provide the chance to be different and help in creating one's style. Many consumers shop for clothes from second-hand markets and then redesign them in their way to be unique and out of main fashion stream. They get excited about finding unique designs in the second-hand market. The results are consistent with that of Ferraro, Sands, and Brace-Govan (2016) who concluded that fashion motivation is a significant factor in second-hand shopping, and has a significant impact on customers' desire for second-hand shopping.

Quality came out to be another significant driver in the purchase of second-hand clothes and was mentioned frequently by the respondents. Consumers were highly affected by the perceived attributes of second-hand clothes that included quality of materials, shape, etc. The study supported the assertion of Tóta, (2013) that indicated shopping for second-hand clothes is influenced by price-quality factors as consumers want good quality clothes at less process that allows them to shop for more products. In line with the past study (Hur, 2020), poor quality can become a key barrier that can refrain users from buying second-hand clothes. Moreover, the results of research reinforce the conclusion of previous studies (Xu, et al., 2014; Agra Florence, 2015), which state that the stigma of reusing clothes due to the hygiene of second-hand clothes is decreasing as more than half of respondents declared that second-hand clothes can be cleaned before the usage and remarked that they prefer buying and consuming used clothes due to low price. On the other hand, some respondents showed concerns over the cleanliness of store environments of second-hand clothes that refrains the optimization of second-hand clothes uptake.

The study also revealed second-hand clothing consumers' attitudes towards the environment. It is vital to understand the aspect of customers' behaviors related to sustainable consumption to promote green through second-hand buying. Intriguing results were observed that are also aligned with the study of Tarai and Shailaja (2020) explain that consumers are not much concerned about environmental factors and do not consider them while shopping for second-hand clothes. Since the last few decades, sociologists have researched the increasing concern of the public towards the environment but had little success elucidating the concept of green, implementation of pro-environment behaviors like recycling. If consumers will think more about the environment or have more information about the effect of mass consumption on the environment the results would be positively different.

Social influence came out to be another factor affecting buyers' decision to purchase second-hand clothes. The consumers' behavioral intention to buy second-hand clothing depends on both the opinion of others and their perceptions regarding how that they will be judged or criticized (Edwards & Erikson, 2014). It was observed the social influences on consumers such as social stigma, the taboo of buying second-hand cloth, and low confidence level to tell other are the reasons due to which customers hesitate to purchase used clothes. The taboo regarding wearing second-hand clothing is also gradually changing but is still linked with low social standards. This is a major issue that can be handled through awareness campaigns and will ultimately result in a boost of sales and purchase of second-hand garments.

### **5.1 | Practical Implications**

The findings of this study provide useful insights that can help second-hand retailers to focus on the factors due to which consumers opt for second-hand clothes over new clothes such as reduced price, the power to bargain,

greater value for branded goods, and uniqueness. Focusing on these factors will allow them to boost their sales. They can also devise strategies to overcome the hurdles such as hygiene due to which customers are reluctant to buy second-hand clothes.

In the past, consumers usually turned to second-hand shops out of necessity but now young shoppers mostly prefer second-hand clothes due to their uniqueness and quality. Previously second-hand stores have not been very selective with the products that they accept and sell. However, we can observe from the results that consumers now put special emphasis on fashion while shopping for second-hand clothes. This indicates an opportunity for second-hand fashion retailers to connect with shoppers through fashion. They may need to focus on the product variety and range to curate offerings that tap into fashions of the time.

Results indicate that there is a stigma associated with the consumption of second-hand clothes. Social media is playing an important role in eradicating this stigma. A growing number of online retailers are emerging that offer second-hand value via new distribution channels. This will allow the people who previously used to feel shy in going to a thrift store to buy second-hand clothes online very conveniently and without any hesitation. Retailers can diversify their distribution channels and opt for new business models to cater to the needs of the consumers.

### 5.1 | Limitations and Future Recommendations

The finding of this qualitative study adds to the existing literature by exploring the factors that have an impact on the purchase decision of second-hand clothing shoppers. Only a single method (interviews) was used for data collection. Other methods such as focus groups/ observations can also be used in future studies. Multiple methods are useful as some findings that are masked by one method can be uncovered with a different one. In this study, data was collected from the customers only. Future research may include retailers as well. The multilevel analysis will reveal other hidden aspects of the subject matter. The findings of this study are based on the qualitative method. Future studies can further confirm these findings through quantitative methods. The sample size used for this study was 50. Future studies can use a large sample size to increase the generalizability of the findings. The respondents belonged to the urban area of Pakistan. Future research can be conducted by including the respondents from rural areas as well.

