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**Resale as sustainable social innovation: understanding shifts in consumer decision-making and shopping orientations for high-end secondhand clothing.**

*The best things in life are free –  
the second best are very expensive.  
(Coco Chanel)*

**Abstract**

*Purpose* – This study draws from sustainable social innovation theory and the Consumer Style Inventory (CSI) instrument to examine secondhand clothing consumption habits for Russia.

The secondhand market is the logical outcome of efforts to adopt resale as a facet of sustainable social innovation, with which to drive sustainable decision-making and socially responsible marketing in the secondhand high-end clothing market. Resale represents the cornerstone of business model innovation (BMi) for the retail sector, offering substantial opportunities for retailers who understand changes in consumption behaviour. More cost-effective and arguably greener, the sale of secondhand clothing is expected to be double the volume of fast fashion by 2030 but it remains an understudied field of research in the literature relating to the fashion industry.

*Design/methodology/approach* – Hypotheses are developed from the existing literature. Survey methodology is used to collect data from 250 Russian consumers in the city of Petersburg. The objective is to test the veracity of CSI shopper orientations, focusing on nascent motivations for high-end branded secondhand clothing, to examine sustainable social innovation and resale in an emerging market.

*Findings* – Four new shopping orientations are identified. Based on the empirical data, we suggest that five (out of the original eight CSI shopping orientations) are of internal statistical relevance, and that our new orientations are relevant for not only this market, but for neighbouring Eastern European countries too. The findings reflect postmodern evolution in

behavioural motivations for Russian consumers, that can inform retail strategy in terms of BMi consumer for harnessing opportunities offered by sustainable social innovation and resale.

*Originality* – Whilst the CSI has been widely used, research for Eastern Europe is limited. Understanding the shopping orientations for sustainable alternatives to newly produced clothing has theoretical and practical implications for improving circularity, post-war entry strategies, and countries facing economic downturn. Our study contributes novel insights by examining consumer decision-making and shopping orientations in an emerging market.

**Keyword:** Sustainable Social Innovation, Resale, Consumer Styles Inventory (CSI), high-end branded secondhand clothing, shopping orientations, Business Model Innovation (BMi), Russia

## **Introduction**

The genesis for this study is the market disruption caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which has interrupted global supply chains and left unmet needs. Beyond the immense tragedy to human life, we are beginning to grasp its devastating consequences for society and sustainability. The war is having a serious knock-on effect on consumers, retailers and social entrepreneurs – resulting in extreme uncertainty for Russia, Ukraine and neighbouring countries (Korobkova, Newmark and Gardham, 2022; Jagtap et al., 2022). The disruption of global supply chains has altered the retail landscape, especially in these emerging economies.

The focus of our study is on examining the concept of resale (also known as re-commerce) as a facet of sustainable social innovation (Guldmann and Huulgaard, 2020). Evidence suggests that high-quality resale is popular (Hines, 2005), and has grown in recent years into a multibillion-dollar business (THREDUP, 2016) It is a sector that is more commercially orientated than some other social enterprise sectors in the sense that it focuses on the recovery, distribution and resale of clothing back into communities. While resale has strong links with

the many other actors, the small size of many of these social enterprises means they are highly dependent on good quality business support and information. This paper examines the resale of high-end branded secondhand clothing as a facet of social innovation, and driver of new shopping orientations, while acknowledging other behavioural motivators, particularly the cost-of-living crisis (Oxford Analytica, 2022). Secondhand clothing has been defined in the literature as items of clothing that are branded and have been used/pre-loved – or alternatively, clothing items that are unique in some way, and/or date back in time, to denote something of the past, such as vintage (Ryding et al, 2019). For this study, secondhand clothing is examined within the context of high-end branded goods.

Understanding consumption habits and subsequent shifts is paramount for retailers and social entrepreneurs, so that business models can be redesigned to meet consumer needs more sustainably (White, Habib and Hardisty, 2019; Carter and Carter, 2020). A business model provides a holistic description of *how* a business operates and *how value is created* (Do Vale, Collin-Lachaud and Lecocq, 2021). As it is dynamic, not static, it needs constant innovation to respond to changes in the surrounding business environment. It can help a business to adopt a sustainable approach by (i) incorporating concepts, principles or goals aimed at sustainability; or (ii) integrating sustainability into the value proposition, value creation and delivery activities, and/or value capture mechanisms (Geissdoerfer et al., 2018). Thus, business model innovation and sustainable social innovation are closely connected in terms of aiming to create value for society while also generating economic benefits (Carter and Carter, 2020).

The growing awareness of the negative impact of the clothing industry on the environment and human life (Niinimäki et al., 2020) has increased the urgency to shift consumers to a more sustainable lifestyle and encourage retailers to innovative their business model (Carter and Carter, 2020) to address major environmental concerns (White et al., 2019). A small but growing number of retailers have innovated their business model to incorporate a more

sustainable and socially-oriented approach, such as Burberry, Gucci and Selfridges who have partnered with consignment companies to collect and resell preloved products (MMI Lab, 2021). However, it is not clear why the resale of high-branded secondhand clothing has been largely overlooked in prior studies of fashion.

Our paper draws from emerging research (Ryding et al., 2020; Sun, Bellezza and Paharia, 2021) that supports buying fewer yet higher-end products as a means of overcoming product durability neglect for sustainable consumption. Resale is an emerging sector estimated to be worth over \$80 billion by 2030. It can extend the lifecycle of fashion clothing by shifting the focus away from a linear economy to a circular economy (Fraanje et al., 2019), in line with the 17 global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) put forward by United Nations member states in 2015 to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all. This paper contributes to SDGs: #9 Industries, Innovation, and infrastructure; #11 Sustainable Cities and Communities; #12 Responsible Consumption and Production.

