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Something old, something used: Determinants of women's purchase of vintage fashion vs second-hand fashion

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Something old, something used

Determinants of women's purchase of vintage fashion vs second-hand fashion

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Abstract

Purpose – Vintage has been a growing trend in clothing recently, leading to major fashion brands launching collections inspired by vintage pieces or luxury haute-couture houses digging into their archives to revive past designs. Yet, as this market develops, little is known about the profile of the consumer and the motivations to purchase vintage. This paper aims to explore the veracity of a number of assumptions relating to vintage consumption, equating it to the consumption of used, previously owned clothes by nostalgic prone, environmentally-friendly or value-conscious consumers.

Design/methodology/approach – A quantitative approach including structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed in this research using data collected from 103 women (screened on past second-hand purchases). Vintage clothes were defined as pieces dating back from the 1920s to the 1980s. Second hand clothes were defined as modern used clothes.

Findings – The results show that the main antecedents to vintage consumption are fashion involvement and nostalgia proneness as well as need for uniqueness through the mediation of treasure hunting. In contrast, second-hand consumption is directly driven by frugality. Eco-consciousness plays an indirect role through bargain hunting. In essence, the thrill of the hunt is present for vintage and for second hand consumption. Yet, while vintage consumers shop for a unique piece with history, second-hand consumers shop for a unique piece at a good price. Additionally, the main characteristics of vintage fashion consumers are a higher level of education and higher income whereas age is not directly related to the purchase of vintage pieces.

Originality/value – The paper discusses the relevance of second-hand stores repositioning as vintage based on vintage and second-hand consumers' profiles. Also, the need to educate consumers on the role of second-hand consumption in a pro-environmental lifestyle is highlighted.

Keywords Fashion, Vintage, Second-hand, Luxury, Eco-fashion, Nostalgia, Consumer behaviour, Women, Buying behaviour, Second-hand markets, Clothing

Paper type Research paper



The trend is fuelled by more than pure economics. Vintage items contain elements of nostalgia. To those people who actually lived during the period in which the goods were manufactured, they often call back positive memories. More significant from a marketing viewpoint, for those who are not old enough to have experienced the actual decade in which their vintage product was created, vintage still recalls what they perceive as more prosperous times in our nation's history (Iverson, 2010).

Introduction

Vintage fashion has emerged as a growing trend in the last ten years in Western cultures as well as developing nations. China, a country in which consumers dislike wearing someone else's used clothes, has embraced the trend with the opening of stores specialized in vintage pieces such as Mega Mega Vintage in Beijing's Dongcheng district. Following this consumer craze, several luxury brands such as Ralph Lauren have started hunting for vintage pieces and selling them in their flagship stores, side by side with their new collections. Also, benefitting from this trend, some second-hand retailers and thrift shops have renamed their stores "vintage", whatever the age and origin of their stock (Iverson, 2010).

Yet, as the market for vintage develops, little is known about the profile of the consumer and the motivations to purchase vintage. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the unique characteristics of these consumers and offer a better understanding of the specific drivers towards vintage consumption. In particular, this research explores the reality (or lack of) of a number of assumptions related to vintage consumption, equating it to the consumption of used previously owned clothes by nostalgic prone, environmentally-friendly or value conscious consumers. We also compare vintage consumption to the purchasing of second-hand fashion. Although vintage pieces might be second-hand, we suggest that vintage purchases are determined by totally different drivers to those of second hand fashion purchases.

In the following sections, a definition of vintage is suggested and some possible antecedents to vintage consumption are tested, motivational drivers such as bargain and treasure hunting and psychological traits such as Fashion Involvement, Nostalgia Proneness, Need for Uniqueness, Need for Status, Eco-consciousness and Frugality. Next, the results of a survey conducted among 103 women are described and a structural model of intentions to purchase vintage vs. second hand fashion pieces is presented. Limitations, contributions to the fashion industry and future research avenues are offered in the final section.

Vintage fashion, second-hand clothes and vintage-style fashion

The word vintage was originally used in the winemakers' vocabulary to denote a year's wine harvest. However, in the meantime the term vintage has been adopted by the fashion world where it is used to define "a rare and authentic piece that represents the style of a particular couturier or era" (Gerval, 2008). An alternative definition, which seems to have gained general acceptance, identifies clothing as vintage "when it is produced in the period between the 1920s and the 1980s". Clothing originating from before the 1920s are classified as antiques, while clothing produced after the 1980s are not considered to be vintage yet, the most recent being called modern or contemporary fashion (Cornett, 2010). Clothing originating from the period between the 1920s and the 1930s are generally priced higher as they are considered more valuable because of their age and scarcity. The time preserved in the cloth confers value to it. The same holds for Haute Couture houses or designer vintage pieces, especially when they are unworn and are emblematic of a designer style or period (Cornett, 2010). The term vintage does not only pertain to the fashion industry, in fact the term has become so popular that it is now used to define in an elegant way any "old" goods, from jewels to cars to fridges (Secundus.dk, 2011). Movies, old advertisements and fashion magazines, photos on record covers are one of the most important sources of information about vintage fashion (Jens, 2005).

Over the years, the term vintage has been overused in the media, to describe pieces of past collections, without real time anchorage other than not being of a recent season. Furthermore, capitalizing on consumers' craze for vintage style, some second-hand shops have renamed their stocks, vintage clothing, which creates confusion in the mind of the uninformed consumer. The term second-hand categorizes any piece of clothing which has been used before, notwithstanding the age of the clothes. Whether second-hand clothing is considered vintage is determined by the age of the cloth, and not the fact that it has been used (Mortara and Ironico, 2011). Vintage clothing can be purchased at specialized boutiques, exhibitions or at auctions. Some of the most luxurious pieces have never been worn, or worn only on the catwalk.

