What about disposition? Exploring millennials' clothing disposal behaviours in fashion-oriented impulse buying.

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Abstract

 The frequent restocking of stores and constant promotional offers associated with fast fashion presents the physical cues for consumers to engage in fashion-oriented impulse buying. This consumption behaviour has led to over consumption and the underutilization of clothes, adding to the problems of textile waste all over the world. Despite the increasing interest in consumers' disposition behaviours, the concept has not been studied in relation to fashion-oriented impulse buying. Thus, to fully understand consumers post-purchase behaviours, particularly by focusing on clothing disposition behaviours after engaging in impulse buying, the current study explores the methods and motivations for the use of specific clothing disposal behaviours of 15 millennials. Using semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to gain in-depth information about consumers' disposal behaviours. Analysis of the data gave rise to the use of six clothing disposition methods: hoarding, giving out to friends and/or family, reusing, donating to charity shops and bins, reselling through Facebook and eBay and swapping between friends. Motivations for the use of disposal method were based on convenience and ease with the disposal method, the desire to serve greater good, clothing characteristics, personal benefits, avoiding feelings of guilt or regret, and consideration of future usefulness of the clothing item. The findings from this study provide new insights into consumers clothing disposal behaviours and points out managerial and practical directions for solving the increasing problem with textile waste.

Key words:

Fashion-oriented impulse buying, clothing disposition, disposal behaviours, post-purchase negative emotions, millennials

Acknowledgement

<center>**1.0 Background**</center>

1.1 Consumer fashion-oriented impulse buying behaviour

Consumers browsing through store shelves or scrolling through a shopping website often make purchases they do not initially plan for. This consumption behaviour is termed impulse buying (Susteyo, 2018). Impulse buying may be defined as consumers' experience of a sudden, often powerful and persistent urge to buy a product immediately (Rook, 1987). This unreflective purchase based on the urge to buy and consume a product is closely linked to hedonic shopping experiences and sensory stimulation characterised by a feeling of excitement, and a sense of adventure and thrill that often competes with the practical necessity to delay the immediate gratification that consumption provides (Aruna & Santhi, 2015; Park 2011; Xu, 2007).

Some consumer items are more likely to be bought on impulse as compared to others (Kacen, Hess & Walker, 2012). An example of such item is apparel which represents a constantly changing experiential product with rich symbolic meanings and closely linked to self-image and appearance (Park and Kim, 2008; Park et al., 2012). For such items, the psychological buying motivation becomes more persistent than price or usefulness and may lead to varied kinds of hedonic consumer behaviours such as impulse buying (Park & Kim, 2008). For clothing, fashion-oriented impulse buying occurs when a consumer perceives a new fashion product and buys it because they are motivated by the suggestion to obtain this product (Park et al., 2006; Kang et al., 2012). In addition, hedonic consumption tendency (Hausman, 2000), positive emotion while shopping (Mattila & Enz, 2002), fashion involvement (Han et al., 1991) and the desire to have variety and instant gratification (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010) may be significant predictors of fashion-oriented impulse buying among consumers.

The fashion industry has significantly evolved over the years. The industry today is highly competitive and one focused on changes in consumer demand, lifestyle, and industry trends (Chatzidakis et al., 2009). Hence, the demand for new options due to changes in lifestyle, media and popular culture encourages retailers to capture new trends and translate them into product designs available to the store more quickly and frequently (Chatzidakis et al., 2009). This constant refreshing of product ranges and restocking of stores means that there is an incessant move by fashion retailers to extend the number of fashion seasons, and the frequency with which the entire merchandise within a store is changed (Bhardwaj &

Firhurst, 2010). This is referred to as "fast-fashion" by scholars, and encourages consumers to visit stores and dispose of their clothing more frequently, following the idea of "Here Today, Gone Tomorrow" (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010; Bianchi & Birtwistle, 2012). According to Foscht et al. (2013), the multiplicity or excess of alternative choices, seem to increase confusion in consumer's buying decisions. Thus, the abundant brand choices, increased disposable income, and consumer's lack of time may encourage them to buy more and often impulsively (Foscht, et al., 2013). Additionally, Bianchi & Birtwistle (2010) posit that, the exponential growth of fast-fashion retailers can be attributed to high impulse purchasing behaviour among consumers who are more fashion-driven.

1.2 Consumer Post-Purchase Behaviours; Clothing Returns and Disposal

The moments following a purchase may involve a series of thoughts in the minds of consumers where the pre-purchase expectation of the product is compared with the results of the actual purchase to determine whether or not the product was a good buy – also referred to as post-purchase evaluation (George & Edward, 2009; Kang & Johnson, 2009). This post-purchase evaluation may be influenced by product-related variables such as product performance, consumers personal characteristics and store features (Kang & Johnson, 2008) or simply consumers changing their minds (Wachter et al., 2012). Han et al. (1991) mention that impulse purchases may be characterised by less availability of time, physical and cognitive effort before the purchase and often influenced by consumers' emotions. Hence, consumers are more likely to experience post-purchase regret after engaging in impulse buying.

The post-purchase evaluation may lead to several behaviours, such as product returns, which some researchers have sought to explicate. According to Wachter et al. (2012), the increasing return rates of merchandise negatively affects the retailer's cost due to distributions, reverse logistics and labour costs, which eventually lowers gross margins. From their study, results indicated that for most product returns, the reasons involved a change of consumers' post purchase decisions, as almost half of their participants indicated that they returned the product because they changed their mind. In another study by Fedorova (2017), consumers after engaging in impulse purchases experienced post-purchase negative emotions including feelings of guilt and regret that eventually led to product return behaviours. On the other hand, problems with size and fit (Foscht et al., 2013), product failure or defect (Kincade et al., 1998; Wachter, 2012), poor quality, and problems with delivery such as delivery of

wrong product and late delivery (Foscht et al., 2013) may motivate consumers to return apparel.