To examine resale, therefore, we draw from Sproles and Kendall's (1986) Consumer Styles Inventory (CSI) to explore the secondhand branded clothing market in Russia by interviewing consumers in St Petersburg, the second largest market in Russia. The CSI is a previously validated and tested framework that has been used to understand the shopping orientations of consumers in various international retail contexts, especially the USA (Mehta and Dixit, 2016) – see Table 1. While the CSI was not specifically designed to contribute to sustainable social innovation, it indirectly supports sustainability in four distinct ways:

- (i) *Awareness of consumer behaviour*: The CSI helps individuals become aware of their consumer behavior and preferences, which can lead to a better understanding of the impact of their consumption patterns on the environment and society, and encourage more sustainable choices.
- (ii) *Identification of consumer segments*: The CSI can be used to identify different consumer segments based on their behavior and preferences, thus helping companies and organisations tailor their products and services to meet the needs of specific consumer groups, including those who prioritize sustainability.

- (iii) *Development of sustainable products*: By understanding consumer preferences, companies can develop products that meet both consumer needs and sustainability goals. For example, the CSI can help identify consumer segments that prioritize eco-friendliness and use this information to develop sustainable products.
- (iv) *Evaluation of sustainability initiatives*: The CSI can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of sustainability initiatives by measuring changes in consumer behavior and preferences over time.

Generalisations of shopping orientation across cultures can be misleading (Chaudhary & Dey, 2016; Khare, 2016; Mehta and Dixit, 2016; Sarkar et al., 2019). Few studies have explored emerging markets (Ferraro et al., 2016; Appiadu et al., 2021), and no recent studies published in English have studied Russia in this context. We set out to fill this gap in knowledge, using Sproles and Kendall's CSI. Specifically, we extend Sproles and Kendall's CSI to reveal the constant renewal of styles, procurement, and social bricolage of clothing – which we believe has not received adequate attention in Anglophone literature. To discuss our findings from Russia in relation to a western developed business market would not be comparable; therefore, we present our findings alongside the findings of a pilot study conducted in neighbouring Poland (Ryding et al., 2020), undertaken previously by the authors, to provide a comparative illustration.

Studies show that consumers increasingly seek value-for-money and discount offerings, coupled with eco-awareness (Lichy, 2021) and engagement with circularity (Coscieme et al., 2022), reflecting more sustainable lifestyles and money-saving benefits (Machado et al., 2019). Identifying change in consumer behaviour is a priority for retailers and social entrepreneurs; they need to be able to recognise the types of clothing purchased where consumers place emphasis within the consumption process, and when consumption trends change – to innovate their existing business model to address the shifts (White et al., 2019). However, with the exception of Ryding et al. (2019) and Henninger et al. (2022a,b), limited recent research has been undertaken in this field, particularly in emerging markets.

To address this gap in knowledge, we set out to conduct a systematic review of decision-making styles of shoppers in high-end branded secondhand consumption contexts, in Russia.

### ***Consumer Styles Inventory (CSI) – Overview***

The Consumer Styles Inventory (CSI), developed by Sproles and Kendall (1986), is the first methodical approach for measuring consumer decision-making styles, shopping behaviour and orientation of consumers (Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003). It provides information on the decision-making processes in the consumer journey (Nayeem and Marie-IpSooching, 2022) and therefore can inform retail managers and social entrepreneurs for designing appropriate strategies (Codignola et al., 2021; Tueanrat, Papagiannidis and Alamanos, 2021). The CSI has been validated and replicated for several product categories. Researchers claim that the CSI instrument is reliable and applicable in a cross-cultural context; although important to note is that its outcome may vary from one country to another (Durvasula et al., 1993; Yeung, 2007; Tanksale et al, 2014). Sproles and Kendall's (1986) CSI thus acts as structural inspiration for this paper, and given its limited use in Eastern Europe, we extend the instrument and apply it for Russia (Ferraro et al., 2016; Appiadu et al., 2021). Russia serves as proxy to illustrate consumer behaviour in an emerging consumer market, which Hoskisson et al. (2000:249) define as "low-income, rapid-growth countries using economic liberalisation as their primary engine of growth". The collapse of communism in Central and Eastern European countries in 1989 created a number of 'transition economies'; but whereas reforms improved economic performance in Central Europe and Baltic countries, they were much less successful in Russia and the Balkans (Svejnar, 2002). Our focus is on the resale market that intersects post-communist and postmodern consumption, favouring dynamic economic change driven by young middle-class consumers (Stiehler, 2016), and offering opportunities for extending the supply chain internationally (Al Balushi, 2018).

Schroeder et al. (2014) found that consumers in emerging economies develop brand knowledge faster than consumers in developed markets, perceiving foreign brands to be of relatively higher quality and higher symbolic value (Guo, 2013; Sun et al., 2017). Here, consumers often show a strong preference for brands perceived as 'Western', linked to hedonic attributes (Askegaard, 2010), aspirational benefits and social esteem that foreign brands offer (Winit et al., 2014); they are generally less risk averse and more experimental in their buying behaviours (Al Balushi, 2018). They are primarily driven by a need for status and modern Western European lifestyle, which creates further demand for high-quality goods (Stiehler and Tinson, 2015). Engaging with these consumers may require some adjustment for Western retailers and social entrepreneurs.

In the last two decades, the unattractive connotation of secondhand retail outlets has moved away from being low-level fashion targeted at lower social classes, and instead has repositioned towards enabling consumers from diverse social groups to create their own unique style (Skowrońska, 2009; Herjanto et al., 2016). Resale has been reimagined and repurposed to address contemporary sustainability challenges, with the result that purchasing secondhand clothing has become an accomplishment for many consumers (Lichy, 2021). As such, resale has become a socially acceptable and attractive market in Central and Eastern European countries (Haraldsson and Peric, 2017). Market studies indicate that consumers who regularly purchase secondhand clothes are motivated by the low price and thrill of unearthing a rare or unique original designer garment (Ryding et al., 2020). Some consumers are driven by the positive environmental impact and consider it as a hobby; they form a new segment of eco-aware consumers who are mindful of the impact of consuming fast fashion (Sun et al., 2021). In Russia, many new resale markets (e.g., 'Eurostock' and 'Euro-secondhand') are expanding across the country (Dorokhina and Kharchenko, 2021). Secondhand shops are beginning to resemble modern supermarkets with carefully selected items, improved merchandising, and



chic boutiques selling high-end secondhand branded clothing (Borusiak et al., 2021). In 2015, the first online luxury resale shop ‘*Buy by me*’ was opened in Moscow, offering mid- to high-end brands including *Yohji Yamamoto*, *Haider Ackermann* and *Comme des Garçons* (Peopletalk, 2016).