Awareness and interest for vintage clothing has increased dramatically since the early 1990s due to celebrity endorsement. Media attention on celebrity fashion has revealed that people who are considered as role models such as Kate Moss or Michelle Obama regularly wear vintage clothing. Since the end of 2000s, with popular movies and television series such as *Mad Men* set in the "good old times", the 1960s, and fashion blogs such as *Sea of Shoes*, street style has been inspired by vintage designs. Fashion houses, such as Louis Vuitton for its 2010-2011 winter collection, have started reproducing and reinterpreting vintage clothing or, such as Yves Saint Laurent in 2009, re-using vintage fabrics. These styles are generally referred to as "vintage style", "vintage inspired" or "retro style". They are usually available in a wider range of sizes and are generally more affordable than the original pieces.

As was mentioned previously, vintage pieces are not necessarily pieces which have been used. This consumption mode is often confused with second-hand consumption due to the overlap which exists: vintage pieces might be second-hand and second-hand pieces might be vintage, but [...] not all vintage pieces are used and not all second-hand pieces are old. Roux and Guiot's (2008) definition of second-hand buying is very clear: "the acquisition of *used* objects through often specific modes and places of exchange" (p. 66). But the places of exchange for second hand clothes and authentic vintage are sometimes similar, through the internet marketplace for instance, which only adds to the confusion.

Antecedents to the purchase of original vintage pieces and second-hand pieces

Nostalgia

The element of nostalgia contained in vintage clothing has been suggested to be one of the factors motivating consumers towards the purchase of vintage pieces. People who are presented with vintage clothing manufactured during their lifetime have been shown to recall positive memories. Additionally, consumers are able to experience nostalgic feelings for vintage pieces produced in a period they have not experienced (Iverson, 2010). As mentioned by Jens (2005, p. 179), vintage is "especially appealing to people who have not themselves experienced the time they now consume through dress".

Davis (1979, p. 18), a pioneer in nostalgia research, defines nostalgia as "a positive preference for the past involving negative feelings toward the present or future". The negative feelings are derived from the belief that "things were better in the past". This definition has been broadened significantly by Holbrook and Schindler (1991) who defined nostalgia as "a preference (general liking, positive attitude, or favorable affect)

toward objects (people, places or things) that were more common when one was younger (in early adulthood, in adolescence, in childhood, or even before birth)" (p. 330). This view suggests that nostalgia most commonly attaches to experiences that are object related, either due to the fact that these have become difficult to obtain, or because changes in the pattern of consumption has excluded these object related experiences. Furthermore, by suggesting that nostalgia might be felt toward objects common before one's birth, this definition acknowledges that nostalgia not only pertains to experiences remembered from one's own past, but that it can reach back and encompasses the holistic past (Havlena and Holak, 1991, Holak and Havlena, 1992). This view of the past has been supported by Holak and Havlena (1992), who in their study on themes and emotions in nostalgic experiences found that participants were able to experience true nostalgic feelings for a time period or event, during which they had not lived. Based on such findings, the literature has suggested separating nostalgia into two distinct response types; personal nostalgia and historical nostalgia. Personal nostalgia refers to emotional feelings coming from a personally remembered past, whereas historical nostalgia refers to a longing for a time in history that the person has not directly experienced (Stern, 1992; Phau and Marchegiani, 2009). Nostalgia has also been defined "as a bittersweet longing for the past". The emotion associated with nostalgia is bittersweet, because what people are longing for is a recollection of an idealized past, to which they cannot return (Holak and Havlena, 1992). The past is idealized through selective memory, which allows people to re-shape or screen out negative elements from their memories so that they become pleasurable during the recollection process. Based on this, nostalgia is generally considered to be a positive emotion (Stern, 1992).

According to Holbrook's (1993) findings, women were found to be slightly more prone to nostalgic feelings than men. Also, contrary to expectations, young adults were just as prone to nostalgic feelings as older adults. This has been supported by Holbrook and Schindler (1996) who found that people of all ages can experience nostalgic emotions. Nostalgia is generally triggered by objects which the person remembers as being popular during his or her lifetime (Holbrook and Schindler, 1991). People very often "store their memories" in items from the past. This is consistent with the suggestion that objects serve as key stimuli in eliciting nostalgia (Holak and Havlena, 1992). Authentic and genuine objects are much more effective in evoking nostalgic feelings because they hold the memories of "the real thing". Retro clothing "uses the potential of dress as a cultural signal of time and an important component of cultural memory, historic consciousness, and imagery" (Jens, 2005, p. 179). Unauthentic or fake objects may elicit brief moments of nostalgia, but not rich memories of the past. Also, it is likely that consumers experience nostalgia for products which are not sold anymore and for which they have lost contact with for a period of time. This is probably one of the reasons why nostalgia plays a very limited role in senior consumers purchasing the oldest brands of perfumes (Lambert-Pandraud and Laurent, 2010). Consequently, nostalgic proneness should increase the intention to purchase genuine vintage pieces but should not be related to the purchase of second hand pieces:

- H1a.* The higher the nostalgia proneness, the greater the intention to purchase genuine vintage pieces. Yet, nostalgia should not affect the intention to purchase second-hand fashion pieces.

Fashion involvement

Fashion clothing involvement has been defined as the extent to which the consumer views fashion clothing as personally relevant (O’Cass, 2000). According to this definition, high fashion clothing involvement indicates a greater relevance to the self. The greater importance fashion clothing has in the consumer’s life, the higher the involvement in the product (O’Cass, 2000, 2001, 2004). High involvement with a product, such as fashion clothing, is said to increase the consumer’s acquisition rate of product information and result in more frequent purchase and use of it (Kim *et al.*, 2002).

Past research tends to show that fashion clothing involvement is highly related to demographics (Auty and Elliott, 1998; O’Cass, 2001). Females were found to be more involved in fashion clothing whereas men were more involved with cars. Age has also shown to have a significant influence on an individual’s attachment and usage of fashion clothing. As age increases, fashion clothing involvement decreases. Indeed, younger people are said to place more importance on their appearance compared to older people (O’Cass, 2004; O’Cass and Julian, 2001). Lastly, some personality traits are directly related to fashion involvement. Contrary to expectations, self-monitoring does not seem linked to fashion involvement; yet, a significant relationship between materialism and the level of fashion involvement has been found in several studies (O’Cass, 2004; O’Cass and Julian, 2001).