However, the post-purchase phase of the clothing consumption process does not only relate to product returns, but also includes how the clothing item is used, cared for, re-used, recycled, destroyed or discarded (Bianchi & Birtwistle, 2012; Laitala, 2014). Re-using clothes may involve giving out or passing on the clothing items to friends or relatives while donated clothes may be exported and sold as second-hand clothes to consumers especially in third world countries (Shenxun, 2012) or recycled; that is converted into new products (Joung, 2013). Hoarding may equally be described as a post-purchase behaviour. This is when consumers keep unwanted clothing even though they do not wear or use them often due to its perceived value (Joung, 2013).

As part of the clothing consumption process, consumers may engage in behaviours such donating to charity or charity bins, giving away to family or friends, selling as second-hand or throwing away as garbage – collectively referred to as disposal behaviours (Bianchi & Birtwistle, 2012). Laitala (2014) defines clothing disposal as the act of getting rid of clothing items, that is, the end of life stage of the clothing with the present owner, including if the clothing is discarded of as waste, donated, reused, resold, or given out to friends and family. As a semi-durable product clothing items may require disposing when used for a period of time, or when they become no longer needed due to the availability of new fashions, change in fashion taste or boredom, problems with size or fit, signs of damage or wear, and other reasons such as lack of storage space (Laitala, 2014; Joung, 2013).

In addition, with fast fashion retailers (such as ZARA, H&M) continuously offering trendy, innovative and low-priced apparel to consumers in a short selling cycle by stocking their outlets every 2 to 3 weeks, trendy young consumers who want to keep up with latest fashion trends tend to purchase excessive amounts of clothing (Yee et al., 2016). This overconsumption will eventually lead to the disposal of redundant clothing (Yee et al., 2016). Furthermore, the growing affluent lifestyle and purchasing power of consumers coupled with the rate at which fashion trends quickly become obsolete has and still is aggravating the phenomena of throw away fashion where unused clothing are being discarded. Some researchers argue that the relatively low price of clothing and the growth of fast fashion today has helped fuel fashion-oriented impulse buying leading to over consumption and

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underutilization of some clothes which may have being worn only a few times as well as high turnover of used clothing (Yee et al., 2016; Norum, 2015; Birtwistle & Moore, 2007).

The discussion above show that, the post-purchase components of apparel consumption do not only involve product returns but encompasses a myriad of components including, the use, reuse, donation, resale and discarding which the current study seeks to explore.

1.3 Research Problem

Many retail outlets capitalize on the concept of fast fashion to produce new apparel lines very often, to stimulate consumer's impulse to buy (Yee et al., 2016). This results in excessive clothing consumption, and this overconsumption rate may lead to the disposal of enormous amount of unwanted clothing (Yee et al., 2016). According to Bedford (2016), the fast fashion industry is creating an overflow in landfills as consumers purchase low quality clothing products more frequently and often impulsively. Thus, consumers may be more inclined to dispose of unwanted fast fashion products through either sustainable or un-sustainable methods (Bedford, 2016). There is a growing problem of clothing disposal and textile waste and its impact on the environment, due to high volumes of purchases fuelled by fast fashion (Goworek et al., 2012). In the UK for example, about one million tonnes of textile waste end up in the landfills every year (Bianchi & Birtwislte, 2010) contributing to environmental pollution. As many consumers engage in fashion-oriented impulse purchases, the ineffective disposal of textiles is becoming an increasingly serious problem around the world. Consequently, the landfill problems are becoming more serious as synthetic materials found in some of the clothing decompose slowly and clothing items made from wool when decomposing may produce methane which contributes to global warming (Yee et al., 2016).

Current research on consumer behaviour has focused on the subtleties, multiplicity of meanings and values consumers attach to acquisition of personal items (Albinsson & Perera, 2009). However, research on consumers disposal behaviours although part of the consumption cycle, has received limited attention (Laitala, 2014; Bianchi & Birtwistle, 2010) and is almost non-existent in fashion-oriented impulse buying literature. The main focus in extant literature have examined the phenomenon of impulse buying in relation to personality traits and impulsive tendencies, (Rook, 1987;), hedonic experiences (Chatzidakis et al., 2009; Vojvodić et al, 2018), situational variables such as time availability and purchasing power (Husnain et al., 2019; Han et al., 1991), store characteristics (Xu, 2007; Husnain et al., 2019),

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product characteristics (Dholakia, 2000), promotional strategies (Shamout, 2016; Husnain et al., 2019), and website design (Park, 2011).

While these studies contribute to the subject in the attempts to understand the triggers of impulse buying in different settings and across various channels, they have been criticized for focusing primarily on the antecedents of impulse buying and mostly on the emotional and situational elements of the phenomenon (Fedorova, 2017; Chatzidakis et al., 2009). However, the use and disposal of clothing bought on impulse remains a neglected field of study.

Previous studies indicate that, after consumers engage in fashion-oriented impulse buying, they may experience negative feelings such as guilt and remorse about the purchase even though they made the purchase decision themselves (Esterhammer &Huang, 2017; Fedorova, 2017). Factors such as forgone alternatives and dissatisfaction of the actual purchase outcome in comparison with what was expected before the purchase, contributed to the negative post-purchase emotions (Esterhammer & Huang, 2017), and may influence consumer to discard of clothing that is barely worn. Clothing may be differentiated in two ways: absolute and relative obsolescence (Yee, 2016). Absolute obsolescence refers to apparel that is no longer usable, while relative obsolescence applies to clothing that is still functional but may be disposed of for some other reason. According to Laitala (2014), it is not known the degree to which product obsolescence categories apply for clothing disposal. Thus, in this study, the focus is on relative obsolescence.

