



Article

Examining Generation Z Consumer Online Fashion Resale Participation and Continuance Intention through the Lens of Consumer Perceived Value

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Abstract: The fashion industry has recently embraced a circular economy due to the increased consumer awareness of environmental issues, especially among younger generations. However, it is unclear if younger consumers, especially Generation Z, are willing to consistently engage in sustainable consumption patterns, such as buying and selling pre-owned fashion products through online resale platforms. This research specifically focuses on Generation Z consumers' online fashion resale participation continuance. A research model was proposed with perceived benefits, pro-environmental beliefs as antecedents to attitude and continuance intention, and consumer perceived value as a moderating factor shaping the specified direct and mediating relationship. An online survey was administered to a convenience sample of 257 Generation Z consumers, and exploratory factor analysis identified five dimensions of perceived benefits of online fashion resale participation, epistemic benefits, product choice benefits, quality benefits, value for money, and budget benefits. Two groups of consumers were identified based on value perceptions of clothing consumption: maximum value pursuers and self-oriented shoppers. Structural equation modeling was employed to test the hypothesis. Results showed that pro-environmental beliefs affect Generation Z consumers' attitudes and continuance intention to online fashion resale participation with strong effects for the group of self-oriented shoppers. Among the five dimensions of perceived benefits, only epistemic benefits affect continuance intention for self-oriented consumers. Theoretical and practical implications are provided in this paper.

Keywords: generation Z consumer; fashion resale practice; perceived value; continuance intention



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1. Introduction

The fashion industry is positively associated with creativity, the evolution of trends, and innovation. However, it is also one of the largest contributors to environmental pollution and waste due in large part to fast fashion [1]. Fast fashion promotes over-consumption through the rapid production of trendy clothing, which in turn generates immense waste. Consequently, in response to the significant environmental issues caused by fast fashion, there is increasing interest in understanding and promoting sustainable practice approaches by both industry professionals and fashion scholars.

The recent increase in consumer awareness of environmental issues caused by the fashion industry, especially among younger generations [2], has led the fashion industry to embrace a circular economy. One of the essential components of the circular economy in fashion is resale, which significantly contributes to sustainability by extending the lifespan of products and reducing fashion waste. Fashion online resale refers to the process of

buying and selling pre-owned fashion items over the Internet. This phenomenon has gained significant popularity in recent years, particularly among younger consumers who are interested in sustainability and fashion affordability. Fashion resale not only reduces waste and supports a sustainable circular economy, but also mitigates consumers' concerns about environmental issues and provides them with unique and affordable fashion options [3]. Furthermore, research shows that consumers who embrace resale are more likely to engage in other sustainable consumption practices, such as repurposing or repairing clothing [4]. Zhang et al. [5] found that consumers who were aware of the negative impact of unsustainable fashion practices were less likely to engage in fast fashion. Additionally, those same consumers were equally likely to participate in sustainable circular practices such as buying and selling pre-owned clothing, or fashion clothing resale (e.g., vintage or second-hand) [1].

Although the impact of the fashion industry on the environment has become increasingly notorious, older generations remain less likely to engage in sustainable fashion practices. Kapferer and Michaut-Denizeau [2] found that younger generation consumers were more likely to be interested in sustainability in fashion consumption compared to Boomers and Generation Xers. As a fast-growing number of Generation Z enter the workplace, they are changing the consumer landscape and shaping the way of business since this first generation of true digital natives has become a potent influence on consumers of all ages and incomes [6,7]. Specifically, technology and online marketplaces are driving the growth of the second market [8], this group of digitally native consumers plays a critical role in sustaining and developing the essential component of the circular economy in the online fashion resale industry. Studies have indicated that this group of consumers is savvy and pursues different values of products and services compared to other generations [6,7]. Even though Generation Z consumers are found caring about social and environmental issues caused by the fashion industry, to what degree they are willing to switch to responsible and sustainable products or consumption patterns needs to be further examined [9]. In addition, research on understanding this powerful group of consumers' perceived value regarding clothing consumption practices is crucial for promoting sustainability in the fashion industry. Even though buying and selling pre-owned fashion products through online resale platforms are increasingly popular among Generation Z consumers, it is not clear if they are willing to continue participating in such a sustainable consumption pattern. Research has examined and identified key motivations that drive consumers to participate in fashion online including financial gain, variety, uniqueness, and access to high-end fashion items at a lower cost [10]; however, how these motives influence Generation Z consumers' continuance intention of online fashion resale practice has not been examined. The initial adoption of the sustainable consumption pattern does not guarantee continued pre-owned fashion clothing consumption, as discontinuance may occur at any stage of adoption due to unsatisfactory trial outcomes or usage experiences [11]. Indeed, initial adoption is only the first step; the success of sustaining this circular fashion clothing consumption model depends more heavily on the continued participation in online resale practices through buying and selling an increasingly wide range of pre-owned fashion clothing products than initial adoption [12,13].

Personal values and beliefs play a crucial role in shaping individual consumption preferences [14]. Studies have found that an individual's pro-environmental beliefs play a crucial role in determining their behavior towards the environment including the adoption of sustainable consumption patterns [15]. However, the degree to which an individual's pro-environmental beliefs influence their commitment to maintaining adopted sustainable consumption patterns remains unclear. In addition, a significant body of research exists exploring the role of perceived value in shaping consumer decision making and consumption patterns [16–19]. For instance, Hur et al. [19] found that perceived social, emotional, and functional values have a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction with respect to green innovation. Research has also shown that perceived value can have moderating effects on a range of consumer behaviors. Nonetheless, the extent to which

consumer perceived value influences individual beliefs and behaviors within the context of resale market places remains unexamined. To this end, this research intends to fill the identified gaps by fulfilling the following research objectives: (1) examine Generation Z consumers' preferences in clothing consumption including sustainable clothing consumption preferences; (2) examine what benefits this consumer cohort perceives to obtain from online fashion resale participation and how perceived benefits affect attitudes toward online fashion resale participation, and continuance intention; (3) examine Generation Z consumers' pro-environmental beliefs regarding fashion clothing consumption, and how these beliefs affect their attitudes toward online fashion resale participation and continuance intention; and (4) examine how perceived value moderates the impact of perceived benefits, pro-environmental beliefs on attitudes, and continuance intention to Generation Z consumers' participation in the fashion resale market as a pre-owned product buyer or seller.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Environmental Impact of the Fashion Industry and Sustainable Consumption