Against this background, the aim of our study is to examine consumption habits for high-end branded secondhand clothing in the Russian market, using the Consumer Style Inventory (CSI) instrument and sustainable social innovation theory. The objective is to test the veracity of CSI shopper orientations, focusing on nascent motivations for high-end branded secondhand clothing, to examine resale as an important facet of sustainable social innovation theory in an emerging market. The paper proceeds as follows. The theoretical underpinning provides a 3-part review of the key concepts used in our study and the research context. Next, we outline the methodological approach, then present and discuss the results, from which we draw academic and practitioner implications. Lastly, we discuss the limitations and put forward concluding comments.

### **Theoretical Underpinning**

For this study, the 3-part literature review examines concepts of (i) sustainable social innovation, (ii) CSI and (iii) its application to the Russian context.

#### ***(i) Sustainable social innovation***

As efforts are underway to encourage consumers to buy fewer yet higher-quality clothing to ensure durability, there is renewed consumer demand for clothing that is more socially and environmentally sustainable. Retailers and social entrepreneurs have responded by redesigning their business model (Carter and Carter, 2020) to integrate resale as a postmodern practice (Gopalakrishnan and Matthews, 2018). Resale provides a viable option for consumers with a

limited budget (Sun et al., 2021). The growth of resale has led to a proliferation of approaches, practices and business model innovations (BMi) used by retailers and social entrepreneurs entering the secondhand market. Resale has the net effect of keeping “products and materials ‘in-the-loop’ for longer, allowing for extended use, repair, reuse, repurposing, and recycling” (Coscieme et al., 2022:451).

While not all secondhand businesses are resale businesses (for example, some businesses may focus on buying and selling vintage or rare items), resale can be understood as a type of secondhand business because it involves the sale of previously owned goods. Secondhand business models operate through different channels, including online platforms, retail stores, drop-off kiosks, and e-commerce websites (Abbes et al., 2020; Yrjölä, Hokkanen and Saarijärvi, 2021; Schadenberg and Folmer, 2022), with a focus on using lean operational structure and innovative distribution networks that combine physical and digital channels (Lichy, 2021). In this way, by offering a more sustainable, cost-effective and diverse shopping experience, resale has become an attractive option for consumers and a promising growth area for businesses.

The secondhand market will soon overtake the fast fashion segment (Stein, 2019; Paço et al., 2021), evoking two possible scenarios. First, a more circular approach to consuming could be fostered by making use of already existing products – namely pre-loved/ pre-owned secondhand clothing (Turunen and Leipämaa-Leskinen, 2015) – which “not only seems easier than people’s intuitive strategy of replacing old entities with new entities, but it is likely cheaper and less wasteful as well” (O’Brien and Smith, 2019:77). This approach is supported by BMi oriented towards redistribution, better capacity use, change of consumption patterns or digitalisation of consumption (Ritter and Schanz, 2019).

Second, the fashion industry has an opportunity to actively offset its environmental issues by supporting sustainable approaches to conducting business, and by engaging with BMi that

foster secondhand clothing consumption – such as renting, swapping, resale and redistribution (Lichy, 2021). A number of designers already offer sustainable consumer choices, such as Stella McCartney’s partnership with the luxury consignment brand The RealReal, Selfridges working with the HURR collective, and Gucci selling vintage items through their Gucci Vault (Henninger et al., 2022a,b; Schadenberg and Folmer, 2022). Here, the term *secondhand* refers to ‘used’ or ‘pre-loved’ garments (Turunen and Leipämaa-Leskinen, 2015) that are valued by consumers for their traditional attributes and augmented (hedonistic, nostalgic) experiences (Askegaard, 2010; Kneese and Palm, 2020). The academic literature, points towards a growing interest in understanding the redistribution channels for secondhand retail, to understand the subsequent impacts of their intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics on behaviour (Abbes et al., 2020). Resale offers one such example of this type of redistribution.

### ***(ii) Consumer Style Inventory (CSI)***

The complexities of consumer behaviour have led to growing interest in the use of consumer typologies, otherwise referred to in the literature as ‘consumer shopping orientations’ or ‘consumer decision-making styles’ (Sproles and Kendal, 1986). These terms describe the segmentation of consumers into relatively homogenous groups based on psychographic and demographic profiling (Bandar, 2014), thus contributing to a clearer understanding of consumers’ motivations, as well as lifestyle choices that can have an impact on retail settings. Numerous consumer-profiling studies exist (Bellenger and Korgaonkar, 1980; McDonald, 1993), which reflect a wide range of consumer purchasing behaviour dimensions. However, the measurement of consumer styles had been largely overlooked until Sproles and Kendall (1986) put forward a psychological assessment tool, the Consumer Style Inventory (CSI), to help classify consumers according to their purchasing behaviour. The CSI provides a proven tool that identifies eight styles, summarised in Table 1.

-Table 1 here-

**Source:** Sproles and Kendal (1986) and Yeung (2007, p.136)

These styles are consistent with prior studies that discuss aspects of psychographics, consumer typologies and characteristics. The CSI has been used and validated for many different categories of products (Durvasula et al., 1993; Tanksale et al., 2014) with numerous scholars confirming its applicability in many countries (Lyonski et al., 1996; Walsh et al., 2001), particularly in Central Asia and the USA (Yeung, 2007). It is possible that the CSI has been used in research conducted in Russia, but it has not been widely publicised or translated into English. It is important to note that when using standardised tools in different countries and cultures, it is necessary to consider linguistic and cultural factors that may affect the interpretation of the results (Durvasula et al., 1993; Tanksale et al., 2014) and the overall usefulness of measurement tools. We develop this point further in the next section.