Concerning clothing disposal, previous studies have provided results indicating that consumers tend to reuse, donate to charity, give out to friends and family, or sell unwanted clothing as second hand (Lee et al., 2013). Disposing into the dumpster was often the last resort for clothing that were damaged or not useful to other people (Ha-Brookshire & Hodges, 2009; Charbonneau, 2008). Other studies showed that consumers may dispose of clothing when it doesn't fit the consumer's self-concept anymore (Albinsson & Perera, 2009), to declutter (Ha-Brookshire & Hodges, 2009), when they were dissatisfied with the product (Estahammer & Huang, 2017) or to help others who may be in need (Bianchi & Birtwistle, 2012). In addition, behaviours often learnt through family socialization (Albinsson & Perera, 2009), familiarity of the disposal method, socially responsible behaviour (Charbonneau, 2008), awareness of the environment (Bianchi & Birtwistle, 2012), emotional attachment to the product (Lee et al., 2013), economic concerns and convenience (Joung & Park-Poaps, 2013) were related to the choice of disposal method consumer chose.

Despite recent efforts by these researchers to understand consumers' disposition behaviours, there is the need to further explore clothing disposition in today's fast-fashion world, to uncover different factors that may guide disposition actions after one has engaged in fashion-oriented impulse buying. Although previous studies paid attention to clothing disposition, the concept has not been linked to fashion-oriented impulse buying. Thus, to fully appreciate and understand consumers' post-purchase behaviours specifically clothing disposal behaviours after impulse purchases, the current study explores consumers' clothing disposal methods and motivations for the methods they employ for relative obsolescent clothing items.

1.4 Research Objectives and Questions

Given the importance of the profitability of apparel impulse buying in today's fast-fashion market, as well as the environmental implications of clothing disposal behaviours, it is essential that retailers get a better understanding of consumers' clothing disposal behaviour in relation to fashion-oriented impulse buying (Park et al., 2006; Norum, 2015).

Extending the research on post-purchase behaviours after impulse buying, the purpose of this thesis is to explore clothing disposition behaviours of millennials after impulse buying. Due to their size, spending abilities and impulsive nature than previous generations, millennials deserve close attention from both the retail industry and academia (Xu, 2007). Hence, understanding millennials' clothing disposition behaviours with regards to impulse buying should be of much interest as disposition has public policy implications concerning the environment (Lee et al., 2013). According to Yee et al. (2016), to be able to create a more sustainable future, the attitude of young consumers towards fashion and clothing disposal behaviour need to be studied on an urgent basis. By conducting in-depth interviews, the study aims to provide new insights for understanding post-purchase consumption behaviour in the contemporary retail space by exploring millennials' clothing disposal behaviours and the motivations for the disposal method used after engaging in fashion-oriented impulse buying.

With regards to these considerations, the first research question focuses on the method of clothing disposal millennials' use after buying apparel on impulse. Therefore, it aims at exploring what they do with their apparel purchases after evaluating the purchase decision. Hence, the first research question is:

> *RQ1: What clothing disposal methods do millennials use after purchasing clothing items on impulse?*

Following up on the initial argument, the second research question concentrates on exploring the motivations behind clothing disposal behaviours consumers engage after buying clothing items on impulse. According to Joung and Park-Poaps (2013), motivation refers to the processes that result in people behaving in a specific way. Understanding consumer motivations for the disposal methods they engage after buying apparel on impulse, can provide a basis for developing effective recycling programmes and social policies that may contribute towards consumers' effective clothing disposal behaviours, thereby reducing the landfill problems with textile waste. Thus, the second research question is:

RQ2: What motivates millennials' method of clothing disposal after purchasing clothing items on impulse?

1.5 Delimitations

The specificity of the research topic limits the scope and sets the boundary of the current study from several aspects. The boundaries that were set are as follows:

- The choice of respondents. While impulse buying could help consumers find good and useful clothing, the respondents of this research will be consumers who had previously engaged in fashion-oriented impulse buying and whose impulsive purchases in the past did result in having redundant clothing items that may have being disposed of in one or several ways.

The research intention.

- The thesis will not focus on general consumption behaviour but only on fashion-oriented impulse buying and its associated clothing disposal behaviours.
- The thesis will not focus on the entire consumer decision making process, but on the post purchase stage, specifically on clothing disposal behaviours after impulse buying.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

The thesis is organised into five chapters. The first chapter consist of a background to the concepts of fashion-oriented impulse buying and clothing disposal, the research problem, the aims, and research questions, as well as the research delimitations. Subsequently, the theoretical background is developed and literature on fashion-oriented impulse buying and clothing disposal is reviewed. The methodology chapter describes the research philosophy, design, strategy, and procedure, and presents the analytical and ethical considerations. Also, the methodological limitations are briefly discussed. Chapter four encompasses the results

and a detailed analysis of the research findings in relation to previous studies. In the last chapter the theoretical, managerial, and practical contribution of this thesis is discussed. Finally, the conclusion is drawn and recommendations for future studies are given.

2 .0 Literature Review

2.1 Impulse buying definitions and types

Generally, the term impulse buying is considered to be synonymous with unplanned buying referring to purchases a consumer makes but without prior planning (Han et al., 1991). However, as a multifaceted buying behavioural concept, impulse buying behaviour may be explained as a hedonically complex buying behaviour where consumers experience a sudden, often powerful and persistent urge to buy a product immediately (Park, 2011; Rook, 1987). When it was first mentioned in marketing literature in the early 1950s, impulsive purchasing was perceived as "unplanned purchase"; that is, any purchase that consumers make without prior planning (Fedorova, 2017). Subsequently, other researchers explained impulse buying with the equation "Impulse Purchasing = Unplanned Purchasing + Exposure to a Stimulus (Piron, 1991). Some researchers such as Applebaum (1951) suggested that impulse purchases may occur from consumers exposure to a stimulus while in the store. Thus, impulse buying referred to purchases that consumers did not plan prior to entering a store, but which resulted from a stimulus such as sales promotional devices in the store (Applebaum, 1951). According to Rook (1987), the most significant distinction between planned and impulse purchases is that, impulse purchases are irrational and unplanned purchases that are often borne out of emotions and feelings.

Although impulse purchases may be unplanned, they may not be necessarily irrational. For instance, Nesbitt (1959; as cited in Piron, 1991) describes impulse buying as "intelligent shopping" where consumers do not plan their purchase before visiting a shop but instead, search for and take advantage of in-store promotions thereby maximizing their purchasing power. An assertion that Han et al. (1991) agreed with as an efficient and sensible way to buy goods.