The fashion industry has long been associated with substantial environmental concerns, such as pollution, waste, and depletion of natural resources [1,20]. Recent studies have highlighted the magnitude of these issues, with the production and disposal of textiles contributing to climate change, water scarcity, and biodiversity loss [20–22]. Additionally, synthetic textile production relies on the use of fossil fuels, which contribute to climate change through greenhouse gas emissions [23]. Furthermore, these environmental issues are intensified by the transportation and disposal of fashion waste [22].

As consumers gradually become more aware of the environmental and societal consequences of their clothing choices, sustainable fashion consumption has grown in prominence [24]. Sustainability has become a major focus of the industry in the past decade. Meanwhile, consumers are gradually shifting away from a throwaway culture and embracing sustainable consumption [2]. Generation Z (Generation Z), who have recently emerged as major consumers, are embracing eco-friendly and ethical consumption behaviors. Several market surveys and empirical studies have verified that worldwide, Generation Z is the most sustainable generation to date with a higher willingness to pay a higher price for purchasing products that are more environmentally friendly, long lasting, and ethical [15–17]. In addition, the trend of minimalist fashion, perusing “less is more,” has been embraced by Generation Z. Notable motivators of sustainable fashion consumption include personal values, awareness of environmental issues, and social influences [25].

Sustainable fashion consumption patterns encompass a range of practices including renting, swapping, reusing, recycling, and resale. Among these sustainable consumption patterns, sharing economy-based patterns such as renting, swapping, and resale is growing fast. In particular, resale, a form of sharing economy-based sustainable consumption, has also been recognized as a fundamental component for advancing a circular economy in the fashion industry [26]. In recent years, fashion resale has been gradually accepted by consumers as a trendy and sustainable activity. Fashion clothing and accessories exchanged in resale are all pre-owned, reducing the consumption needs for products made with new materials. Fashion resale practices also maximize the usage of clothing and accessory items, extending the lifespan, and reducing the impact of products that were discarded after limited use. The resale idea enables consumers to have access to high-end fashion brands and products at a low cost. Fashion resale makes it possible for consumers to obtain special fashion products that would not be accessible, otherwise achieving more variety in fashion clothing and accessory choices [27].

2.2. Generation Z Consumers

Gen-Z consumers refer to individuals born between 1997 and 2012. Generation Z has been characterized by their social and environmental consciousness, technological savviness, desire for uniqueness and personalization, being practically value driven, and being

highly diversity and inclusivity oriented [7,28]. As consumers, the Generation Z cohort values authenticity, transparency, and affordability in their interactions with brands [7,29]. Research suggests that Generation Z consumers have a significant influence on family spending decisions and are more likely to shop online than previous generations [7]. They are highly influenced by social media and influencer marketing and prioritize sustainability and affordability when making purchasing decisions [7].

Regarding fashion consumption, recent research has demonstrated that Generation Z consumers are interested in sustainable fashion and are more likely to embrace sharing economy in fashion. For instance, a survey conducted by ThredUp found that 64% of Generation Z consumers have purchased second-hand fashion items and 73% of them are willing to pay more for sustainable fashion [30]. However, this cohort of consumers also prioritizes individuality and self-expression in their fashion choices. Given their characteristics of being practically value oriented, it is common for Generation Z consumers to purchase from fast fashion brands even if they consider sustainability to be an important factor in their purchasing decisions [5].

Generation Z consumers are considered a driving force to sustain and grow the fashion resale industry [31]. According to the newly released report by ThredUp, Generation Z and Millennials are the biggest consumers of second-hand fashion, accounting for nearly two-thirds of the incremental resale market as their purchasing power increases. Moreover, the global research market is expected to surge at three times the rate of the overall global apparel market up to 2027, mainly driven by Generation Z consumers [31].

This preference for resale among Generation Z consumers can be attributed to increased awareness of the environmental impact of fashion and their desire for unique and personalized fashion items, perceived benefits obtained from online resale practices, as well as their affinity for digital platforms that enable peer-to-peer transactions and impulse shopping [32,33]. Unsurprisingly, the impact of social media has been instrumental in promoting sustainable fashion consumption, as it enables consumers to exchange experiences and information regarding fashion resale platforms [34–36].

Overall, Generation Z consumers hold positive attitudes toward fashion resale, as a circular economy model in fashion. They are active in participating in online resale platforms including Depop, Poshmark, ThredUp, The RealReal, and other emerging resale platforms for special products. However, to what extent will the motivations driving their adoption of online fashion resale practices keep them from participating in these sustainable consumption practices has not been examined.