### REFERENCES

1. Abdulrahman, M. D., Gunasekaran, A., & Subramanian, N. (2014). Critical barriers in implementing reverse logistics in the Chinese manufacturing sectors. *International Journal of Production Economics*, 147, 460-471.
2. Acharya, A., & Gupta, M. (2016). Self-image enhancement through branded accessories among youths: A phenomenological study in India. *Qualitative Report*, 21(7).
3. Agra Florence, E. G. (2015). The Impact of the Use of Second-Hand Clothing in Ghana- A Case Study. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 12.
4. Alam, M. D. (2015). Factors that Influence the decision when buying second-hand products.
5. Barnes, L., Lea-Greenwood, G., Watson, M. Z., & Yan, R. N. (2013). An exploratory study of the decision processes of fast versus slow fashion consumers. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*.
6. Bashir R., Lodhi R.N. & Atif M. (2016). Factor Influencing the Purchase Intention of Consumer While Purchasing Second-Hand Products in Pakistan. *Arabian J Bus Manag Review*.
7. Borussia, B., Szymkowiak, A., Horska, E., Raszka, N. and \_ Zelichowska, E. (2020), "Towards building sustainable consumption: a study of second-hand buying intentions", *Sustainability*, Vol. 12 No. 3, pp. 875-890.
8. Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.

9. Bukhari, M. A. M. (2018). Reverse logistics network design in the circular economy. Promoting sustainable collection and reuse for post-consumer textile and clothing (Doctoral dissertation, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid).
10. Cervellon, M. C., Carey, L., & Harms, T. (2012). Something old, something used: Determinants of women's purchase of vintage fashion vs second-hand fashion. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 40(12), 956-974.
11. Chua, K. B., Quoquab, F., & Mohammad, J. (2019). Factors affecting environmental citizenship behavior. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*.
12. Cline, E. L. (2012). Overdressed: The shockingly high cost of cheap fashion. *Portfolio*.
13. Cullinane, S., Browne, M., Karlsson, E., & Wang, Y. (2017). An examination of the reverse logistics of clothing (r) e-tailers in Sweden. EUROMA conference, Edinburgh, Scotland.
14. De Brauw, A., & Giles, J. (2018). Migrant labor markets and the welfare of rural households in the developing world: Evidence from China. *The World Bank Economic Review*, 32(1), 1-18.
15. De Gagne, J. C., & Walters, K. J. (2010). The lived experience of online educators: Hermeneutic phenomenology. *Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 6(2), 357-366.
16. e Silva, S. C., Santos, A., Duarte, P., & Vlačić, B. (2021). The role of social embarrassment, sustainability, familiarity, and perception of hygiene in the second-hand clothing purchase experience. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*.
17. Ek Styvén, M., & Mariani, M. M. (2020). Understanding the intention to buy secondhand clothing on sharing economy platforms: The influence of sustainability, distance from the consumption system, and economic motivations. *Psychology & Marketing*, 37(5), 724-739.
18. ERIKSSON, C., & EDWARDS, L. (2014). Second-hand Clothing Online: A study of Swedish consumer purchasing intentions.
19. Farrant, L., Olsen, S. I., & Wangel, A. (2010). Environmental benefits from reusing clothes. *The International Journal of Life Cycle Assessment*, 15(7), 726-736.
20. Ferraro, C., Sands, S., & Brace-Govan, J. (2016). The role of fashionability in second-hand shopping motivations. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 32, 262-268.
21. Graafland, J. J. (2003). Distribution of responsibility, ability, and competition. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 45(1-2), 133-147.
22. Guiot, D., & Roux, D. (2010). A second-hand shoppers' motivation scale: Antecedents, consequences, and implications for retailers. *Journal of Retailing*, 86(4), 355-371.
23. Hammad, H., Muster, V., El-Bassiouny, N. M., & Schaefer, M. (2019). Status and sustainability: can conspicuous motives foster sustainable consumption in newly industrialized countries?. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 23(4), 537-550.
24. Haraldsson & Peric (2017), Drivers and motivations for second-hand shopping: a study of second-hand consumers.
25. Hur, E. (2020). Rebirth Fashion: Secondhand clothing consumption values and perceived risks. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 34.
26. Javadi, M., & Zarea, K. (2016). Understanding thematic analysis and its pitfall. *Demo*, 1(1), 33-39.
27. Kiehn & Vojkovic (2018), Millennials Motivations for Shopping Second-Hand Clothing as part of a Sustainable Consumption Practice.
28. Krishnaraj (2020), Study on relationships between knowledge factors influencing Textile and Clothing disposal behavior towards sustainable waste management, *International Journal for Modern Trends in Science and Technology*, 6(9S): 154-160.
29. Laitala & Klepp (2018), Motivations for and against second-hand clothing acquisition, *Clothing Cultures Volume 5(2)* pp. 247-262.
30. McGoldrick, P. J., & Freestone, O. M. (2008). Ethical product premiums: antecedents and extent of consumers' willingness to pay. *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research*, 18(2), 185-201.
31. Moll, G. (2021). Clothes Make the (Wo) man: A Qualitative Study on the Construction and Expression of a Green Identity through Second-Hand Clothing.
32. Mukherjee, S., Datta, B., & Paul, J. (2020). The phenomenon of purchasing second-hand products by the BOP consumers. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 57, 102189.
33. Padmavathy, C., Swapana, M., & Paul, J. (2019). Online second-hand shopping motivation–Conceptualization, scale development, and validation. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 51, 19-32.
34. Paras, M. K., Pal, R., & Ekwall, D. (2018). Systematic literature review to develop a conceptual framework for a reuse-based clothing value chain. *The international review of retail, distribution and consumer research*, 28(3), 231-258.
35. Pinheiro & Francisco (2018), Reverse Logistics Processes and Textile Waste: Study in a Clothing Cluster, *International Association for Management of Technology IAMOT*.
36. Pretner, G., Darnall, N., Testa, F., & Iraldo, F. (2021). Are consumers willing to pay for circular products? The role of recycled and second-hand attributes, messaging, and third-party certification. *Resources, Conservation and Recycling*, 175, 105888.
37. Puertas, R., Martí, L., & García, L. (2014). Logistics performance and export competitiveness: European experience. *Empirica*, 41(3), 467-480.
38. Saleki, R., Quoquab, F., & Mohammad, J. (2019). What drives Malaysian consumers' organic food purchase intention? The role of the moral norm, self-identity, environmental concern, and price