The understanding of impulse buying was significantly impacted by Stern's (1962) classification of impulse buying behaviour into four categories. These are;

- Pure Impulse Buying; this refers to a novelty or escape purchase, often unplanned, that breaks the normal buying pattern.
- Reminder Impulse Buying; the key factor in this type of impulsive buying behaviour is a remembered prior experience with, or knowledge of the product which triggers the impulse purchase.

- Suggestion Impulse Buying; this occurs when a consumer sees a product for the first time and visualizes a need for it without any prior knowledge of the item.
- Planned Impulse Buying; this type of impulse buying occurs when the consumer has some specific purchases in mind but with the expectation and intention to make other purchases depending on special sales, coupon offers etc.

2.2 Fashion Oriented Impulse Buying

Han et al., (1991) described suggestion impulse buying (from Stern's framework) as "Fashion-oriented impulse buying". This is when consumers see a fashion product (an apparel item) in a new style, design or fabric and buy it because there is a suggestion to buy the new product. Apparel represents a constantly experiential product with high hedonic value, symbolic meanings, and closely linked to self-image and identity, and is often a main target for impulse buying (Park, 2011). Hence, fashion retailers leverage on using store design, product displays, music and sales promotions to influence consumer's impulsive buying tendencies (Bae, 2012). For fashion items, consumers are likely to be more divergent on what they want than what they need as a result of the relatively rapid change in fashion trends and clothing availability in style, colour, and fabric (Han et al, 1991; Park, 2011). Here, needs refer to basic requirements without which human survival may not be possible while wants are not essential for human survival and may change depending on the time, location, financial situation, amongst others (Trivikam, 2017).

By nature, fashion is unpredictable with fashion trends changing very often (Sudha & Sheena, 2017). Since the 1980's retailers have strived to increase variety of fashion products and the frequency with which they stock retail outlets a phenomenon referred to as fast fashion (Chatvijit, 2012). Apparel retailers such as Zara, H&M, Mango, Gap, Topshop, New Look and Next utilize the fast fashion concept by employing a combination of enhanced product design and assortment, quick response and agile product supply to respond to emerging fashion trends (Chatvijit, 2012). The fashion industry is one centered on changes in consumer demand, lifestyle, and industry trends and succeeds by presenting sensory experiential products (fashion items) that play an important role in contributing to impulse purchases (Chatvijit, 2012). The sensory experiential cues that fashion items provide, often preclude consumers from engaging in the cognitive and behavioural processes that consumers go through to make purchases – referred to as the consumer decision-making process (Kwan et al., 2008).

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2.3 Consumer decision-making process

As the main actors in the retail market, consumers may exhibit various behavioural patterns during the purchase process (Sudha & Sheena, 2017). Consumer decision-making behaviour may be defined as patterned, cognitive and behavioural processes that consumers go through to make purchase choices, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy individual needs and desire (Kwan et al., 2008; Sudha & Sheena, 2017). Early researchers such as Engel, Kollat and Blackwell (1968; as cited in Fedorova, 2017) introduced a model describing the decision-making process of consumers, which remains relevant for consumer behaviour research today. These five stages are the most widely accepted in consumer behaviour studies (Darley et al., 2010). Although the model has been discussed and modified throughout the years, the main components remain unchanged (Fedorova, 2017; Esterhammer & Huang, 2017).

The decision-making process proposed by Engel, Kollat and Blackwell (1968) comprises five stages which are problem or need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternative choices, purchase decision and post-purchase evaluation stages.

Figure 1. Five stages of consumer decision making process (reproduced from Fedorova, 2017).

The model by Engel, Kollat and Blackwell (1968) depicts consumer decision-making as a multi-stage and complex process with various factors triggering problem or need recognition before initiating a sequence of actions to reach an outcome of either satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Kwan et al, 2008). It may also seem as the normal process of purchase decision, where buying behaviour involves a time- consuming information search followed by rational decision-making (Hokkanen, 2012). On the contrary, some consumers may rely on simple strategies rather than going through a sequence of stages or processes (rationally) when making purchase decisions (Kwan et al., 2008). Researchers refer to this type of purchases made without such advanced rational processes as "Unplanned purchases" which includes impulse buying. Impulse buying differs from non-impulse buying decision in the sense that, the consumer do not have prior purchasing intentions (Rook, 1987). As such,

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consumers engaging in impulse buying will skip the first three stages in the consumer decision-making process immediately to the purchase decision stage (Esterhammer & Huang, 2017; Fedorova, 2017).

Alternatively, Bayley & Nancarrow (1998) describe the decision-making process during impulse purchases as consisting of a number of phases.

Object fixation	Urgency	Adrenalin rush	Lift in self-esteem /mood	Guilt

Figure 2. Consumer impulse buying decision-making process by Bayley & Nancarrow (1998)

Findings from their study suggest that impulse purchases often arise from the consumers pre-disposition to obtain a level of self-expression through shopping, and the elation that accompanies impulse purchases is likely to dwindle as the functional or economic factors kick in after the purchase resulting in feelings of guilt. At this stage, consumers begin to wonder "Do I really need another pair of shoes? (Bayley & Nancarrow, 1998). According to Park et al. (2011), such unreflective emotional attractions often affect apparel purchases, making them one of the most common impulsively bought items.

2.4 Post-Purchase Behaviours

The first three stages of the five -stage model of consumer decision making process clearly describes the processes before purchase decision is made. Despite the fact that post-purchase evaluation stage is an integral part of the buyer decision-making process, most research have focused basically on the purchase decision stage than on consumer's post-purchase behaviours (Kang & Johnson, 2009). Post-purchase evaluation may be conceptualized as the process through which consumers make an evaluative decision of the product and compare their pre-purchase expectations with the result of the actual purchase (Kincade et al., 1998; Kang & Johnson, 2009). According to Bedford (2016), the post-purchase evaluation may involve stages where the consumer examines the fashion product based on intrinsic (product aesthetics and product performance) and extrinsic cues (designer labels, country of origin and store image). The consumer may evaluate physical cues such as the construction (including seams, collars, sleeve position etc), aesthetics (for instance the apparel's colour, design elements etc) and product performance (in terms of durability, ease of care etc).