### ***(iii) Application to Russia – CSI development***

Research into high-end branded secondhand clothing lies in the field of hedonic consumption and is linked to multi-sensory and emotional experiences (Askegaard, 2010). There is a high level of emotional patriotism in Russia, referred to as the *'love for the motherland'* (Goode, 2016), which is used for unifying society and securing the legitimacy of Putin's regime. However, Gurova (2021) argues that cosmopolitanism can indeed co-exist with patriotism in high-end fashion, as evidenced in the rising demand for resale. Following Korobkova et al. (2022), the impact of the war is having far-reaching consequences on the clothing supply chain, price of textiles and cost of living – resulting in consumer spending being diverted away from

clothing purchases to more essential items. In such circumstances, the branded secondhand clothing market may represent a viable solution for retailers and social entrepreneurs.

Consumers, on the other hand, are driven by different motivations to engage with the secondhand market. Secondhand consumption can be linked to nostalgic and *ostalgie* motivations. Nostalgia refers to a sentimental longing or wistful affection for the past, while *ostalgie* is a specific term used to describe a feeling of nostalgia for the former USSR and the socialist era (Godeanu-Kenworthy, 2011). In this respect, secondhand consumption may be associated with a longing for the past and a desire to reconnect with Soviet-era goods and culture. Secondhand items reflect the history of a country and therefore provide consumers with the opportunity to indulge in experiences of a cultural nature, that may have been omitted under a centrally-planned economy (Kim et al., 2021).

Originality is another important motivator; fashion involvement plays a key role in the *novelty fashion-conscious* consumer decision-making style. The motivation to be unique through *'bargain and treasure hunting'* behaviour is evident. Cervellon et al. (2012) found that although a key motivator for secondhand clothing consumption is of economic value, the lure of treasure hunting is also manifest. This phenomenon is defined as *'the battle of the finds'* linked to the idea of finding *'hidden designer treasures'* (Ryding et al., 2020).

Compared to other emerging markets, Russia has only recently experienced wealth generation and economic growth (Laruelle and Limonier, 2021). Many young consumers in Eastern Europe have similar consumer behaviour to their Western European counterparts, in that they renew their wardrobe (Ryding et al., 2020). In a market where many consumers live on a fixed income or pension, this trend has created a spike in demand for consuming secondhand fashion (Koszevska, 2013; Euromonitor, 2020), further accentuated by Russia's war on Ukraine (Jagtap et al., 2022; Korobkova et al., 2022).

It is important to bear in mind that the findings of studies which use the CSI are often context-

specific, since variations in its applicability will differ across different product categories and countries. Owing to these differences, new orientations can emerge that extend the CSI. For example, some scholars (Cervellon et al., 2012; Koszewska, 2013) have highlighted the motives driving the consumption of secondhand clothing as nostalgia, price consciousness, involvement in the fashion buying process, status seeking, creativity, sustainability, and bargain/treasure hunting. Drawing from these studies, therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

*H1: The original CSI can be utilized to validate consumer decision-making styles for secondhand clothing in Eastern Europe – i.e., Russia*

To extend the CSI, we thus draw from the secondhand clothing literature (Guiot and Roux, 2010; Cervellon et al., 2012; Koszewska, 2013; Turunen and Leipamaa-Leskinen, 2015; Ryding et al., 2019), and coupled with the relevant Eastern European studies examined within this study (Oelze, 2018; Gurova, 2021; Jagtap et al., 2022; Korobkova et al., 2022), we put forward four additional decision-making styles (bargain hunter, ecological and ethically conscious, nostalgic/ostalgic, treasure-hunter) – outlined in Table 2.

-Table 2 here-

**Source:** Spoles and Kendall, 1986 (extended).

In extending the CSI framework, the authors in particular take inspiration from the work of Koszewska (2013) and Cervellon et al. (2012), to better understand the factors impacting on the decision-making of Russian consumers when shopping for high-end secondhand clothing. The study undertaken by Koszewska (2013) and Cervellon et al. (2012) combined, explicates that regardless of culture or nation, when consumers shop for secondhand goods, these products

are normally purchased by consumers who are fashion-involved, with treasure hunting and the prospect of finding a bargain acting as key antecedents to decision-making. The thrill of the hunt, and the possibility of finding new pieces of higher quality, denotes a bargain in this respect, and thus creates value for the recipient (Cervellon et al., 2012; Koszewska, 2013; Ryding et al., 2019). In addition, nostalgia/ostalgia as outlined in its contextualisation for Russia earlier, tends to be an important motivator; with cross cultural interpretations underpinning such experiences. To fully understand the motivators of purchasing secondhand clothing, it has furthermore been suggested that the feel-good moment created by reducing the environmental footprint offers end-value for consumers (Thomas, 2003; Guiot and Roux, 2010; Turunen and Leipamaa-Leskinen, 2015). According to Oelze et al, (2019) there is limited research on the ecological and ethical consciousness/consumption for Russia, with no research undertaken within the context of clothing. In this study, Oelze et al., (2019) did find that national cultural values have an impact on ethical awareness and practices. The study found that Russian consumers do not know too much about sustainability and they do not purchase certified products on this basis. Instead, quality, and well-manufactured garments was found to be very important for Russian consumers. However, within this study, it is also evident that whilst consumers' awareness of sustainability is limited, there is some evidence of its growing importance. Furthermore, Poland, a neighbouring region to Russia for example, has recently witnessed the emergence of more ecological and social sensitive consumers, which fits the secondhand fashion trend and shows growing awareness within the Eastern European region (ibid).

To summarise, we draw on this literature to extend the CSI instrument, to include four additional decision-making types: Bargain Hunter, Ecological and Ethical Consciousness, Nostalgic/Ostalgic Seeker and Treasure Hunter.

It was decided that the type ‘Fashionista’ (Cervellon et al., 2012) was similar to the “novelty fashion-conscious consumer” outlined in the original CSI, notwithstanding minor variation. ‘Fashionista’ was therefore removed. As a result of this finding, new questions were developed for the novelty fashion style.