- consciousness. *Journal of Agribusiness in Developing and Emerging Economies*.
39. Sandes, F. S., & Leandro, J. C. (2016, October). Exploring the motivations and barriers for secondhand product consumption. In CLAV 2016.
  40. Sandin, G., & Peters, G. M. (2018). Environmental impact of textile reuse and recycling—A review. *Journal of cleaner production*, 184, 353-365.
  41. Stock, J. R. (1992). *Reverse logistics: White paper*. Council of Logistics Management.
  42. Tarai, S., & Shailaja, K. (2020). Consumer perception towards the sale of second-hand clothes in the localities of Odisha, State of India. *J Textile Eng Fashion Technol*, 6(4), 159-162.
  43. Thomas, V. M. (2011). The environmental potential of reuse: An application to used books. *Sustainability Science*, 6(1), 109-116.
  44. ThredUp (2019), *Thredup 2019 Resale Report*, Thredup, available at: [https://www.thredup.com/resale/2019?tswc\\_redir5true](https://www.thredup.com/resale/2019?tswc_redir5true) (accessed 10 August 2020).
  45. Tian, K. T., Bearden, W. O., & Hunter, G. L. (2001). Consumers' need for uniqueness: Scale development and validation. *Journal of consumer research*, 28(1), 50-66.
  46. Tóta, Á. (2015). Sustainable clothing consumption—case study about second-hand clothes. *Faculdade De Economia Universidade Do Porto*, 118.
  47. Weinstein, J. F. (2014). *Reframe, Reuse, Re-Style: Deconstructing the Sustainable Second-Hand Consumer*.
  48. Williams, C. C., & Paddock, C. (2003). The meanings of informal and second-hand retail channels: some evidence from Leicester. *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research*, 13(3), 317-336.
  49. Xu, Y., Chen, Y., Burman, R., & Zhao, H. (2014). Second-hand clothing consumption: a cross-cultural comparison between American and Chinese young consumers. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 38(6), 670-677.
  50. Yan, G. (2019). *Reverse Logistics in Clothing Recycling: A Case Study in Chengdu*. *International Journal of Environmental and Ecological Engineering*, 13(5), 298-301.
  51. Yang, N., & Ha-Brookshire, J. E. (2020). Chinese textile and apparel manufacturers' moral duty positions, goals, and structures toward sustainability. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*.
  52. Yang, S., Song, Y., & Tong, S. (2017). Sustainable retailing in the fashion industry: A systematic literature review. *Sustainability*, 9(7), 1266.
  53. Yoon, S. W., & Yoon, C. H. (2018). On the impossibility of sustainable growth in a manufacturing based economy. *Economic research-Ekonomska istraživanja*, 31(1), 1526-1538.