2.3. Perceived Benefits of Online Fashion Resale Participation

Online fashion resale platforms, such as Poshmark, ThredUp, Depop, and The RealReal have become increasingly popular in recent years, allowing consumers to buy and sell pre-owned clothing and accessories. Several studies have examined the perceived benefits of using these platforms for buying and selling fashion items [37–39]. One of the main perceived benefits of online fashion resale platforms is the economic benefit. Consumers can save money by purchasing pre-owned clothing items at a lower price than new ones [39]. In addition, sellers can generate income by selling their unwanted clothing items [40]. A study conducted by ThredUp found that 64% of U.S. consumers have bought or are willing to buy second-hand clothing to save money, and 54% have sold or are willing to sell their clothes to earn money [30]. Social benefits have also been identified as significant drivers for consumers to purchase from resale websites. The other benefits include experiential benefits and epistemic benefits. A study conducted by the Boston Consulting Group [41] found that the majority of fashion resale customers feel confident and more stylish when they wear pre-owned designer brand clothing and accessories. However, a recent study conducted by Ahn and Kwon [37] found that perceived functional, epistemic benefits, and economic benefits, but not social or experiential benefits, affect consumers' intention to purchase from resale websites. Research exploring the drivers of Generation Z consumers' attitudes and acceptance toward resale practices has identified several key

factors, including perceived functional, experiential, and budgetary advantages, as well as fashion identity and expressive benefits [33]. Generation Z consumers are known to be price conscious and buying pre-owned fashion clothing allows them to save money on their purchases. Additionally, Generation Z consumers are interested in expressing their style and individuality through clothing styles. Buying pre-owned clothing can provide a unique and one-of-a-kind look that sets them apart from others. Fashion resale channels allow them to experiment with different brands, styles, and looks including vintage and retro styles with affordable prices. However, whether these identified benefits continue to shape Generation Z consumers' sustainable consumption via online fashion resale marketplace has not been examined.

2.4. Pro-Environmental Beliefs

There is a significant amount of research on how pro-environmental beliefs affect consumer adoption of sustainable consumption patterns. Several studies have found that people who hold pro-environmental beliefs are more likely to adopt sustainable consumption patterns. For example, Ertz et al. [23] found that individuals who had stronger pro-environmental beliefs were more likely to engage in sustainable consumption practices such as recycling, energy conservation, and buying environmentally friendly products. Research has identified the role of pro-environmental beliefs in shaping consumers' clothing consumption. For instance, Razzaq et al. [42] found that consumers' pro-environmental beliefs are positively associated with sustainable fashion consumption. Lavuri et al. [43] found that consumers with stronger pro-environmental beliefs are more likely to have positive attitudes toward sustainable fashion consumption, including resale practices.

However, some research suggests that pro-environmental beliefs may be a poor predictor of actual sustainable consumption behavior [44]. Generation Z's attitudes toward resale practices remain an area of ongoing research, with some studies suggesting a strong relationship between these beliefs and sustainable fashion consumption [43], while others report more nuanced or context-dependent relationships [45]. The interaction between pro-environmental beliefs, consumer value orientation, and sustainability also appears in the literature investigating younger generations' fashion consumption and the desire to make a positive impact on the environment [43]. Overall, more research is needed to examine how pro-environmental beliefs affect individual consumers' actual behavior, not intention, in the context of sustainable fashion consumption practices.

2.5. Consumer Perceived Value Moderating Effects on Sustainable Fashion Consumption

Consumer perceived value (CPV) is an important concept in marketing that has been extensively researched over the past few decades. It refers to the subjective evaluation of the benefits and costs associated with a particular product or service by the consumer. One of the early conceptualizations of consumer perceived value was proposed by Zeithaml [46], who defined it as "the consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given" (p. 14). This definition suggests that consumer perceived value is a function of the perceived benefits of a product or service relative to its price or other costs. Since then, a large body of research has been conducted to understand the factors that influence consumer perceived value. Some of the key factors that have been identified include product quality, brand reputation, convenience, customer service, and emotional appeal. Sweeney and Soutar [17] presented a four-dimensional model that illustrates how consumers perceive the values and benefits of products and services from emotional, social, quality/performance, and price/value aspects.

CPV has been identified as a key determinant of consumer behavior and is considered an important construct in marketing and consumer research. A considerable amount of research, e.g., [18,37,47] has been conducted on the moderating effects of CPV on various consumer behavior outcomes, such as purchase intentions, brand loyalty, and customer satisfaction. For instance, Hsin Chang and Wang [48] have shown that CPV can moderate the relationship between price and purchase intentions. Specifically, consumers who

perceive a higher value in a product may be less sensitive to price changes and more likely to make a purchase even when prices are higher. This effect has been observed across a variety of products and services, including electronics, food, and apparel products. Research has examined the moderating effects of CPV on customer satisfaction. Studies have shown that CPV can buffer the negative effects of service failures on customer satisfaction. For example, Chang et al. [48] found that if a customer perceives high value in a product or service, they may be more likely to overlook minor service failures and maintain a positive attitude towards the brand. The concept of consumer perceived value has been applied to explain why consumers choose to participate in sustainable fashion consumption such as resale practices. Several studies have examined the relationship between the consumer-specific perceived value of second-hand products and online fashion resale consumption, e.g., [49–51]. However, how consumers, especially Generation Z consumers, and the perceived value of clothing consumption in general shapes their decisions and behavior in the context of online fashion resale participation has not been examined.

2.6. Research Model

Based on the above review and discussions, we proposed a research model to guide the empirical study. Specifically, we identified two major antecedents to attitude and intention to continue fashion resale practices: perceived benefits obtained from online fashion resale participation and pro-environmental benefits. We also proposed that individual value orientation based on perceived customer value would shape the salience of the impacts from the identified antecedents to their attitudes and intention to continue the online resale practices (see Figure 1).

