

Circular economy and consumer attitudes in the context of online second-hand goods

Publications in media on ‘circular economy’ (The Guardian, 2020; Euromonitor International, 2015) are paving the way for advancing our understanding about consumer attitudes towards second-hand goods as these goods re-enter the re-sales cycle. The second-hand goods market has been growing along with the rise of *eBay* in the UK and USA and other online platforms such as Vintage or Babybundle in the UK (The Guardian¹, 2020), or Amazon, which offers a large online platform to sell second-hand goods, such as books, DVDs or guitars. Such platforms are especially useful to many consumers, particularly in times of crisis as many individuals struggle financially and those platforms offer second-hand goods at affordable prices. Such platforms also offer a convenient sale or purchase activity. For instance, the Vintage app has a convenient option of uploading a picture of a consumer’s unwanted piece of clothing which can be sold on this platform. This app also enables consumers to see what offers are placed by other sellers and purchase those items immediately. Moreover, these platforms increase sustainable consumption and reduce waste, and thus, contribute to the sustainability agenda of reducing greenhouse emissions by 2050 (European Commission, 2020).

Circular economy and platforms offering second-hand goods online to consumers gain popularity in times of crisis since economic conditions worsen in the market. Moreover, the sustainability agenda for 2050 has increased consumer interest in circular economy (The Guardian, 2020). To maximise sales on second-hand goods platforms, it is important for online sellers to better understand consumer attitudes towards the second-hand goods and how consumers benefit from engaging in such behaviour. Previous research has extensively examined consumer attitudes towards products in the context of sustainability (e.g., Piligrimiene et al., 2020), but studies researching consumers in the online second-hands good market are scarce, especially with regard to renting versus buying second-

¹ Hicley, Sh. The Guardian (2020), [Secondhand no longer second-best for UK's 'circular economy' consumers | Money | The Guardian](#)

hand goods as they enter circular economy. However, a study was conducted by Salciuviene and Daryanto (2015), which examined perceived value of second-hand goods sold by unknown retailers in a circular economy market. Specifically, their study researched the role of beliefs and trust in perceived value of second-hand goods and confirmed that information safety on a website and reliability of second-hand goods online retailers are of utmost importance to gain positive value perceptions of second-hand goods' retailers. Further a study by Park and Lin (2018) have explored attitude-behaviour gap in terms of sustainable consumption. These authors claim that consumers care about sustainable consumption, however their actions do not result in purchasing second-hand products. These authors suggest that especially such attitude-behaviour gap is apparent in the context of fashion where used clothing causes a lot of waste and requires some input from academics to provide theoretical guidelines as to how to close this attitude-behaviour gap and reduce consumption of clothing. This can be done in various ways, but Park and Lee (2018) suggest that changing consumer habits would lead to reduced waste, would increase environmental sustainability and contribute to the sustainable fashion products. Moreover, Sun et al. (2021) suggest that fashion products which have a longer life-cycle, such as luxury goods can also positively contribute to sustainability and that product-durability is important when considering value in sustainable consumption. According to those authors, high-end goods are disposed in a more sustainable manner and can be resold by their owners and a higher price, and so contribute to the greener environment.

To advance our knowledge, this research aims to introduce a theoretical model of consumer attitude formation towards renting and buying second-hand goods on online platforms that enter circular economy. This study proposes a theoretical model and propositions that may be tested empirically in future research about renting versus buying online second-hand goods in circular economy. Specifically, this study theorises the relationships among consumer personal values, moral identity, consumer engagement in circular economy activities and the relationship outcome related to renting or buying second-hand goods on online platforms. We posit that by examining consumer attitudes and investigating their level of engagement in circular economy, it is possible to predict the

extent to which consumers would partake in the online second-hand goods market. This study also aims to provide theoretical guidance to second-hand goods retailers as to how increase consumer base for renting or buying second-hand goods on online platforms.

References are available upon request.