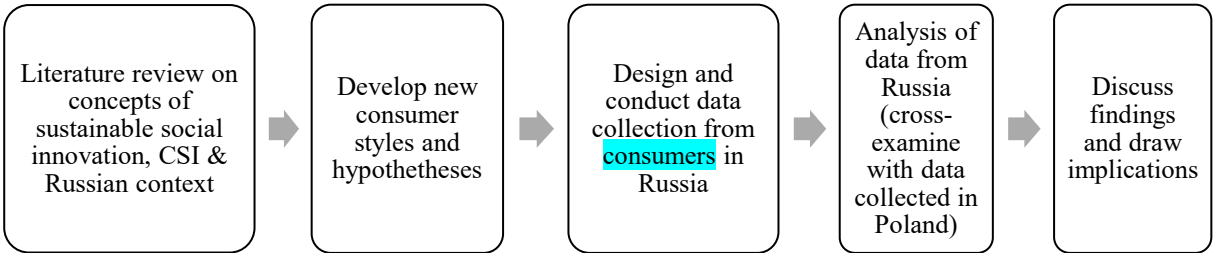
Based on the literature, we developed the following hypotheses for testing:

- H.2.1 Russian consumer purchasing behaviour for high-end branded secondhand clothing is influenced by the notion of treasure hunting for a product.*
- H.2.2 Russian consumer purchasing behaviour for high-end branded secondhand clothing is influenced by seeking an unexpected bargain for a product.*
- H.2.3 Russian consumer purchasing behaviour for high-end branded secondhand clothing is influenced by nostalgia/ostalgia.*
- H.2.4. Russian consumer purchasing behaviour for high-end branded secondhand clothing is influenced by ecological and ethical influences.*

**Methodology**

This study adopts a quantitative approach to provide a novel insight into consumer motivations for the consumption of high-end branded clothing in Russia, as illustrated in figure 1 below:

**Figure 1. Research Design**





The participants were guaranteed total anonymity and informed that they could withdraw at any time from the study, as advocated by the Russian ethics committee for research.

Based on the literature reviewed, we extend the CSI to include 4 new consumer styles of secondhand high-end branded clothing: bargain hunters, treasure hunters, nostalgia seekers and environmentally-conscious consumers. The quantitative element of this research focuses on a sample of psychographic and demographic characteristics, thus enabling effective data analysis. In terms of rigour, our study does not make use of a student sample, unlike Sproles and Kendall (1986), Lysonski et al. (1996) and Maçik and Maçik (2015). Instead, our respondents represent a cross-section of consumers within the working population.

### ***Data Collection and Analysis***

Data were collected from consumers in Russia who were shopping in stores selling high-end secondhand clothing. A professional translator prepared the Russian-language version of the questions. The survey was translated first from English to Russian and then back-translated (Lysonski et al., 1996). Data were collected in July 2022 by the agency OMI Online Market Intelligence, yielding a total of 250 valid survey responses. The size of the sample was assessed using G\*Power, Wilcoxon signed-rank test (Faul et al., 2009). The test proved the size of the sample is sufficient: the achieved power is 1 (at  $\alpha=0.05$ ). The final sample included a fairly even split between 41.2% (102 responses) female and 58.8% (148 responses) male respondents. The age distribution is shown in Table 3.

-Table 3 here-

**Source:** Authors' own creation.

Most participants are professional employees (medical doctors, engineers, teachers, etc.) and

managers in higher and mid-level posts (33.6% and 22.4% correspondingly) followed by 'physical workers' (14.8%) and entrepreneurs (8%). Table 4 provides an overview of occupations.

-Table 4 here-

**Source:** Authors' own creation.

The sample for this study is representative of the population of consumers in Russia. Equally, the data can be considered reliable based on the target stores, which sell high-end branded secondhand clothing brands. The participants were informed that there were no correct or incorrect answers, which further helped to reduce the risk of socially desirable responding and acquiescence bias. They were reminded that they could ask questions or withdraw at any time – and that their responses would remain confidential. The researchers received ethical approval from the university ethical review committee to undertake the study.

The survey used both existing questions (dimensions 1-8 on the CSI) and newly developed questions (dimensions 9-12) for the extended four decision making styles. These newly created questions were developed from the extant literature for high-end branded secondhand consumption and from prior research undertaken on environmental considerations in the decision-making process (Cervellon et al., 2012; Koszweska, 2013; Ryding et al., 2020; Lichy, 2021). However, to ensure further validity, the newly created questions were statistically validated by the agency employed to collect the data.

The survey was split into two parts: the first section centred on the participants' demographics (nationality, gender, age, ethnicity, marital status, income, etc.). The second section examined consumer behaviour by focusing on the extended consumer style inventory (frequency of purchase, motivation, brand preference, shop preference, etc.). Following Sproles and Kendal (1986), the second section adopted a 40-item questionnaire using a 5-point Likert-scale.

Another 32 items were added to the questionnaire to test the additional four CSI. Data was processed and analysed by using SPSS. A factor analysis was performed to test and validate the 12 consumer style characteristics. To test the reliability of these styles, Cronbach Alpha coefficient was applied. A hierarchical clustering technique was used to complete the analysis, which grouped the respondents into various segments based on their CSI.

### **Findings and Discussion**

A Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was used to analyse the extended CSI, which resulted in twelve factors with an eigenvalue greater than 1. The KMO (0.883) and the Bartlett's Test (13286.258 ( $p < .01$ )) determined that a factor analysis can be performed (see Table 5).

-Table 5 here-

**Source:** Authors' own creation.

The factor analysis produced a twelve-factor solution, which differs from Sproles and Kendall (1986). Therefore, the original CSI only partially explains contemporary consumer behaviour in the secondhand clothing market in Russia. However, the typology is different from the traditional CSI. By means of an illustration, it also differs from the results obtained in a similar study undertaken in neighbouring Poland (cf., Ryding et al., 2020). For example, two factors (Factor II – Brand conscious, Price Equals Quality Consumers and Factor III – Novelty-Fashion Conscious Consumers) were united, and there is also a new typology that splits the existing ecological and ethically conscious factors; these are now Factor IX (1) and Factor IX (2) – see Appendix A, which showcases the varimax rotated factor loadings for the sample. The twelve-factor model explains 64.665% of the variance within the Russian secondhand clothing consumer market, which aligns with the findings of Sproles and Kendall (1986) and Lysonski et al. (1996).