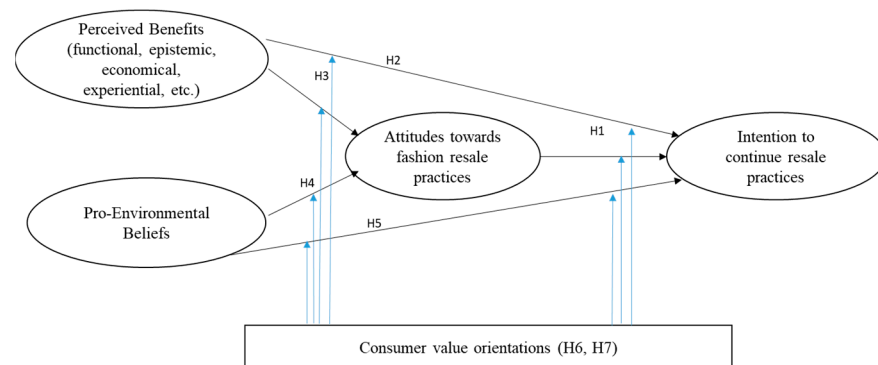


Figure 1. Research model.

Specifically, we proposed the following hypotheses:

Hypotheses 1 (H1). Generation Z consumers' intention to continue fashion resale participation is affected by attitudes toward fashion resale participation.

Hypotheses 2 (H2). Generation Z consumers perceived benefits obtained from fashion resale participants affect their attitudes toward online resale practices.

Hypotheses 3 (H3). Generation Z consumers perceived benefits obtained from fashion resale practices affect their intention to continue online resale participation.

Hypotheses 4 (H4). Generation Z consumers holding a higher level of pro-environmental beliefs have greater positive attitudes toward online resale participation compared to those with a lower level of pro-environmental beliefs.

Hypotheses 5 (H5). Generation Z consumers holding a greater level of pro-environmental beliefs are more willing to continue fashion resale participation compared to those with a lower level of pro-environmental beliefs.

Hypotheses 6 (H6). *The effects of (a) perceived benefits obtained from online resale practices and (b) individual pro-environmental beliefs, on attitudes towards online resale participation vary across Generation Z consumer groups with different value orientations.*

Hypotheses 7 (H7). *The effects of (a) perceived benefits obtained from online resale participation and (b) individual pro-environmental beliefs on intention to continue online resale participation vary across Generation Z consumer groups with different value orientations.*

3. Research Methodology

The goal of the correlational research strategy is to examine and describe the associations and relationships between variables, which are employed commonly in business and consumer-related research [52]. This research aimed to examine the influence of identified factors on Generation Z consumers and the specified relationships between identified factors. A correlational research strategy was employed. This research design allows for establishing the proposed relationship existing between identified variables and describing the nature of the relationship.

3.1. Sampling and Sample

An online survey was used to collect data for empirical testing. A convenience sampling approach was employed. The survey invitation was sent out to 450 students from different departments in a major U.S.-based university. A total of 370 responses were received, representing a response rate of 82.22%. The incentive used to encourage participation was course extra credit. Two attention-checking questions were inserted in the middle of the survey to avoid careless responses. Participants who missed any of the attention-checking questions were forced out of the survey. After removing incomplete responses, a total of 257 valid responses remained. Table 1 presents a summary of participants' demographic characteristics, including age, gender, monthly personal income, monthly fashion expenditure, and the proportion of second-hand clothing in their wardrobes. All the respondents were older than 18, with 61% of respondents being younger than 20, and 39% being older than 21 but younger than 25. The majority of the respondents were female (78.21%), making the sample biased toward females. Approximately 67% of the respondents were white, 22% were African American, and 11% were Hispanic, Asian, and others.

Table 1. Demographics of participants.

Items	<i>n</i>	%	Items	<i>n</i>	%
Gender			Ethnicity		
Male	53	20.62%	White	172	66.90%
Female	201	78.21%	African American	57	22.18%
Other	3	1.17%	Hispanic/Latino/ Spanish	9	3.50%
Age			Asian	11	4.28%
18–20	156	60.70%	Other	8	3.11%
21–25	101	39.30%			
The portion of fast fashion in wardrobe			The portion of pre-owned clothing in wardrobe		
None	21	6.50%	None	22	6.85%
Less than 10%	52	16.10%	Less than 10%	87	27.10%
10–25%	73	22.60%	10–25%	85	26.48%
25–40%	67	20.74%	25–40%	55	17.13%
40–60%	51	15.79%	40–60%	45	14.02%
60–80%	40	12.48%	60–80%	18	5.61%
More than 80%	19	5.88%	More than 80%	9	2.80%

3.2. Instrument Development

Multi-item scales were adopted or adapted from previous research. Specifically, consumer perceived value was assessed using the 19-item measure, PERVAL, scale developed by Sweeney and Soutar [17]. The measure was developed for use in a retail context to determine what consumption values drive purchase attitudes and behavior. The scale has four dimensions, namely emotional, social, quality/performance, and price/value for money, and was tested in pre-purchase and post-purchase situations with good reliability and validity. The 10-item scales measuring individual pro-environmental beliefs (PEB) were adopted from Moon et al.'s research [53]. To measure the perceived benefits of sustainable consumption via online resale platforms (PBSC), an 18-item scale was created based on the findings from the empirical research conducted by Turunen and Pöyry [39], and market research conducted by the Boston Consulting Group [41] and McKinsey & Company [38]. Items to assess attitude and intention to continue were adapted from the study conducted by Turunen and Pöyry [39]. All scale items were measured using seven-point Likert scales anchored between “strongly disagree (1)” and “strongly agree (7)”.

4. Findings, Results, and Discussion

4.1. Descriptive Analysis

A descriptive analysis was conducted to profile participants' pro-environmental beliefs, clothing consumption patterns, and preferences. Descriptive statistics showed that participants hold mild pro-environmental beliefs (average rating of 4.94 out of 7). The belief with the highest degree of agreement is “It would mean a lot to me if I could contribute to protecting the environment” (see Table 2), indicating that this group of consumers is socially and environmentally conscious.

Table 2. Research constructs and statistics.