Fashion involvement is directly linked to being informed on fashion and being up to date, in phase with fashion trends (O’Cass, 2000, 2001). Consequently, as long as vintage is considered as stylish and trendy, fashion involvement should influence positively the intention to purchase vintage pieces. Yet it should not influence behaviors such as purchasing second-hand fashion pieces, which are considered to be out-dated or at least not from the latest fashion (Cervellon *et al.*, 2010). On this basis, the following hypothesis is derived:

H2a. The greater the fashion involvement, the greater the intention to purchase vintage pieces. Yet, fashion involvement should not affect the intention to purchase second-hand fashion pieces.

Need for uniqueness

Consumer need for uniqueness has been defined as “the trait of pursuing differentness relative to others through the acquisition, utilization and disposition of consumer goods for the purpose of developing and enhancing one’s social and self-image” (Tian *et al.*, 2001 p. 52). A persons’ need to express uniqueness in a social setting is determined by his/her self-perceived degree of uniqueness compared to other individuals or groups (Jordaan and Simpson, 2006). It has been suggested that if individuals consider their level of uniqueness to be insufficient, they may engage in activities such as the consumption of fashionable clothing in their pursuit to change this undesirable situation and improve their perception of uniqueness (Burns and Warren, 1995).

The need for uniqueness construct encompasses three different dimensions. The creation of a personal style via the acquisition of unique or original consumer goods representing the self is the most common way of expressing one’s individuality or unique identity. This particular behaviour characterizes creative or unpopular choices in order to counter conformity. Creative choice reflects that the consumer is trying to

stand out from others, while at the same time being very likely to make product choices which are accepted by significant others. By contrast, through unpopular choice in order to counter conformity, the individual differentiates himself/herself from others via the purchase and use of products which differ with the prevailing consumer norms. By engaging in an unpopular choice the consumer may have to face social disapproval, however, this behaviour may also enhance the consumer's social and self-image. The third way in which an individual can demonstrate the need for uniqueness is through avoidance of similarity. Avoiding similarity refers to the way in which the individual tries to re-establish his/her individual identity by discontinuing the purchase and consumption of commonly used products.

In a study on vintage clothing and contemporary consumption, individuality was pointed out as one of the main reasons for wearing vintage clothing (Gladigau, 2008). According to respondents, vintage clothing represented a much better means for distinguishing themselves and improving personal uniqueness, than mainstream fashion. The vintage clothes come off as unique and exclusive in contrast to regular fashion clothing (Gladigau, 2008). Furthermore, individuals with a strong need for uniqueness are suggested to be much more likely to make non-traditional consumer choices, such as purchasing clothing in second-hand channels as opposed to conventional channels as a means of demonstrating their individuality (Roux and Guiot, 2008; Guiot and Roux, 2010). Indeed, consumers value the exclusivity of possessing rare pieces which will enhance their sense of differentiation (snob effect). Several studies confirm that high need for uniqueness individuals are in constant search of scarce products in order to establish their individuality (Snyder, 1992). Amaldoss and Jain (2005) demonstrated in an experimental setting that consumers with a high need for uniqueness found that a product increased in attractiveness in line with its price value, thus enhancing its exclusivity and snob value. Consequently, a need for uniqueness should be a key driver to the purchase of vintage pieces due to their limited supply and originality:

H3a. Consumers with a high need for uniqueness will have a greater likelihood to purchase vintage fashion. Yet, the purchase of second-hand fashion should not be affected by this trait.

Need for status

Eastman *et al.* (1999) defined the need for status as a "tendency to purchase goods and services for the status or social prestige value that they confer to the owner" (p. 41). Consumers with a high need for status tend to spend money conspicuously on products which, in their view, confer status (Eastman *et al.*, 1999; Eastman *et al.*, 1997). Han *et al.* (2010) confirmed that individuals with a high need for status tend to prefer brands which signal their belonging to a wealthy and status laden group, for instance luxury brands with prominent logos. On one hand, those consumers with a high need for status but a lower level of wealth would mimic the behavior of the wealthy, by purchasing counterfeit products of luxury brands for instance. On the other hand, the wealthy consumers with a high need for status will purchase status laden goods to associate with the "connoisseurs" or relieve their anxiety about not being perceived as wealthy.

In a similar fashion to wine and antiques, vintage connoisseurship and consumption entails a snob appeal which simultaneously attracts and excludes those who do not have the knowledge or the spending power (Belk, 1995). The consumer needs to possess a

certain level of knowledge and connoisseurship to be able to identify an original vintage piece of high quality and rarity. Within “patrician” families (Han *et al.*, 2010) or old wealth, classical couture pieces are transmitted from generation to generation and are a testimony of the family history. For instance, the familial handing down of designer gowns, from one generation to another, acknowledges the family social standing through the ability to purchase high quality clothing which becomes vintage with time (Lloyd, 2010). These vintage objects confer to their owners a certain prestige, which might explain partly their attractiveness to a wider audience. They do not necessarily carry a prominent logo but they carry a signal: they date. The wealthy have the genuine Louis XV drawer and family couture dresses from the 1960s, the wannabes the Louis XV style drawer and the 1960s dress reproductions. Hence, the increased interest in vintage clothing has given rise to a mass production of fashion inspired by vintage as well as to the reproduction of original vintage pieces sold on fake markets. Consequently, it is difficult to identify the authenticity of a vintage piece at first sight, even for experts. In addition, although being at times extremely expensive, it is not always the case these pieces more often than not do not loudly claim that they are. On these grounds, we propose that a high need for status will not affect the intention to purchase vintage pieces. Yet, because second-hand pieces are not from the latest collection, even when they are expensive they do not valorize the client status. We propose that need for status will be negatively related to the purchase of second hand clothes:

H4a. A high need for status should influence negatively the purchase intention of second hand clothing. Yet, this trait should not affect the purchase intention of vintage clothing.