Some researchers posit that, based on these evaluations, consumers after engaging in fashion-oriented impulse buying may reach a point of satisfaction or dissatisfaction and may experience post-purchase negative emotions such as guilt and regret (Fedorova, 2017; Esterhammer & Huang, 2017). Based on these evaluations, consumers may engage in specific post-purchase behaviours (Kang & Johnson, 2009). Similarly, Park and O'Neal (2005) in their study of post-purchase behaviour of consumers who buy apparel on impulse found that, when consumers buy apparel on impulse, they tend to evaluate their purchases negatively. Participants in their study reported feelings of regret towards the apparel or themselves after buying even though they felt great excitement during the purchase.

In the best purchasing situations, consumers obtain products that meet their expectations and satisfy their needs and wants (Kincade et a al., 1998). On the contrary, there are times when consumers experience incongruence between pre-purchase expectations and actual purchase results. In addition, some products that are unable to match quality expectations, require that consumers spend extended periods of time repairing or replacing these products (Kincade et al., 1998) which may result in consumer dissatisfaction causing the customer to engage in post-purchase behaviours such as product complaints to retailers or manufacturers and sometimes even to government offices, or eventual product return. This is what Kincade et al. (1988) refer to as redress behaviours. Alternatively, consumers may engage in behaviours such complaining to friends and family (negative word-of-mouth), giving it out to friends and family, donating to charity, hoarding the item or simply disposing it of (Kang & Johnson, 2009; Chen & Hong, 2002; Kincade et al., 1998) referred to as non-redress behaviours. For the purpose of this study, the focus is on clothing disposal behaviours which fall under Kincade's (1988) category of non-redress behaviours.

2.4.1 Non-Redress Behaviours: Product Use and Disposal

Jacoby, Berning, and Dietvorst (1977) were among the early researchers that suggested the importance of studying consumers' disposal behaviours and developed a conceptual taxonomy to describe consumer product disposition behaviour. In their study, Jacoby et al. (1977) identified that consumers may contemplate the disposal of a product based on three general options.

1. Keep the product; this includes consumers' continuous use of the product for its intended purpose, converting the product to serve another purpose or storing it for eventual use later in the future.

2. Permanently dispose of it; this option included throwing the item away into the trash, abandoning it, giving it away in charitable donations or handing down to friends or family, selling it to another consumer or trading the product in for another item.

3. While temporarily disposing of the product included loaning the product or renting it to someone else
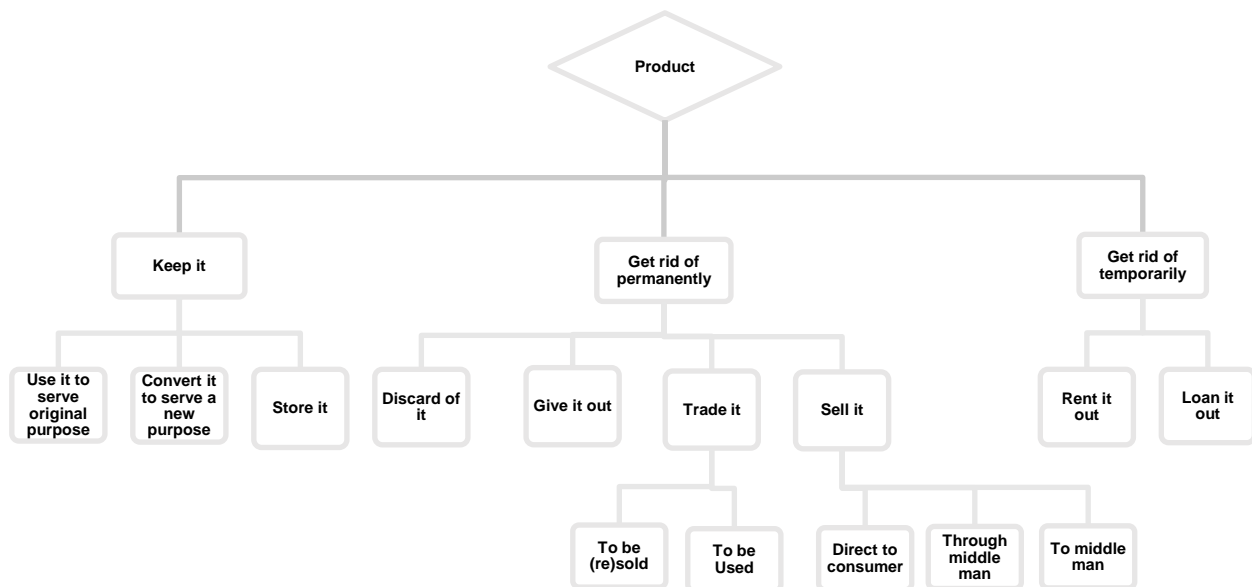
Figure 3. Disposition Decision Taxonomy by Jacoby et al., (1977)

The authors suggested that there were three factors that influence consumers' disposition choices: the psychological characteristics of the consumer (including personality, attitudes, etc.), factors intrinsic to the product (including condition, functionality, etc.), and situational factors extrinsic to the product (such as storage space, financial situation, etc). While this study was one of the most influential works on consumer disposal behaviour, respondents provided feedback on products including wristwatches, phonograph records, toothbrushes, refrigerators and bicycles.

Contrarily, Winakor (1969) conducted a study focusing primarily on clothing disposition and argued that the clothing consumption process includes three main stages: acquisition, inventory, and discard. Acquisition includes the stages when consumers obtain possession of a clothing item, either new or second-hand. The inventory is the stock of clothing items an individual possesses at any point in time. This includes clothing available

for regular use, including those temporarily stored. On the other hand, discarding of clothing occurs when the clothing item leaves the possession of the consumer, when he or she anticipates no further use of the item for himself or herself. Here, discarding may include handing down, throwing away, selling, exchanging, using for rags, making over or abandoning (Winakor, 1969).