Factors	α	EFA Loading	CFA Loading	CR	Mean/Std.
<i>Epistemic benefits</i>	0.82			0.82	
I look for limited editions		0.85	0.82		3.98/1.74
I look for sold-out items		0.79	0.79		3.69/1.75
I gain knowledge about designers and brands		0.71	0.68		4.63/1.70
I look for authentic pieces		0.67	0.64		5.04/1.61
<i>Product choice benefits</i>	0.79			0.75	
I find a large choice of items		0.84	0.87		4.41/1.48
I find a large choice of brands		0.74	0.67		4.47/1.52
<i>Quality benefits</i>	0.79			0.79	
I find high-quality pieces		0.73	0.84		5.27/1.41
I look for pieces that are lasting		0.71	0.78		5.50/1.39
<i>Value for Money</i>	0.77			0.77	
I look for good value for money		0.83	0.83		5.90/1.33
I look for good deals		0.76	0.75		5.78/1.30
<i>Budget benefits</i>	0.65			0.65	
I can have more for the same budget		0.83	0.70		5.18/1.44
I can easily change and renew my wardrobe		0.75	0.69		4.81/1.52
<i>Pro-environmental beliefs</i>	0.91			0.94	
I prefer clothing that would help reduce environmental threats.		0.82	0.80		5.07/1.54
By buying second-hand, I feel I'm helping to fight against waste.		0.81	0.87		5.00/1.56
If available, I would seek out environmentally friendly clothing.		0.80	0.82		4.69/1.70
By buying second-hand, I feel like I'm escaping the consumption system.		0.79	0.82		4.56/1.66
It would mean a lot to me if I could contribute to protecting the environment.		0.77	0.87		5.36/1.58

Table 2. Cont.

Factors	α	EFA Loading	CFA Loading	CR	Mean/Std.
Buying second-hand enables me to distance myself from consumer society.		0.74	0.75		4.95/1.67
<i>Attitude</i>	0.90			0.90	
Buying and selling products from resale websites is constructive		0.81	0.81		5.07/1.28
Buying and selling products from resale websites is wise		0.78	0.89		5.20/1.36
Buying and selling products from resale websites is a great idea		0.74	0.89		5.48/1.34
Buying and selling products from resale websites is sustainable		0.71	0.73		5.36/1.43
<i>Continuance intention</i>	0.92			0.92	
Regularly buy products through resale websites in the future		0.85	0.86		4.50/1.93
Continue to use resale websites in the future		0.85	0.93		5.08/1.92
Intent to use resale websites in the future		0.85	0.95		5.18/1.86
Regularly sell products through resale websites in the future		0.75	0.67		3.93/2.08

The findings show that 93% of the participants have pre-owned items in their wardrobe (up to 60% of their whole wardrobe). However, still, around 30% of participants have 40–60% fast fashion in their wardrobe, thus fashion still has Generation Z consumers' heart [54]. In addition, our findings suggest that Generation Z consumers maintain a practical value-oriented approach across both traditional retail and sustainable fashion research contexts. Regarding pre-owned fashion consumption, the most frequently mentioned attributes of pre-owned fashion clothing are value for money, high quality, authenticity, uniqueness, and worth keeping, indicating that utilitarian benefits rather than experiential benefits derived from consuming pre-owned fashion clothing are the most salient driving factors. In addition, the most frequently mentioned attributes of fast fashion are low prices, easy access, trends, and many choices. These findings are consistent with other research profiling Generation Z consumers as practical, caring efficient, unique, and ethical options, e.g., [7,55,56]. Additionally, our findings confirmed the fact that fashion still has Generation Z consumers' hearts because of financial benefits (low price), efficiency (easy access, and many choices), and expressive benefits (trendy) [54].

Moreover, approximately, 75% of participants have acquired pre-owned items from local thrift or vintage stores, and 50% of participants have purchased pre-owned items from resale platforms. These findings show that this group of consumers places efficiency as a priority when considering shopping channels. For shopping for pre-owned items, it is more efficient to select and purchase pre-owned fashion clothing from local thrift and vintage stores. In addition, our findings showed that Poshmark is the most frequently used resale platform followed by Depop. Practical evidence has shown that Generation Z consumers love Poshmark and Depop and use these platforms for buying and selling used clothes [57,58].

4.2. Identifying Factor Dimensions and Assessing Construct Validity

First, the Harman single-factor test was conducted to assess the potential influence of common method variance (CMV) due to the single data source of the collected data [59]. The test showed that the first factor explains 28.25% of the variance (lower than 50%), indicating that there is no threat of common method bias existing. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to explore the basic structure of the scales. A total of 18 items assessing perceived benefits (PB) obtained from online fashion resale participation, 10 items assessing pro-environmental beliefs (pro-EB), 4 items assessing attitudes (ATT) toward online fashion

resale participation, and 4 items assessing intention (INT) to continue the online fashion resale participation were subject to the EFA analysis via principal axis extraction and a varimax rotation [60]. An eight-factor structure emerged with five dimensions of PB, one dimension of pro-EB, ATT, and INT, respectively. The total explained variance was 74.74%. The five dimensions of PB for online fashion resale participation include epistemic benefits, product choice benefits, quality benefits, value for money, and budget benefits. All the commonalities were between 0.60 and 0.88. Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.65 to 0.92, demonstrating acceptable reliability of the scales.

Next, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted on the eight variables measured by multi-item scales. The proposed measurement model exhibited an acceptable fit ($\chi^2 = 526.44$; $df = 266$; $\chi^2/df = 1.98$; RMSEA = 0.62; CFI = 0.94), thereby providing evidence of convergent validity. Each item loaded significantly on the proposed constructs with composite reliabilities around or above 0.70 [61], providing evidence of the reliability of the measures. Table 3 provides correlations between research constructs. Discriminant validity was confirmed through a confidence interval test. Confidence intervals of correlations between latent constructs were obtained through bootstrapping methods using AMOS 28. All the intervals of the correlation are significantly less than 1.0, providing evidence of the discriminant validity of the research constructs [62].