Frugality and value consciousness

Price sensitivity or price consciousness has been found to be a positive predictor of second-hand shopping behaviour (Roux and Guiot, 2008; Guiot and Roux, 2010). This finding makes much sense when taking into consideration the lower price of second-hand products (books, electronics, etc.) over new ones in most purchasing contexts. For the very specific case of clothes, it is not necessarily true that second-hand clothes are more cost effective than new clothes, especially when they are vintage. In addition, most consumers, including vintage experts, do not have a reference price for second-hand and vintage pieces, as it depends on the birth period and rarity of the piece.

Yet, price consciousness might be considered as one aspect of a wider construct which is more related to value consciousness and relevant in the context of second-hand and vintage clothes: frugality. Frugality is a lifestyle trait which has been neglected so far in the consumer behaviour literature. As defined by Lastovicka *et al.* (1999), “frugality is a uni-dimensional consumer lifestyle trait characterized by the degree to which consumers are both restrained in acquiring and in resourcefully using economic goods and services to achieve longer-term goals” (p. 88). Frugal consumers try to make smart choices, re-use their resources and spend their money carefully. They refrain from purchasing unnecessary acquisitions and might sacrifice short term gratifications with a view to obtain a more worthy ones in the long run. Lastovicka *et al.*'s (1999) seminal study reports that the frugal are less materialistic and less prone to purchase compulsively. In addition, frugality is directly related to value and price consciousness. In contrast, it is not linked with eco-friendliness or a higher concern for

the welfare of society in general. Nonetheless, Roux and Guiot (2008) found frugality was influencing certain economic motives towards the shopping of second hand products, which in turn were strongly linked to recycling behaviours.

The mere concept of fashion with its short cycles and seasonal effects seems inconsistent with frugality. It is reasonable to think that the frugal invests in classical pieces of garments which last. He/she also must be prone to re-cycle or re-use garments that he/she owns. Frugality might also be linked to the purchase of second hand bargain fashion items (Roux and Guiot, 2008). Yet, because purchasing vintage does not entail a trade-off between used and not used (with a bargain) but rather between old and new, the old piece being often more expensive than the new one, frugality should not be an antecedent to vintage purchase. Consequently, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H5a. The more frugal the consumer, the higher the likelihood of the intention to purchase second-hand clothes. Frugality is not an antecedent to vintage purchases.

Environmental-friendly proneness

Over the last decade, an eco-fashion movement has emerged among consumers who are more and more concerned with the impact of the production of clothes on their health, the environment and society at large (Cervellon *et al.*, 2010; Cervellon and Carey, 2011; Butler and Francis, 1997). The re-use and recycling of clothes are considered by consumers as effective ways to reduce waste and impact positively on the environment (Bianchi and Birtwistle, 2010). For instance, the motives behind donating and purchasing second-hand goods are partly based on the idea that it is a useful way of prolonging the lifespan of products and thereby limiting waste (Roux and Guiot, 2008; Guiot and Roux, 2010).

Probably to give some glamour to the recycling of clothes, the industry tends to merge clothes made out of recycled fabrics or garments to vintage clothes (Hethorn and Ulasewicz, 2008). For instance, in the denim industry, APC and Levi Strauss have encouraged consumers to return their old jeans in exchange for a new pair at half price. The old jeans are labeled with the previous owner's initials, cleaned, repaired and resold as vintage jeans (Groves, 2008). Also, the Yves Saint Laurent collection labeled New Vintage collection represents unique pieces designed from recycled cotton drill from the couture house archives. It appears that eco-friendly initiatives in the fashion industry still suffer from a lack of glamour which makes necessary the use of appealing claims which convey style and sexiness (Cervellon *et al.*, 2010).

Also, choosing to purchase second-hand pieces is becoming, for an increased number of consumers, a form of rebellion against a "Kleenex society" which promotes waste and throw-away behaviors. In the view of these consumers, the purchase of second-hand pieces slows down the production and selling of unnecessary goods (Roux and Korchia, 2006). Consumers create and express a socially-conscious self through the choice of second hand clothing. "Wearing second-hand clothes by choice can thus be regarded as a sign of opposition to consumerism, associated with voluntary simplicity and various reducing behaviours" (Roux and Korchia, 2006, p. 30):

H6a. The more eco-conscious the consumer, the higher the likelihood to purchase vintage pieces and second hand pieces.

Mediators: Bargain hunting and treasure hunting

Hedonic and economic motives are consistently mentioned as the main drivers to second-hand consumption (Roux and Guiot, 2008). Concerning the hedonic motives, Roux and Guiot (2008) mention the recreational aspects which are at the heart of the second-hand shopping experience such as the social contact with friendly and passionate salespeople, the entertaining aspects of the shopping activity and the “serendipity ensuing from the unexpected encounter with certain objects” (p. 67). These dimensions should be motivational drivers to the purchase intentions of second-hand and vintage purchases alike. Yet, vintage consumption is related to collecting, defined by Belk (1995) as “the process of actively, selectively and passionately acquiring and possessing things removed from ordinary use and perceived as part of a set of non-identical objects or experiences” (p. 479). It also involves an experience which is more emotional than functional for the consumer. For instance, Roux and Guiot (2008) conclude that there is a direct influence of nostalgia proneness on recreational motives, a super factor which encompasses treasure hunting and social contacts. Consequently, we propose that vintage consumption might be more driven by hunting for a treasure, the unique piece rather than hunting for a bargain, the good price:

H1-2-3b. Treasure hunting should be a mediator of the relationship between the traits related to uniqueness and nostalgia and the purchase intention of vintage clothing.