Thus, apparel consumption includes a wide range of consumption stages including acquiring, storing, using, maintaining and discarding (Ha-Brookshire & Hodges, 2009). Although each of these stages are significantly and equally important in the consumption process, previous scholars have focused on the decision-making process related to the product acquisition and consumption stages (Yee et al., 2016; Norum, 2015) with little knowledge on the product disposal stage (Ha-Brookshire & Hodges, 2009).

It is undeniable that human behaviour has a significant impact on the planet. As such, consumers purchasing behaviour may have direct impacts on several elements of the environment (Bianchi & Birtwistle, 2012). Due to the trend of fast fashion changes leading to over consumption, the increasing problems with disposal of packaging, apparel and textiles products are further compounded (Bedford, 2016). According to Norum (2015), it is important to understand consumers' clothing disposal behaviour for both environmental and marketing reasons. Thus, the current study focuses mainly on consumer motivations and behaviours during the clothing disposal stage in fashion-oriented impulse buying.

2.5 Review of related studies on clothing disposition

Clothing may also be disposed of through donation bins or directly to charity shops. The donated items are then sorted and sent to people in need or sold through second- hand shops to generate capital to fund social projects (Bianchi & Birtwistle, 2012). Ha-Brookshire and Hodges (2009), in their study sought an in-depth understanding of consumer disposal behaviour of used clothing. The main reasons for clothing donation from their study was the need to create space in the closet for something new. However, consumers kept clothing with high sentimental value until they no longer felt the sentimental attachment. In addition, results from the study showed that consumers after purchase mistakes, tend to keep apparel without using them creating feelings of guilt. Thus, consumers donated clothing in order to alleviate the feelings of guilt that came from keeping clothing that was rarely worn, and from past purchase mistakes.

By using Ajzen and Fishbein's (1977) theory of reasoned action, Joung and Park-Poaps (2013) in their study to identify factors influencing clothing disposal behaviours found that consumers dispose of unwanted clothing in different ways based on different motivational factors. For instance, economic concerns predicted resale and re-use behaviours. While consumers' attitudes towards the environment predicted clothing donation. Thus, consumers who wanted to save money or gain some financial benefits re-sold or re-used clothing items they no longer needed. Consumers motivated by convenience simply discarded their unwanted clothing while those who were concerned about charity and the environment tended to donate their unwanted apparel.

Similarly, Bianchi & Birtwistle (2012) in their study examining clothing disposal behaviours of consumers in Chile and Australia, found that consumers with positive attitudes towards recycling were more likely to dispose of their clothing by donating to charity, rather than giving away to family or friends. Additionally, consumers awareness of the environment positively related to clothing donation to charities.

Subsequently, focusing on fashion disposition behaviour in young consumers in US, Lee et al. (2013) used a qualitative approach to investigate consumers' clothing disposition behaviours and motivations for their disposition. By doing a content analysing of essays from undergraduate students concerning their apparel disposal habits, the study highlights the varied methods and motivations for disposing of clothing. Results showed that young consumers engaged in multiple fashion disposition behaviours including donation, selling, repurposing, and swapping unwanted clothing. Respondents also added that fashionability, physical condition of an item and social responsibility as the factors that prompted their fashion disposition. The authors further uncovered that emotions may influence clothing disposal behaviours. Some consumers may experience enormous levels of stress about the decision to take out items from their closets and this may lead to hoarding.

Similar to Lee et al. (2013), Charbonneau, (2008) also used a qualitative approach to study the relationship between women's acquisition of second-hand clothing as well as post-purchase behaviours including clothing disposition. By conducting phenomenological interviews with consumers, the study contributes to the understanding of consumers' experiences and clothing disposition behaviours. Clothing disposal options from this research included donating to second-hand stores, giving out to family and friends, repurposing, rejuvenating or recycling and selling at garage sales, flea markets and e-Bay. Disposing into a

dumpster was the last resort for clothing items that could not be worn, repurposed or recycled, that is, clothing at the very end of its life cycle. Thus, their results indicate socially responsible behaviour. Social responsibility referred to the moral beliefs that everything and everyone is connected and affect the global reservoir of resources; where personal ethics and concern for the ultimate impact of apparel choices on the environment influence consumers to engage in moral and ethical consumption behaviours.

Consumers are increasingly becoming aware of sustainable consumption influencing the use and disposal of apparel as found in the studies mentioned above. However, the disposal component is a relatively new field in clothing consumption literature (Laitala, 2014) and almost non-existent in fashion-oriented impulse buying studies. Majority of previous studies on clothing disposition (e.g. Bianchi & Birtwistle, 2010; Yee et al., 2016; Norum, 2015) used quantitative method by formulating hypotheses and collecting data through standardized questionnaires. This method of data collection tends to limit consumers' scope of account on their disposition behaviour by limiting the capacity for self-reflection (Bryman, 2012). Thus, with little knowledge on the links between fashion-oriented impulse buying and disposition behaviours, this current research aims to explore this new connection using qualitative research methodology.

Finally, findings from the related studies mentioned above, will serve as a discursive framework for the current thesis and will help provide a priori themes that will facilitate the analysis of research data. By focusing on disposal behaviours in relation to relative obsolescent clothing items, the current thesis will complement previous clothing disposal literature while highlighting how clothing obsolescence relate to clothing disposal behaviours.

3.0 Methodology

The purpose of this study was to explore millennials' clothing disposition methods and motivations for the method used in relation to fashion-oriented impulse buying. A qualitative study with interpretive approach serves as the most appropriate framework to answer the research questions. This chapter discusses the research philosophy, strategy and design, sampling, research materials and procedure, analytical and ethical considerations as well as the limitation of the study.