Table 3. Construct correlations.

	Epistemic Benefits	Product Choice Benefits	Quality Benefits	Value for Money	Budget Benefits	Pro-Environmental Beliefs	Attitude	Continuance Intention
Epistemic benefits	0.54 ^a							
Product choice Benefits	0.51 **	0.60						
Quality benefits	0.33 **	0.59	0.66					
Value for money	0.32 **	0.43	0.63	0.62				
Budget benefits	0.48 **	0.43	0.55 **	0.55	0.48			
Pro-environmental beliefs	0.22	0.06	0.23	0.24	0.15	0.76		
Attitude	0.29	0.23	0.32	0.25	0.31	0.57 **	0.56	
Continuance Intention	0.35 **	0.14	0.13	0.20	0.21	0.47 **	0.65 **	0.74

^a Denotethat number on diagonal cell is variance extracted for construct. ** indicate significant at 0.001 level.

Our analysis revealed five dimensions of perceived benefits of online fashion resale participation including epistemic benefits, product choice benefits, quality benefits, value for money, and budget benefits. Among all these benefits, participants had the highest rating scores for “value for money”, followed by “quality benefits”. The benefit dimension with the lowest rating scores is “epistemic benefits” followed by “product choice benefits”. These benefit dimensions are consistent with those top features of pre-owned fashion clothing identified by participants, providing internal validity to our findings. In addition, the identified five dimensions of benefits of pre-owned fashion consumption are consistent with findings from prior research which has identified drivers for younger consumers to consume pre-owned fashion products including economic benefits (saving money), quality benefits (obtaining high-quality items), emotional benefits (express individuality), epistemic benefits, and social benefits (support sustainability) [37,39,47,50,63].

4.3. Testing Direct and Mediating Effects

Structural equation modeling [64] was employed to test the proposed research model (see Figure 1) and hypotheses. The model fit was acceptable ($\chi^2 = 493.94$; $df = 266$; $\chi^2/df = 1.86$; RMSEA = 0.59; GFI = 0.88; CFI = 0.94). A comparison of these values against those recommended in the literature suggests that the model estimation result is satisfactory [64,65]. With a good fit for the overall model, we moved to test the individual relationships proposed in the model. Test results were presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Summary of hypotheses and testing results.

Relationship with the Proposed Research Model		Path Coefficient			Hypos	Testing Results
		Overall	CL2-MV	CL3-SO		
Attitude	→	0.57 **	0.51 **	0.52 **	H1	Supported
Perceived Benefits	Epistemic	0.17 *	ns	0.20 *	H3	Partially supported
	Product choices	ns	ns	ns		
	Quality	ns	ns	ns		
	Value for money	ns	ns	ns		
	Budget	ns	ns	ns		
Pro-environmental beliefs	→	0.14 *	0.17 *	ns	H5	Supported
Pro-environmental beliefs	→	0.53 **	0.43 **	0.58 **	H4	Supported
Perceived Benefits	Epistemic	ns	ns	ns	H2	Not supported
	Product choices	ns	ns	ns		
	Quality	ns	ns	ns		
	Value for money	ns	ns	ns		
	Budget	ns	ns	ns		

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.001$.

Among the identified five dimensions of perceived benefits, only epistemic benefits impact intention to continue online resale participation, but not attitudes. Pro-environment beliefs affect both attitudes and intention to continue. Our findings, to some degree, are consistent with a few recent research findings. For instance, Ahn and Kwon [37] found that epistemic benefits are the most salient factor in terms of creating positive attitudes toward online resale platforms followed by economic and functional benefits. Our findings are not consistent with the recently released industry reports which indicate that financial benefits and utilitarian benefits are the most salient factors motivating consumers to purchase pre-owned fashion products., [41,66]. The inconsistency might be because our study was specifically focused on Generation Z consumers. In addition, other research has highlighted similar influences of pro-environmental beliefs [23,41–44]. We found that attitudes affect continuance intention. Overall, we found full support for H1, H4, and H5, and partial support for H2 and H3.

4.4. Testing Moderating Effects of Perceived Value

The Harman single-factor test was conducted to assess the potential influence of CMV first [51]. The test showed that the first factor explains 29.59% of the variance (lower than 50%), indicating that there is no threat of common method bias. Then, the 18-item scales assessing customer perceived value were subjected to the EFA analysis. The resulting 13 items showed four dimensions as expected: experiential value, social value, quality value, and economic value. The total explained variance was 72.98%. All the commonalities were between 0.60 and 0.86. Cronbach’s alpha ranged from 0.66 to 0.90, demonstrating acceptable reliability of the scales. CFA was conducted on the four dimensions of perceived value and the measurement model exhibited an acceptable fit ($\chi^2 = 211.75$; $df = 71$; $\chi^2/df = 2.98$; RMSEA = 0.88; CFI = 0.93; GFI = 0.90), thereby providing evidence of convergent validity. Each item loaded significantly on the proposed constructs with composite reliabilities around or above 0.70 [61], providing evidence of the reliability of the measures (see Table 5). Then, an indicator was created for each dimension by averaging all the measured items respectively. Standard scores were for the four dimensions of perceived value indicators. Cluster analysis with the standard scores of the four dimensions

of consumer perceived value as input variables revealed three groups: indifferent shoppers (ID-Cluster 1), maximum value pursuers (MV-Cluster 2), and self-oriented consumers (SO-Cluster 3). Only 4% of the participants are classified in the ID group. Around 49% of the participants belong to the MV group, and 47% of the participants were classified as SO members. The SO group members show significantly lower scores in social value compared with the MV group (see Figure 2). Due to the low number for the ID group, the rest of the analysis only focused on the other two groups.

Table 5. Dimensions of perceived value and statistics.