In terms of economic motives, the dimensions related to extending the product life-cycle, recycling and minimizing the use of new clothes should be drivers to the purchase of vintage fashion as much as second-hand fashion. Yet, bargain hunting or the shopping motivation to find the lowest prices or to come across a piece with an unbeatable price should be an antecedent to second-hand shopping but not to vintage shopping. Bardhi’s (2003) study on thrift shopping presents it as a money saving activity from which shoppers derive recreational benefits. Shoppers derive pleasure not from finding the gem but from finding the gem “at just 99cts” (Bardhi, 2003, p. 375). Consequently we propose:

H4-5-6b. Bargain hunting should be a mediator of the relationship between variables related to economic motives (need for status, frugality and eco-consciousness) and the purchase intention of second-hand cloths.

Figure 1 illustrates the hypothesized relationships which will be tested with results presented in the Results section.

Method

Sample

A survey was administered to a convenience sample of 103 women in Paris and the French Riviera area (up to Monaco). All women in the sample had purchased at least once a piece of second-hand clothing in the past (screening question). One fifth of these women were recruited based on their involvement in retro-organizations, attendance to retro events and passion for the retro style. Only women were included in the sample because of their higher involvement in fashion related issues (O’Cass, 2000). The average age in the sample is 39.2 years old (SD 11.1) with a minimum age of 21 years old and a maximum of 61 years old. The sample was well spread on age, with 22 per

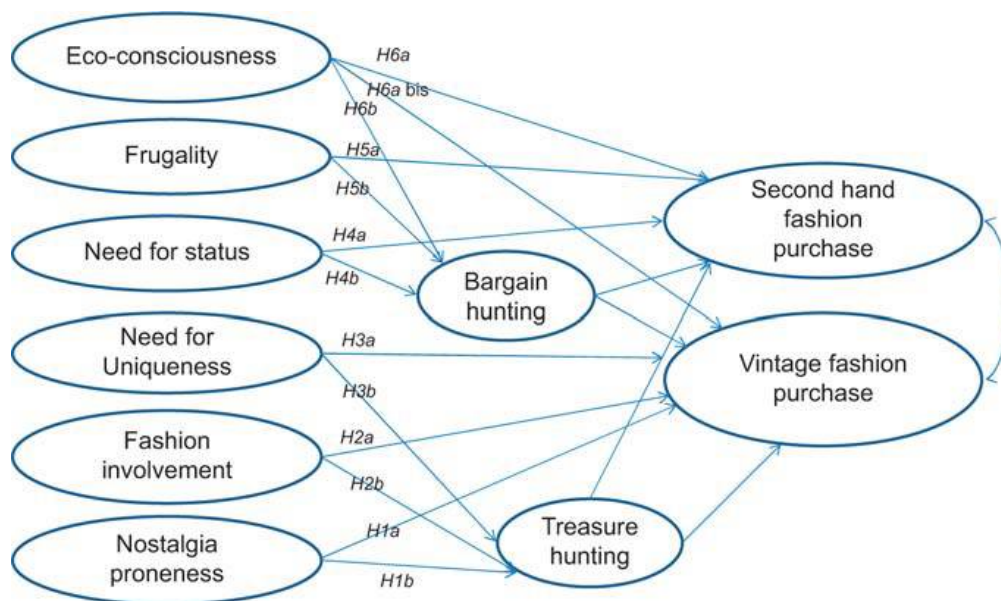


Figure 1.
Conceptual model of
second hand vs vintage
fashion consumption

cent of the respondents between 20 and 30 years old, 26 per cent between 30 and 40 years old, 33 per cent between 40 and 50 years old and 18 per cent over 50.

There is an over-representation of highly educated individuals in the sample compared to the average population. A total of 20 per cent have a high school degree, 35 per cent an undergraduate university degree, 30 per cent a graduate university degree, the rest having a professional degree or no degree at all. Income was also well spread, although with an over-representation of an affluent population, 20 per cent of respondents declared a yearly household income of more than €70,000 a year whereas 23 per cent declared less than €30,000.

Antecedents to the purchase of vintage and second hand fashion

The six constructs considered as antecedents to the purchase of vintage pieces were measured using validated scales. In order to avoid lengthy questionnaire, the items were selected either because they were the most relevant to our research or because they loaded heavily onto the factors we wanted to measure. For Fashion Involvement (O'Cass, 2000), we focused on the dimension of product involvement (over for instance decision involvement). For Need for Uniqueness (NFU) (Tian *et al.*, 2001), we chose the dimension of creative choice counter conformity (over avoidance of similarity or provocative choice). Out of the Ecologically Conscious Consumer Buying scale (ECCB) (Roberts and Bacon, 1997), we selected the items most representative of eco-friendly behaviours in general, and avoided the third factor which measures the aspect of recycling. The Need for Status (Eastman *et al.*, 1999) and Frugality scales were tested almost in their original format. From Holbrook's (1993) statements measuring nostalgia proneness, we retained only the four items directly related to product nostalgia. Respondents graded their agreement or disagreement to the different statements on seven-point Likert scales, anchored by strongly agree and strongly disagree. The reliability of the measures is good, as demonstrated by the Cronbach's alpha achieving higher than 0.90 for the six constructs (see Table I).

Table I.
Reliability analysis

Measure	Source	No. of items	Cronbach's alpha
Fashion (product) Involvement	O'Case, 2000	3 (out of the 8)	0.94
Nostalgia proneness	Holbrook, 1993	3 (out of the 20)	0.93
NFU: Creative choice counterconformity	Tian <i>et al.</i> , 2001	3 (out of the 11)	0.94
Need for Status	Eastman <i>et al.</i> , 1999	3 (out of the 5)	0.95
Frugality trait	Lastovicka <i>et al.</i> , 1999	3 (out of the 8)	0.92
Ecologically Conscious Consumer	Roberts and Bacon, 1997	3 (out of the 12)	0.96
Bargain hunting	Roux and Guiot, 2008	3	0.85
Treasure hunting	Roux and Guiot, 2008	3 (out of the 6)	0.96

In order to measure the two key motivational drivers which might determine different behaviours regarding vintage and second-hand fashion, we extracted items from Roux and Guiot (2008) sub-factors Bargain Hunting, Fair Price and Treasure Hunting. We changed slightly the wording of the items to avoid the use of “second-hand shopping” or “second-hand channels”. The reliability of the measures is high for the treasure hunting construct, a little lower for bargain hunting. Note that bargain hunting was also a weaker measure in Roux and Guiot’s (2008) research (see Table I).