The internal consistency for the 12 factors was calculated through Cronbach's alpha, shown in Table 6 (below).

-Table 6 here-

**Source:** Authors' own creation.

Furthermore, all of Sproles and Kendall's (1986) factors applied to the Russian secondhand market. However, not all these items loaded significantly, therefore 12 items with factor loadings  $< .400$  were rejected from the data. Factors 2 and 3 are combined to produce a single new typology: Brand conscious, Price Equals Quality Consumers and Novelty-Fashion Conscious Consumers form similar shopping style, which we refer to as *Wealthy and Fancy*. An unexpected result was revealed in our findings that distinguishes Russian consumers from two similar studies. Ryding et al. (2020) introduced *Shopping Avoidance*, in a study undertaken in Poland, to replace Sproles and Kendall's (1986) *Recreational, Hedonistic Consumer*, and found that consumers in Poland do not associate secondhand clothes shopping with recreation or hedonistic consumption. Tarka and Kukar-Kinney (2022) reported compulsive buying among young consumers in Eastern Europe. We found no evidence of shopping avoidance or compulsive buying in Russia, which can perhaps be explained by the growing awareness of sustainability issues and social acceptance of secondhand goods (Haraldsson and Peric, 2017). More likely, the consumption of high-end branded secondhand clothing in Russia can be interpreted as a postmodern consumer culture, enabling consumers to create their own unique style, both *avant garde* and trendy, thus confirming prior studies (Skowrońska, 2009; Herjanto et al., 2016; Tesio, Kessous and De Barnier, 2020). Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for *Shopping Avoidance* is .246, which indicates a low level of internal consistency. This finding can be explained by the research context, namely secondhand fashion. Consumers for whom shopping is not enjoyable, who want to spend minimum time on shopping, would not spend time going

around secondhand stores, as this activity can be very time-consuming.

A similar effect was observed for factor 5 '*Price conscious – Value-for-money consumer*', which shows a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of .563: the consumers who want best value for lowest price, preferring low-cost items, would not go to high-end branded secondhand clothing shops; he/she would most probably prefer sales at regular high-street retailers such as H&M, for example. Owing to the lower internal consistency, factors 4 and 5 of the CSI were deleted. The analysis of the results obtained shows that Russian consumers often purchase secondhand clothes impulsively. Factor 6 – '*Impulsive, Careless Consumer*' shows high internal consistency with Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of .726. Their low awareness of the environmental impact of their purchases may trigger impulse purchases.

Factor 9 is now divided into two. It would be ideal if one part were for Ethical consumers, and another part for Ecological consumers, yet this was not the case. We notice that Factor 9 (1) concerns only the natural materials consumption, cautiousness about natural materials. The factor 'country-of-origin' is also included here, but when a Russian consumer checks the country-of-origin, they are interested in the *quality* of the product, not human rights or the environment. For example, when a Russian consumer checks the 'made in' label of a garment, then they are often interested in finding out if the garment is '*Made in China*', since Chinese products have been strongly associated with poor quality. The '*Made in China*' label has received academic attention over the past decade, where several studies examine consumers' perceptions of product quality for Chinese-manufactured goods (Leonidas et al, 2007; Aybeniz & Kara; 2014; Schniederjans et al, 2011). In one study, a set of product perception metrics, combining price, and product durability were used to assess how consumers rated value when purchasing Chinese-manufactured goods (Schniederjans, 2011). A key finding from this study found that the materials used in Chinese-manufactured goods were of poor quality, thus resulting in lower perceptions of quality of products made in China as opposed to other

countries. Furthermore, research into the country-of-origin effect, particularly for emerging countries, also highlights that brand image, trust and quality are significantly lower for Chinese-manufactured goods when compared to other countries (Aybeniz et al., 2014). To summarise, we refer to this shopping style as ‘sensitive skin’. It neither evokes ecological nor ethical consumption; it relates to caring about one’s own health and the quality of the product. Factor 9 (2) retains the title of ‘Ecological and Ethically Conscious consumer’.

For comparison, the results obtained from our Russian sample are shown alongside the results obtained in a similar study undertaken in Poland (Ryding et al., 2020) – see Table 7.

-Table 7 here-

**Source:** Authors’ own creation.

The aim of this study is to examine consumption habits for high-end branded secondhand clothing in the Russian market, by testing the veracity of CSI shopper orientations for high-end branded secondhand clothing. In doing so we examine the nascent motivations of Russian consumers placing resale, an important facet of sustainable innovation theory, at the centre of the debate. Our findings are successful in that we suggest that five out of the original eight CSI decision-making styles are of internal statistical relevance, and that our ‘altered’ styles (i.e., new group of consumers – highlighted in table 7), are relevant for Russia.

To recap, while 5 of the original consumer decision-making styles (Sproles and Kendall, 1986) are internal statistically relevant, it should be noted that slightly different styles had been accepted (see Appendix A). Russian consumers do not purchase secondhand clothing for a low price. When they buy high-end branded secondhand clothes, their consumption is quality-driven and at the same time impulsive. Furthermore, we identify an altered style, which we termed ‘*Wealthy and Fancy*’. It represents a new typology in Russia related to consumers who

are both brand and novelty-fashion conscious. A new shopping style '*Sensitive Skin*' was also identified in Russia with regards to consumers who appreciate consuming natural materials and want to signal thoughtfulness about natural materials as well as the country-of-origin when purchasing high-end branded secondhand clothes. This style has not been identified in prior studies, and therefore has implications.

Against the backdrop of the literature reviewed, our findings equally draw attention to the need for retailers and social entrepreneurs to develop a heightened awareness of business model innovation, to deliver sustainable solutions in the form of high-end secondhand clothing resale (White et al., 2019; Carter and Carter, 2020). We observe evidence of the perpetual cycle of fashion trends that has enabled secondhand retail outlets to reinvent themselves (Skowrońska, 2009; Herjanto et al., 2016) as purveyors of pre-owned chic to satisfy the needs of environmentally conscious consumers (Lichy, 2021). Findings also reveal that market disruption has opened up new opportunities for social entrepreneurs who can respond to the growth of resale by innovating business models to take advantage of new distribution channels, including online platforms, retail stores, drop-off kiosks, and e-commerce websites (Abbes et al., 2020; Yrjölä, Hokkanen and Saarijärvi, 2021; Schadenberg and Folmer, 2022).