Dimension	α	EFA Loading	CFA Loading	CR	Mean/Std.
Experiential value	0.86			0.86	
Would make me feel good		0.86	0.84		6.32/0.81
Would make me want to wear it		0.83	0.78		6.34/0.86
Would give me pleasure		0.75	0.74		6.11/0.98
Is one that I would enjoy		0.74	0.71		6.27/0.91
Is one that I would feel relaxed about wearing		0.68	0.68		6.07/0.98
Social value	0.88			0.92	
Would improve the way I am perceived		0.93	0.95		4.57/1.54
Would help me feel accepted		0.91	0.88		4.41/1.63
Would make a good impression on other people		0.83	0.73		4.89/1.38
Quality value	0.90			0.89	
Is well made		0.89	0.90		5.56/1.12
Has consistent quality		0.88	0.85		5.56/1.07
Has an acceptable standard of quality		0.80	0.85		5.79/0.98
Economic value	0.66			0.77	
Offers value for money		0.75	0.77		5.64/1.26
Is reasonably priced		0.74	0.64		5.86/1.10
Would be economical		0.69	0.50		4.89/1.30

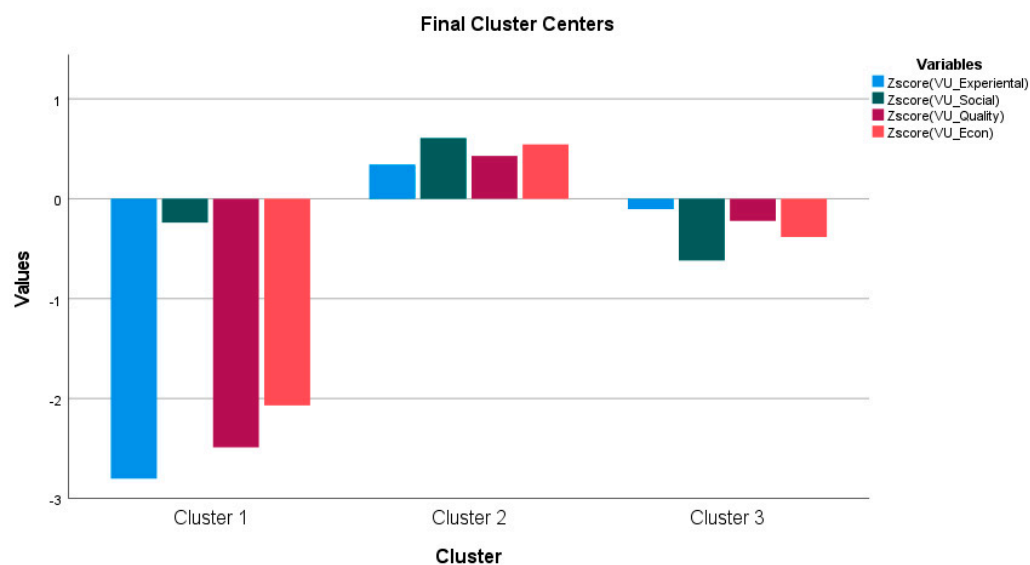


Figure 2. Cluster analysis results with the four dimensions of perceived value as input variables.

MANOVA tests showed that the two groups hold the same level of attitudes and intention to continue the online resale practices. Regarding perceived benefits, these two groups perceived the same level of epistemic benefits, but the MV group perceived a higher level of other benefits including product choice, value for money, quality benefits, and economic benefits. Regarding pro-environmental beliefs, the SO group holds a lower level of such socially oriented beliefs compared to the MV group (see Table 6).

Table 6. Comparison across the maximum value pursuers (MV) and self-oriented shoppers (SO).

Profiling Factors	M (MV)	M (SO)	Mean Difference (G1-G2)	F Value	Sig.
Epistemic benefits	4.51	4.20	0.31	2.99	<0.085
Product choice benefits	4.66	4.20	0.46	7.66	<0.006
Quality benefits	5.77	5.23	0.49	11.16	<0.001
Value for money	6.18	5.79	0.39	8.67	<0.004
Economic benefits	5.42	4.84	0.57	14.99	<0.001
Pro-environmental beliefs	5.21	4.70	0.51	9.16	<0.003
Attitudes	5.53	5.17	0.36	6.51	<0.011
Continuance intention	4.91	4.52	0.39	3.16	<0.077

To test if perceived values have moderating effects on specified relationships, we conducted a multi-group comparison analysis. A constrained multi-group model (base model without moderating effects) was estimated where each measurement weight and structural weight were constrained to be equal across the two groups. The model exhibited an acceptable fit ($\chi^2 = 1026.09$; $df = 622$; $\chi^2/df = 1.65$; RMSEA = 0.05; CFI = 0.90). Next, an unconstrained multi-group model (Model 2: moderating effects) was estimated in which the hypothesized structural paths were estimated separately for two groups. The unconstrained model also exhibits an acceptable fit ($\chi^2 = 1009.48$; $df = 614$; $\chi^2/df = 1.64$; RMSEA = 0.05; CFI = 0.90). The chi-square difference between the two models is significant ($\Delta\chi^2 = 16.61$, $df = 8$; $p < 0.03$), indicating that the influences from perceived benefits and pro-environmental beliefs on attitudes and intention to continue differ for maximum value pursuers and self-oriented consumers. Specifically, pro-environmental beliefs affect both attitudes and intention for the maximum value pursuers but only affect attitudes not the intention for the self-oriented consumers. On the contrary, perceived epistemic benefits only affect the attitudes of the self-oriented consumers, and do not affect either attitudes or intentions of the maximum value pursuers. Therefore, H6 was partially supported (see Table 4).