3.1 Research philosophy

According to Bryman (2012), the methods used in social research are closely tied to different visions of how social reality should be studied. In this study, the researcher aims to study clothing disposition behaviours of millennials after they have engaged in impulse buying. Through the epistemological position known as interpretivism, this thesis was based on conducting in depth interviews, where the researcher focused on individual narratives, perceptions, behaviours, and motivations in relation to fashion-oriented impulse buying and clothing disposal. Interpretivism is the epistemological position that share the view that people and other human institutions are fundamentally different from the natural order, thus, the study of the social world necessitates a research procedure that reflects the distinctiveness of humans (Bryman, 2012). With this philosophical background, the researcher was able to collect rich data of respondents' experiences and behaviours of clothing disposal to provide new understandings of how this relates to Swedish millennials.

3.2 Research strategy and design

According to Bryman (2012), the research strategy refers to the general orientation that researchers adopt in conducting social research, that is, either qualitative or quantitative research strategies. Although the use of either, or both quantitative and qualitative research methods has their benefits, not all research questions can be answered by the same approach (Silverman, 2013). However, using qualitative methods may provide deep descriptions and explanations of people's beliefs and experiences of the phenomenon being studied as well as the inclination to provide a great deal of descriptive detail when reporting findings which quantitative research may be unable to provide (Silverman, 2013; May, 2011). Thus, to be able to fully understand consumer disposition behaviours based on the current research aims, a qualitative method with an exploratory approach will be used to answer the research questions. By doing so, the thesis explores specific clothing disposal methods Swedish

millennial use after engaging in fashion-oriented impulse buying, the motivations, intentions and other underlying factors of the method of disposal employed.

3.3 Sample and Sampling technique

Born between 1980 and 1999, Generation Y, also known as Millennials, represent a great part of consumers around the world (Myers, 2006; Xu, 2007). Millennials are described to have a general liking for purchasing, with significant spending power and more likely to spend impulsively giving the amount of time they spend in shopping compared to other generational cohorts (Pentecost & Andrews, 2010). They tend to spend their money as quickly as they acquire it, often on consumer goods and personal services (Xu, 2007). In addition to millennial's spending power, they have been recognized as having distinctively different tastes and preferences, and have been characterized as being trendsetters in fashion, materialistic, brand-oriented, risk-takers, receptive to new products and engage in impulse buying (Xu, 2007; Aruna & Santhi, 2015). These young consumers are among the group that spends considerable amount of time and money on fast fashion and wardrobe-building clothing items (materialism) and may be an important source of apparel waste (Lee et al., 2013)

For this study, a total of 15 individuals between the ages of 21 and 36 living in cities within the Skåne region in Sweden were interviewed. The focus of attention is on millennials, thus, in order to reach this target for data collection, a purposive sampling method was used for data collection from these respondents. This type of sampling is used when the research pertains to a category of people, organization etc. with direct reference to the research question (Bryman, 2012). The inclusion criteria for this study were;

- The individuals must have been born between 1980 and 1999. That is between 40 and 21 years and living in Skåne
- Respondents must have engaged in fashion-oriented impulse buying and engaged in clothing disposal behaviours previously.

Respondents were contacted by making a post on Facebook highlighting the criteria of inclusion and the purpose of the research. Thus, these were respondents within the researcher's network. Considering the time frame for the thesis project, using this sampling method allowed the researcher to reach the target respondents and collect sufficient reliable data with ease and within a short period of time.

Name	Gender	Age	Location of Stay
Abena	Female	24	Helsingborg
Kwaku	Male	34	Helsingborg
Emefa	Female	27	Malmo
Akua	Female	25	Helsingborg
Mansa	Female	24	Malmo
Essaba	Female	27	Malmo
Yaa	Female	36	Ramlosa
Adjoa	Female	24	Helsingborg
Nii	Male	29	Lund
Kofi	Male	24	Landskrona
Fiifi	Male	33	Helsingborg
Aseda	Female	32	Helsingborg
Naadu	Female	26	Helsingborg
Esi	Female	21	Lomma
Maame	Female	29	Helsingborg

Table 1. Respondents' profile

3.4 Interviews and Research procedure

According to Silverman (2007), interviews offer the chance for researchers to obtain far more rapid results than observation which, even when done properly could take months or years. With the limited time to conduct this thesis, as well the difficulty to observe constructs such as motivations – which is a major focus of this study, necessitated the use of interviews. In order to access consumers subjective reflections and accounts of the motivations, intentions and reasons for how and why they dispose of clothing items.

Thus, twelve individual interviews were conducted through telephone conversations, two over zoom, and one over Skype. Due to the COVID-19 situation, it was difficult to conduct face-to-face interviews, thus, conducting telephone (12) and video interviews (3) was most convenient. The difference between conducting face-to-face and telephone interviews is the loss of that physical contact and ability to see facial expressions that may have been useful for the analysis. Thus, the video interviews allowed for such observations. For instance, I could see when the respondent was in thought after asking a question, whereas

during the telephone interviews, I had to ask if the respondent was still on the call when there was a pause, and probably interrupting their reflections. Also, during the telephone interviews (in this study) one respondent asked to take a break to do something and when they returned, we had to find our way back to where the interview had reached which took a while. The decision to conduct either telephone or video interviews were based on respondents' preference. All the interviews were audio-taped in order to capture participants' responses. Interviews lasted between 58 and 85 minutes.

Semi-structured interviews were used for this study in order to provide respondents with a personal and convenient atmosphere free of prejudice or stereotyping. According to Bayley and Nancarrow (1998), the subject of impulse buying may be seen as negative, also relating this to clothing disposal may cause the respondents to feel judged. For instance, during the interview, one respondent mentioned "I know where you're going with this, and I'm feeling bad" thus, it was important that the researcher created a trusting and safe setting to ensure that respondents felt safe, calm, relaxed and open in order to elicit detailed and personal responses. According to May (2011), semi-structured interviews, presents the platform for the interviewed subjects' viewpoints to be expressed in an openly designed interview situation than in a standardized interview or questionnaire. The questions in semi-structured interviews are normally specified but open-ended thus allowing the researcher to obtain qualitative information on the topic (Bryman, 2012; May, 2011). Hence, using this method allowed the researcher to seek both clarification and elaboration by probing beyond answers thereby obtaining personal context from participants and enhancing the depth of the data which standardized interviews could have restricted. Interviewing protocol suggested by May (2011) was revised before conducting the interviews.