Purchase intentions regarding fashion

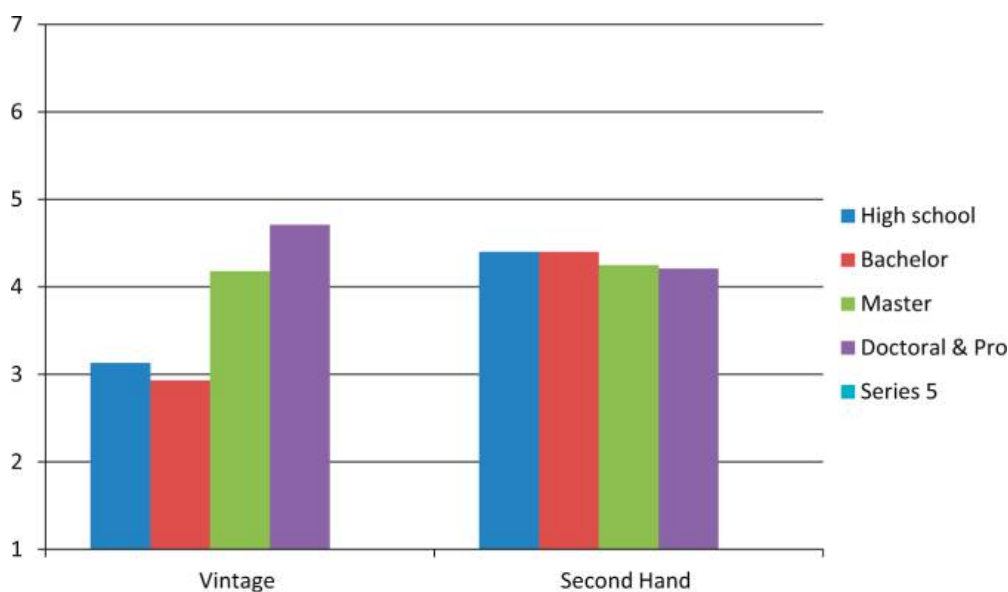
In order to measure the purchase intention, respondents had to grade on seven-point Likert scales their agreement with statements concerning their future behaviour (behavioural intentions as proxy) for purchase intentions towards genuine vintage pieces (two items: It is likely that I will purchase in the coming year at least an original vintage piece/a piece of clothing dating back of the period 1920-1980; Cronbach’s alpha = 0.88) and afterwards, for purchase intentions towards second-hand fashion (two items: It is likely that I will purchase in the coming year at least one second-hand piece of modern clothing/one piece of modern clothing used by someone else; Cronbach’s alpha = 0.87).

Results

Demographic differences in purchase intentions

Overall, purchase intentions for the two categories of clothes are not significantly different: Vintage fashion M = 3.97, (SD 1.68) vs Second-Hand fashion M = 4.28, (SD 1.62), $t(102) = -1.41, p = 0.16$. Also, the correlation between the two constructs is not significant ($p = 0.62$).

In order to understand if there are any significant differences between purchasers of vintage and second-hand fashion, a Multivariate Analysis of Variances (MANOVA) was conducted with the variables vintage fashion and second-hand fashion purchase intentions as dependents and age, income and education as fixed factors. First, there is a main effect of education on the intention to purchase vintage pieces ($F(3, 46) = 7.84, p = 0.000$). Post hoc tests using Bonferroni procedure (see Figure 2) show that the two least educated groups (high school and below; bachelor level) are significantly less likely to purchase vintage pieces than the two higher educated ones. For second hand purchases, there is no significant main effect of education.



Something old,
something used

967

Figure 2.
Purchase intention vintage
vs second hand based on
education

Also, there is a main effect of income on the intention to purchase vintage pieces ($F(5, 46) = 4.16, p = 0.003$), the group with highest income showing significantly higher intention to purchase vintage pieces than the two groups with lower income (mean difference = +1.71 and +1.20, $p = 0.000$). There is also a marginal interaction effect age X income ($F(9, 46) = 1.97, p = 0.06$) for vintage pieces, with purchase intentions being significantly higher for younger people at higher levels of income. In contrast, income is not significant for the purchase of second-hand clothes.

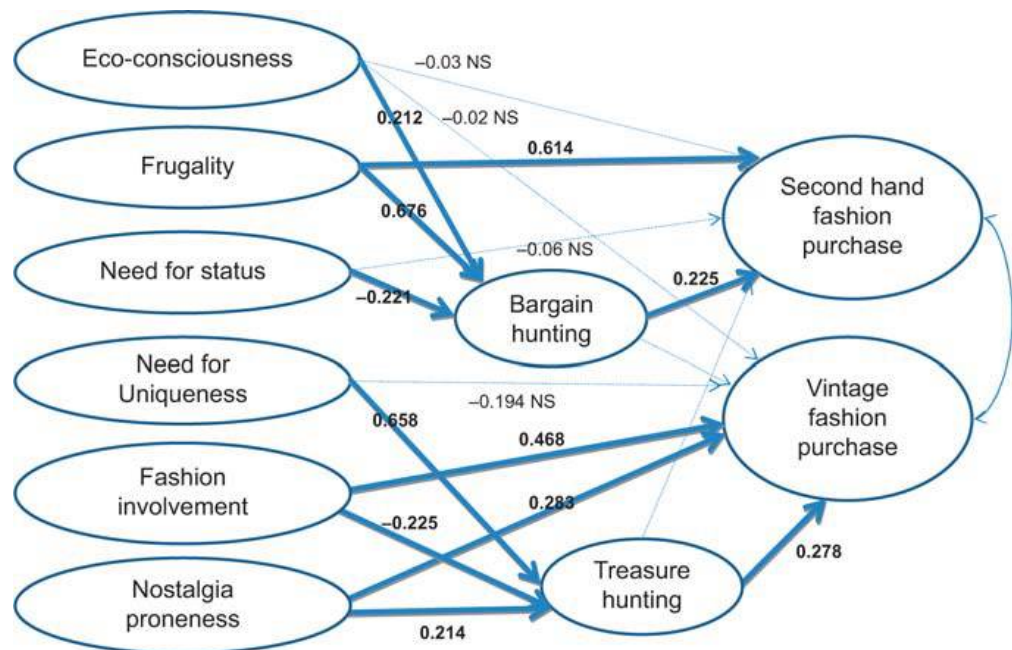
Antecedents to the purchase of vintage and second hand fashion pieces