Overall, other research has highlighted similar influences of pro-environmental beliefs [23,41–44]; however, our findings that reveal the particularly strong on self-oriented consumers add a nuance not previously noted in prior research. In addition, we found that only the dimension of epistemic benefits showed a significant influence on individual continuance intention of online fashion resale participation. These findings indicate that Generation Z consumers value epistemic and product choice benefits when selecting fashion clothing products; however, there appears to be a gap in the current online fashion resale market in meeting these expectations. Our findings are consistent with previous research which argues that Generation Z is not homogenous; instead, this generation is the most diverse [7,28,58].

5. Conclusions, and Implications

5.1. Conclusions

The fashion industry is known for its wasteful practices and high environmental impact. The recent increase in consumer awareness of environmental issues caused by the fashion industry, especially among younger generations, has led the fashion industry to embrace a circular economy. Even though buying and selling pre-owned fashion

products through online resale platforms are increasingly prevalent among Generation Z consumers [58], it is not clear if they are willing to consistently engage in such a sustainable consumption pattern. This research specifically focuses on Generation Z consumers' online fashion resale participation continuance. To further examine how the benefits of online fashion resale participation and individuals' pro-environmental beliefs affect Generation Z consumers' continuance intention, we proposed a research model which posited perceived benefits and pro-environmental beliefs as antecedents of attitude and continuance intention. In addition, the perceived value of clothing consumption, in general, was identified as a moderating factor shaping the proposed direct and mediating relationship. Based on overall value perceptions of clothing consumption, two groups of Generation Z consumers were identified as maximum value pursuers and self-oriented shoppers. Our empirical study identified five dimensions of perceived benefits of online fashion resale participation including epistemic benefits, product choices, quality benefits, value for money, and budget benefits. Relationship testing showed that pro-environmental beliefs affect attitudes and continuance intention but with a stronger effect on the group of self-oriented shoppers than the group of maximum value pursuers. Among the five dimensions of perceived benefits of online fashion resale participation, only epistemic benefits affect continuance intention for self-oriented consumers.

Our findings confirmed that Generation Z consumers are socially and environmentally conscious and are more likely to embrace the shift toward a circular model in fashion consumption. Additionally, our findings confirmed that Generation Z is heterogenous and diverse with sub-segments pursuing different values from online fashion resale participation. Overall, the proposed hypotheses were either fully supported or partially supported, validating the research model.

As the fashion industry continues to grapple with environmental and ethical concerns, the popularity of resale among younger generations may be a sign of a broader shift in consumer value and consumption toward more conscious modes. An understanding of Generation Z consumption behavior is important for businesses and policymakers in promoting sustainability and shaping the future of the fashion industry. Generation Z consumers' attitudes toward sustainable fashion consumption and participation can provide insights into how businesses can adopt more circular practices. This study identified the perceived benefits, pro-environment beliefs, and value perceptions of Generation Z consumers in relation to online fashion resale participation and provided insights into their continuance intention. The findings of this study advance the importance of emphasizing the environmental benefits of online fashion resale participation in marketing and advertising communications, to appeal to Generation Z consumers' pro-environmental attitudes.

5.2. Implications

From a theoretical perspective, this study extended the concept of perceived value, originally developed within the traditional retailing context, to encompass the emerging resale context. Our findings showed that the gap between consumers' desired value from clothing consumption and benefits could be obtained from participation in online fashion resale (see Table 2). We also concentrated on sustainable consumption continuance rather than the initial attention, as previous research has indicated that factors influencing consumer adoption of innovative products or services may not necessarily impact their innovation continuance. More research is needed to identify factors affecting consumers' continuance in sustainable fashion consumption practices. Furthermore, prior studies emphasize the importance of value perception to consumers and identify varied consumer groups [47–50]; the current study extends these findings by refining this segmentation in an online fashion retail context. More research needs to be carried out to further examine the diverse consumption patterns and preferences within this generation.

From a practical perspective, this study can help industry stakeholders, policymakers, and researchers better understand the expectations and consumption attitudes of Generation Z consumers towards online fashion resale. Specifically, fashion brands should

enhance the accessibility of circular consumption options and incorporate features that facilitate learning about fashion and environmental knowledge for younger consumers. This approach can promote, sustain, and expand sustainable consumption among younger generations. Fashion brands and online resale platforms can use the insights from this study to better address the preferences and expectations of Generation Z consumers, as well as advance a more sustainable fashion industry. By extension, businesses can develop more effective strategies to engage this demographic and ultimately, address the preferences and expectations of Generation Z consumers, as well as advance a more sustainable fashion industry.

Furthermore, our findings indicate that resale platforms should focus on enhancing the epistemic and product choice benefits of their inventories. This could entail providing more detailed product information, showcasing a wider range of styles, and incorporating more unique, high-quality items in their listings. Our findings align with previous studies, which demonstrated that Generation Z consumers value individuality and do not prioritize conforming to social norms. Moreover, our findings illustrate that the group of self-oriented consumers tends to value learning from the fashion resale experiences, suggesting that fashion resale platforms might consider adding features to help younger consumers learn about products, brands, styles, and pro-environmental consumption patterns. By implementing these recommendations, they can cater to the self-oriented shoppers who make up a significant portion of Generation Z consumers.

This exploratory study also has some limitations which may provide directions for future research. First, data were collected from only one regional source and the sample size was relatively small, which limits the generalizability of our findings and results. Future research could collect a more representative sample for empirical testing to generate results with higher external validity. Second, to assess construct reliability and validity, we chose to use confirmatory (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM). These methods are built on the same basic principles as the congeneric approaches with correlations (not indicators' means) between items and latent constructs as input for statistic testing and estimation. In future research, we will further expand more congeneric approaches and analysis methods to explore potential structures that have not yet been established. In addition, the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods will be adopted to further expand the dimension of future research. Moreover, Generation Z consumers are different across regions, countries, and cultures; thus, future studies could be further expanded to examine and compare Generation Z consumers' sustainable fashion consumption across regions, countries, and cultures.

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