### ***Theoretical and Managerial Implications***

Previous literature has not examined the relationship between shopping orientations and factors affecting shopping for high-end branded secondhand clothing, and for an emerging market. Five of the original CSI shopping orientations (see Table 7) are applicable to Russia, with some minor nuances. Of these, Type 1 Perfectionist, High Quality Conscious Consumers, is confirmed for Russia and suggests these consumers shop for the best quality. They shop carefully and tend not to be satisfied with mediocre quality (Sproles and Kendall, 1986). This

detail is in line with the adage *'We're not rich enough to buy cheap things'*, which is often echoed by the Russian middle-classes (Gurova, 2012).

From a managerial perspective, therefore, our study provides useful information that can inform practitioners. It is crucial in the Russian market that promotional methods are aligned to messages of high quality, and to eradicate any negative associations which may be linked to clothing which is secondhand. Nuances in shopping orientation types were found for original CSI Type 2 *Brand Conscious, Price Equals Quality Consumers*, and the original Type 3 *Novelty Fashion Consumers*. These types were merged into one and labelled by the authors 'Wealthy and Fancy Consumers'. Similar to Sproles and Kendall's definition, the dominant and emerging *Wealthy and Fancy Consumer* is keen to purchase well-known clothing brands, but equally, they place great emphasis on newer products, and products that reflect contemporary trends and styles. This finding highlights the importance of product positioning in Russia, suggesting that high-end branded secondhand clothing brands are more attractive, compared to alternatives such as vintage clothing designs for example. Other original CSI types confirmed for Russia, include Types 6 *Impulsive Careless Consumer*, Types 7, *Confused by Choice Consumers* and Type 8 *Habitual, Brand-loyal Consumers*.

In sum, these latter three types suggest that Russian consumers do not plan their shopping; they are somewhat confused by choice yet remain brand loyal and have preferred brands that they buy regularly. This is important to note, as retailers in Russia should look for ways to simplify in-store lay-out and merchandising displays between clothing lines and devise promotional incentives on branded re-buys to maximise sales.

From the perspective of social entrepreneurs, numerous opportunities exist. Social entrepreneurs can contribute to this movement by engaging in 're-commerce' (Arman and Mark-Herbert, 2021) – i.e., creating online platforms that connect sellers of secondhand goods with buyers, to make it easier for people to find and buy used goods, thus promoting the culture



of resale. In line with Schadenberg and Folmer (2022), they can also play a role in raising awareness about the benefits of resale and the negative impact of waste on the environment, through designing social media campaigns or partnering with other organisations to publicise the message. In addition, social entrepreneurs can create incentives for people to participate in resale, for example, by offering discounts on new products when consumers bring in used items to sell or donate. Lastly, they could collaborate with policy-makers to promote the culture of resale, for example, by lobbying tax breaks or subsidies for businesses that sell used goods.

Four additional decision-making styles which reflect postmodern shopping orientations and are especially relevant for the Russian market were confirmed – namely Type 9, Sensitive Skin, which alludes to caring about one’s own health and quality of the product; Type 10 *Bargain Hunter*; Type 11 *Treasure Hunter*, and Type 12 *Nostalgic/Ostaligic Seeker*. The confirmation of the newly created types, 10, 11 and 12, reaffirms the literature which indicates a sense of yearning and reminiscence for the era before the collapse of the Communist Bloc (Godeanu-Kenworthy, 2011).

Reinforcing the work of Kim et al. (2021) discussed earlier, secondhand items can reflect the history of a country, providing consumers with the opportunity to indulge in cultural experiences that may have been restricted under a centrally planned economy. This suggests that in terms of in-store layout, whilst simplifying the store environment to improve overall choice is important, maintaining the opportunity within in-store designs to find a ‘golden nugget’ still plays a significant role (Ryding et al., 2020).

Finally, the confirmation of Type 9, Sensitive Skin, provides an opportunity for retailers and social entrepreneurs who can offer clothing to consumers who value clothes made of natural materials. These consumers are mindful of country-of-origin when buying branded secondhand clothes, in line with Strutton et al. (1995) who first recognised the importance of country-of-origin for Russian buyers at the time when the Russian market was opening up for imported

products. Despite the popularity of goods produced in Russia, about 49% of consumers prefer foreign products over local products (Alpha International Trade, 2022). This finding is echoed by Rojas-Méndez and Kolotylo (2022) who found Russian consumers have a xenocentric perspective – i.e., prefer products and brands imported from developed countries instead of developing or transitional ones” (p.208). Therefore, to reach the category of Sensitive Skin consumers, clothes should be promoted to consumers with messages of health and well-being, and also of high quality which is guaranteed by the clothes’ country-of-origin.

### **Limitations and Avenues for Future Research**

The results of the study are limited to consumers of high-end branded secondhand clothing in Russia. Whilst similarities in consumption in neighbouring regions may be apparent, the results cannot be generalised elsewhere. It would be constructive to extend the study to different contexts – for example, other emerging economies in other continents. This approach could be used to develop a classification system for the consumption of secondhand high-end clothes in the post-pandemic era in different markets and across different generations of consumers. Also, there is an argument for pre-testing, checking some of the properties of the new items (e.g., indications of internal and discriminant validity), prior to launching a larger survey, for example the use of online data collection techniques, such as via social networks and blogs. Lastly, an emerging concept to include in future studies is the business model of RaaS (Resale-as-a-Service) for major fashion retail brands, which is growing rapidly in Western Europe particularly among young adult consumers.