A structural model was fitted to the data using EQS6.1 in a two steps process in order to assess the fit of the theoretically driven conceptual model of second hand vs vintage fashion consumption. First, the measurement model was estimated. A Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was run with the eight latent factors (Frugality, Fashion Involvement, Nostalgia, ECCB, Need for Status, Need for Uniqueness, Bargain hunting and Treasure Hunting) and 24 observed variables (three per factor). The Mardia's normalized estimate (Normalized estimate = 3.505) indicates a multivariate normal distribution and no special problems were encountered during optimization. The Chi-square likelihood ratio ($\chi^2(252) = 281, p = 0.101$) is not significant (although at marginal level $p > 0.05$). Yet this statistic has been reported as unsatisfactory to assess alone the goodness of fit of a CFA model. The descriptive goodness of fit indicators indicate a very good fit of the data (CFI = 0.93; RMSEA = 0.08). All standardized factor loadings were large and statistically significant (values ranged from 0.806 to 0.995; see Table II). These results suggest that the goodness-of-fit indices are sufficient in order to proceed to the second step of the process, investigating whether the data are consistent with the suggested conceptual model.

Second, the overall model was fitted to the data (see Figure 3). Again, the Mardia's normalized estimate (Normalized estimate = 2.543) indicates a multivariate normal distribution. The Chi-square likelihood ratio ($\chi^2(339) = 367, p = 0.141$) is not

Table II.
Confirmatory Factor
Analysis standardized
solutions

Observed variables	Standardized loading	R-squared
Fashion Involvement 1	0.928	0.861
Fashion Involvement 2	0.958	0.918
Fashion Involvement 3	0.905	0.820
ECCB item 1	0.970	0.940
ECCB item 2	0.949	0.900
ECCB item 3	0.919	0.844
Nostalgia item 1	0.908	0.825
Nostalgia item 2	0.850	0.722
Nostalgia item 3	0.984	0.969
Need for Status item 1	0.903	0.816
Need for Status item 2	0.885	0.784
Need for Status item 3	0.995	0.990
Need for Uniqueness 1	0.869	0.755
Need for Uniqueness 2	0.894	0.800
Need for Uniqueness 3	0.979	0.958
Frugality item 1	0.890	0.792
Frugality item 2	0.887	0.788
Frugality item 3	0.912	0.832
Bargain hunting 1	0.940	0.884
Bargain hunting 2	0.941	0.886
Bargain hunting 3	0.928	0.862
Treasure hunting 1	0.950	0.902
Treasure hunting 2	0.961	0.923
Treasure hunting 3	0.934	0.873



Note: Significant loadings are in bold

Figure 3.
Structural model of second
hand vs vintage fashion
consumption with factor
loadings

significant. The descriptive goodness of fit indicators indicate a very good fit of the data (CFI = 0.98; RMSEA = 0.04). *H4b*, *H5b* and *H6b* are accepted: eco-consciousness, frugality and need for status (in negative) load significantly on bargain hunting (R -squared = 0.550). In turn, bargain hunting and frugality influence significantly the intention to purchase second hand pieces (R -squared = 0.615), leading to the acceptance of *H5a*. Eco-consciousness and need for status have no direct impact. Consequently, *H4a* and *H6a* are rejected.

In parallel, need for uniqueness, nostalgia and fashion involvement (in negative) load significantly on treasure hunting (R -squared = 0.530), leading to the acceptance of *H1b*, *H2b* and *H3b*. In turn, treasure hunting, nostalgia and fashion involvement (in positive) influence significantly the intention to purchase vintage pieces (R -squared = 0.462). Need for Uniqueness has no direct influence on the purchase of vintage pieces but an indirect influence through treasure hunting. Eco-consciousness is not related to vintage consumption. Hence, *H1a* and *H2a* are accepted while *H3a* and *H6 bis* are rejected.

Although not indicated in the diagram, we tested the relationship between bargain hunting and the purchase of vintage pieces and treasure hunting and the purchase of second hand pieces; none of these relationships was significant (factor loadings respectively: 0.048 and 0.051).

Discussion

The findings of this paper clearly highlight that the profile and motives of the consumer of vintage fashion are unique and very different from that of second-hand fashion. The most salient characteristic of the vintage fashion consumer is education. The purchase intention of vintage pieces is higher at higher levels of education and income. It is not directly related to age. Yet, in the youngest group of consumers, purchase intention of vintage pieces increases with income. It is no surprise that education plays a role, taking into account that the interest and knowledge in real vintage pieces requires a level of connoisseurship sometimes based on historic and artistic backgrounds. As mentioned by Jens (2005, p. 182), “the knowledge of the relevant fashion history as well as the knowledge of good sources for obtaining original artifacts is [...] an important component of their (sub) cultural capital”. Also, the influence of income is relevant for vintage: the price of these pieces might sometimes supersede that of luxury modern pieces. In addition, we find no difference based on income for the purchase intention of second-hand clothes. Williams and Paddock’s (2003) qualitative research also highlights that the most affluent households also engage in second-hand consumption for recreational or social motives. Yet, for the large majority of participants in their study, the economic motives are the main drivers of such consumption.