### **Conclusion**

Using the Consumer Style Inventory (CSI) instrument and sustainable social innovation theory, this study set out to examine consumption habits for high-end branded secondhand clothing in

the Russian market. The objective was to test the veracity of CSI shopper orientations in Russia for high-end branded secondhand clothing, within the context of resale, an important facet of sustainable social innovation theory. In conclusion, we found that five of the original eight CSI decision-making styles are of internal statistical relevance for Russia, with slightly altered styles accepted. The altered and merged style, labelled *Wealthy and Fancy*, includes consumers who seek new products, often reflected in their choice of contemporary styles, and tend to purchase well-known brands. These findings explain why Russian consumers are inclined to purchase secondhand high-end products, such as the desire to acquire high-end items at a more affordable price. Furthermore, this study presents a new orientation, which was not anticipated, labelled *Sensitive Skins*; this group referring to consumers who place emphasis on consuming natural materials, are who are quality driven, with country-of-origin an important motivator (Aybeniz et al., 2014). It can be concluded that Russian consumers overall seek novelty in their experiences when shopping for high-end branded secondhand clothing with quality of materials, and contemporary styles acting as key motivators within their decision-making process.

Interestingly, an unexpected result highlights that unlike two other similar studies undertaken previously, there was no evidence amongst Russian consumers of shopping *avoidance*, found for Poland (Ryding, 2020), or *compulsive buying*, which was found amongst young consumers in Eastern Europe (Tarka and Kukar-Kinney, 2022). This could be because there is a growing awareness of sustainability (Haraldsson and Peric, 2012). Our findings suggest that in recent years, there has been a growing global awareness, including Russia, towards ecological and ethical consciousness. Whilst sustainability is currently not a driving motivator for Russian consumers, they do prefer to make good product choices, and buying secondhand high-end products is seen to reduce waste and extend the lifecycle of these products, which appeals to the consumers who are particularly concerned about sustainability.

Finally, our findings highlight several implications for both entrepreneurs and retailers for sustainable social innovation and the importance of resale, the latter having been reimagined and repurposed to address sustainability challenges, and in a climate of market disruption. Resale promotes the reuse of high-end clothing and reduces the demand for new clothing, which can help reduce waste and the use of natural resources. It creates economic opportunities by providing a market for used clothing and creating jobs in the resale industry. There are also social benefits; it promotes a sense of community and reduces social isolation. Lastly, it offers a way for people to express their individuality by finding unique and vintage items.

Given the timing of our study, Russia's clothing supply chains are suffering because of the sanctions imposed by the European Union and USA. Under these circumstances, the secondhand branded clothing market may be able to reduce the impact of supply-chain disruption. More than a consumer culture that intersected post-communist and postmodern consumption, satisfying the needs of young middle-class and broadening the supply chain, the secondhand market is the logical outcome of efforts to adopt resale as a facet of sustainable social innovation, with which to drive sustainable decision-making and socially responsible marketing in the high-end clothing market. Our study highlights resale as an example of a solution that addresses multiple sustainability challenges at once, giving emphasis to the need for collaboration between different actors (sellers, buyers and intermediaries) and the development of supportive policies and infrastructure. Resale for sustainable social innovation illustrates the complex and interconnected nature of sustainability challenges and the importance of considering multiple factors when developing sustainable solutions. Above all, it highlights the potential for innovative solutions to emerge from existing systems and practices.

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**Appendix A: Results of Factor Analysis and 60-items on twelve Constructs**

<b>Factor/Items</b>	<b>Eigen Value</b>	<b>Factor Loadings</b>	<b>Variance %</b>	<b>Cumulative Variance %</b>
<b>Factor I – Perfectionist, High Quality Conscious Consumers</b>	2.215		2.877	54.022
QB_r3		.858		
QB_r2		.840		
QB_r1		.715		
QB_r4		.703		
QB_r6		.581		
<b>Factor II – Brand conscious, Price Equals Quality Consumers</b>	17.15		22.273	22.273
QB_r13		.749		
QB_r11		.729		
QB_r12		.721		
QB_r10		.719		
QB_r21		.716		
QB_r14		.667		
QB_r9		.417		
<b>Factor III – Novelty-Fashion Conscious Consumers</b>				
QB_r16		.719		
QB_r17		.749		
QB_r18		.696		
QB_r20		.659		
QB_r35		.592		
QB_r22		.489		
<b>Factor IV – Shopping Avoidance</b>	1.923		2.497	56.519
QB_r24		.781		
QB_r26		.697		
QB_r36		.608		
QB_r27		-.558		
QB_r25		-.549		
QB_r28		.483		
<b>Factor V-Price Conscious, "Value-for-money" Consumer</b>	1.327		1.724	64.262
QB_r31		.628		
QB_r30		.446		
QB_r29		.437		
<b>Factor VI-Impulsive, Careless Consumer</b>	1.759		2.285	58.804
QB_r33		.714		
QB_r34		.554		
QB_r32		.503		
<b>Factor VII – Confused by choice-</b>	3.122		4.054	48.100

<b>overload consumers</b>				
QB_r35		.822		
QB_r38		.812		
QB_r39		.792		
QB_r40		.753		
QB_r37				
<b>Factor VIII – Habitual, Brand-loyal Consumers</b>	1.232		1.601	65.862
QB_r41		.593		
QB_r42		.471		
<b>Factor IX – Ecological and Ethically Conscious</b>	1.460		1.897	60.701
QB_r46		.764		
QB_r45		.698		
QB_r47		.697		
<b>Factor IX(2) – Ecological and Ethically Conscious</b>	8.511		11.054	33.327
QB_r51		.833		
QB_r54		.769		
QB_r55		.723		
QB_r50		.708		
QB_r48		.696		
QB_r52		.652		
QB_r49		.550		
<b>X. Dimension 10: Bargain Hunters</b>	2.344		3.045	51.145
QB_r65		.715		
QB_r63		.712		
QB_r64		.666		
QB_r62		.606		
<b>Factor XI-Treasure Hunters</b>	4.802		6.236	39.563
QB_r70		.800		
QB_r71		.761		
QB_r66		.750		
QB_r69		.697		
QB_r59		.661		
QB_r67		.645		
QB_r68		.597		
<b>Factor XII- Nostalgia/Ostalgia</b>	3.542		4.484	44.046
QB_r76		.829		
QB_r77		.782		
QB_r75		.711		
QB_r74		.716		
QB_r73		.615		

Source: Authors' own creation