Vintage fashion and second hand consumers differ strongly on the economic motives which precede the purchase. In this study, frugality is not an antecedent to the purchase intention of vintage fashion. In contrast, the main driver to the purchase of second-hand clothes is frugality, both directly and indirectly through the mediation of bargain hunting. This result is in line with Roux and Guiot’s (2008) findings that price sensitivity and frugality are influencing heavily second-hand shopping motives. In contrast, the hunting for vintage pieces or the purchase via auctions, being online or not, pre-supposes an emotional drive which makes the consumer pay the price, not

necessarily a bargain price (Belk, 1995). In addition, as expected, need for status is inversely related to bargain hunting and has an indirect impact on the intention to purchase second-hand clothes.

The principal driver to the purchase of vintage fashion is nostalgia, which, in line with past research on nostalgia is not linked with the age of the respondents. Nostalgia influences both directly and indirectly through treasure hunting, the intention to purchase vintage pieces. This result indicates a tribute to the material culture of the past. The cult of authentic aged pieces makes sense in relation to the modern culture of the copy; “the better the copies are, the more the original is valued” (Jens, 2005, p. 185). The second driver is fashion involvement, which influences directly and positively vintage consumption at the same time as indirectly and negatively through treasure hunting. This result as such might seem contradictory. The more consumers are fashion involved the least they shop for treasure hunting but the more they purchase vintage. Actually, it seems that fashion involved consumers do not enjoy the shopping experience of discovering a unique piece. At the same time, since the vintage trend has become extremely in vogue and adopted by fashionistas all around the world, it is no surprise that highly fashion involved consumers might engage in vintage consumption, probably through different channels than those who treasure hunt. The result tends to indicate that fashion involved consumers purchase vintage pieces for the trendiness and not necessarily for the symbolic meaning of the piece, the latter probably being driven essentially by nostalgia. Need for uniqueness is also influential but only indirectly through the mediation of treasure hunting.

Our findings also indicate that the integration of the vintage trend into the eco-fashion one is not necessarily a consumer reality, yet [. . .] Neither the purchase of vintage clothes nor that of second-hand clothes is driven by ecological consciousness directly. Eco-consciousness is related to the intention to purchase second hand pieces through the mediating effect of bargain hunting. This finding contradicts the bulk of research on eco-fashion which has explored consumers’ aspirations towards green fashion behaviours (Cervellon and Carey, 2011). There appears to be a discrepancy between what the consumer wishes and what she plans to do. Consumers acknowledge the importance of having an eco-friendly behaviour regarding the disposal of clothes, not wasting, not throwing away. But they do not necessarily adhere to making an eco-friendly statement by purchasing second-hand clothes. Morgan and Birtwistle’s (2009) research on young fashion consumers’ disposable habits tend to show that although interest in recycling and sustainable consumption practices exists, young consumers’ habits are not eco-friendly. Recycling and re-using behaviours seem more natural for products which are supposed to have durability. Also, it is probable that the positive impact on the environment is clearer when clothes claim that they are made out of recycled materials compared to second-hand clothes which are not immediately related to environmentally friendly behaviours. This research highlights the need for practitioners involved in the eco-fashion sector to educate the consumer on the interest presented by second-hand fashion products in a lifestyle respectful of the environment. It is important to valorize the purchase of second-hand clothes, especially among those eco-conscious consumers who integrate the economy of natural resources into their daily routine.

In essence, this research demonstrates that the antecedents and motivational drivers to the purchase of vintage and second-hand clothes are different. In addition, the profile

of the client of vintage and second-hand pieces differs also. Based on these findings, it is not necessarily in the interest of second-hand fashion stores to reposition into vintage. They might attract a group of consumers which will not necessarily find their dream piece and at the same time exclude those smart shoppers driven by the potential bargains presented by second-hand clothes. The decision to turn a business into selling vintage should be driven by the potential target clientele. In addition, the geographic location of the stores, surface design and visual merchandising should be adapted to the requirements of these specific clienteles (see Gregson and Crewe, 2003). Yet, we believe that it is interesting for luxury brands such as Ralph Lauren, to sell vintage pieces into their stores. They attract a group of consumers which would not naturally enter in the store but is fashion involved, educated and often with high income.

Limitations

This research acknowledges several limitations. First, the sample has to be increased and become representative of the target population. It would have been interesting to include males; however, blogs and forums discussing vintage fashion and eco-fashion on the internet tend to show that men are not major players yet. Second, the use of purchase intentions as proxy to actual purchase limits the validity of the results. Yet, we believe that the measure of purchase intention approximates significantly future purchases because the data were collected in neighborhoods where vintage/second-hand markets and stores are readily available thus availability is not an issue.

This paper calls for replication in several countries, as there might be cross-cultural differences in the profile of vintage and second-hand clients. In particular, a comparison between Great-Britain and France would be interesting, as the orientation toward second-hand and vintage fashion, and especially the centrality of these consumption patterns in an eco-conscious lifestyle might be different (Cervellon and Carey, 2011). Also, we assume vintage might have a different resonance between Europe and North America, where certain vintage clothing styles are culturally embedded (e.g. Teddy styles).

In addition, it would be interesting to include other variables which might have an explanatory power in the intention to purchase such products. For instance, materialism has been found related to second-hand purchases (Roux and Guiot, 2008; Guiot and Roux, 2010). It would also be interesting to test as predictors the dimensions of materialism which do not overlap with need for status such as tangibility and acquisition centrality. Also, self-monitoring might have an impact on consumers' behaviours regarding second-hand and vintage fashion, especially because these fashion choices convey a strong message which might enhance or tarnish self-image (O'Cass, 2001). Lastly, it would be interesting to investigate other industries than fashion (e.g. furniture, cars, watches) and see if this paper's findings replicate. Taking into account the scarcity in research regarding vintage, we call for the development of the topic through both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

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