As in semi-structured interviews, there were some pre-formulated questions from the beginning. Having the interview guide, allowed the researcher to maintain the same thematic framework for all respondents. The guide (which can be found in the appendix) was structured to include the following sections:

- Demographic information
- Consumers' fashion-oriented impulse purchase behaviours
- Clothing disposition methods used
- Motivations for disposition method used
- General perspectives on sustainability and clothing disposal

Questions on demographics included the name, age and location of residence of the respondent. The second part concerned consumers' fashion-oriented impulse buying behaviours. To explore respondents' experience of impulse purchases, including factors and situations that led to the creation of redundant clothing. This was necessary to set the pace for the rest of the interview as there must have been some situations leading to disposal behaviours. The third part of the guide focused on the methods of clothing disposal respondents used. The researcher started with some listed clothing disposal methods mentioned in previous literature (including reusing, donating, giving out to friends or family, reselling and hoarding) and asked respondents about their usage of each of these methods. Further, the researcher asked respondents if there were any other methods used that was not initially mentioned. The fourth part focused on exploring consumers motivations and reasons for using the methods mentioned earlier. Each method was taken individually. Consequently, respondents' views on sustainability and sustainable clothing disposal options were sought. Using the semi-structured interviews for example, allowed the researcher to probe respondents' subjective opinions and reflections of their clothing disposal methods and give some contributions towards their expectations from retailers and policy makers in relation clothing disposal.

Silverman (2007) outlines some standards that research in qualitative researchers could meet in order in to present scientific findings in the current intellectual climate – clarity, reason, economy, beauty, and truth. First, researchers need to use clear and plain language in their writings. In addition, researchers need to examine data cautiously, be self-critical and avoid jumping to conclusions. In doing so, it is important to give accurate accounts of facts while using theories and concepts that stimulate the reader's attention (Silverman, 2007). Thus, it was essential to be concise by focusing on concepts and literature that related to the research aims.

Throughout this paper, it was important to follow these guidelines in order to reach research results with high validity and reliability. For instance, the researcher attempted to use plain English words that will allow for easy reading and comprehension. During the interviews as well, theoretical terms (for example, post-purchase behaviour and re-using) that may prove difficult for interviewees to understand were explained to ensure clarity while encouraging clarification and elaboration.

3.5 Analytical considerations

In the process after data collection, audio recordings of the interviews conducted were transcribed using transcribe.wreally.com word-for-word to obtain the qualitative data for analysis. Transcribe.wreally.com is a software that allows the researcher to access the audio recorded files on the computer and easily navigate between playing the audio files and typing, although the actual transcription is done manually by the researcher. As mentioned earlier, the interviews were transcribed word-for-word in other to have data for analysis exactly as given by the respondents while ensuring that the research results were as accurate as possible (Silverman, 2013). The aims of this thesis were to get an in-depth understanding of consumers clothing disposal methods and the motivations for the method used after engaging fashion oriented impulse buying, thus, transcriptions were analysed bearing the aims in mind.

Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003) outline a general step by step guideline on how to analyse and interpret qualitative data in order to bring order and understanding. These procedures were followed for analysing the interview data in this thesis.

> **Step 1**
> Get to know your data

> **Step 2**
> Focus on the analysis

> **Step 3**
> Categorize information

> **Step 4**
> Identify Patterns and connections
> within and between categories

> **Step 5**
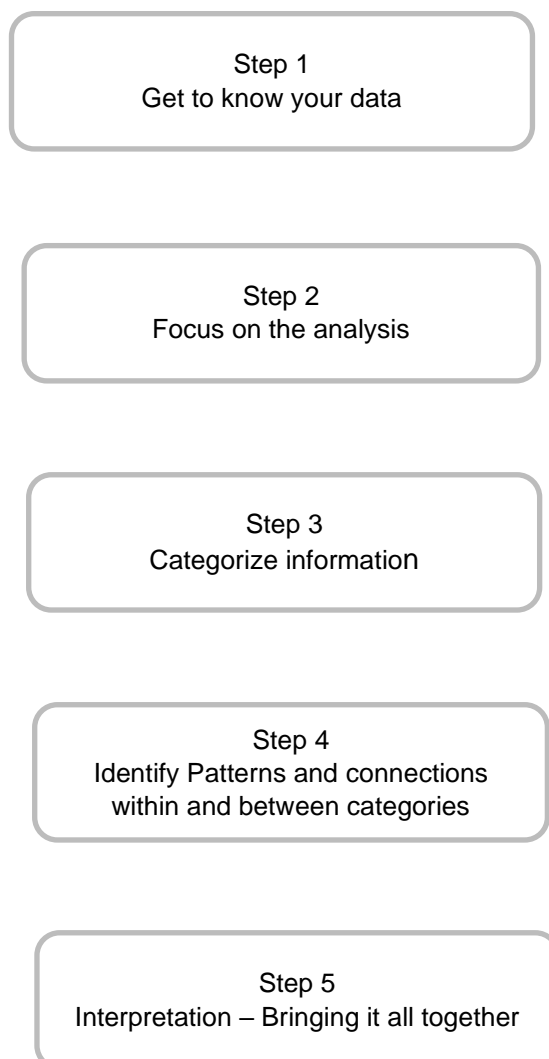> Interpretation – Bringing it all together

Figure 4. Outline of data analysis procedure derived from Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003)

Based on the guidelines described above, I sought to familiarize myself with the data collated by listening to the audio recordings and reading through the transcribed text several times to get a good understanding of it. Next, with the research questions in mind, I begun the data analysis process by analysing and interpreting interviewees responses of their fashion-oriented impulse buying behaviours. Next, I conducted an analysis of the disposal methods used and the motivations for the methods used in relation to respondents' impulsive purchases. In doing so, I tried to categorize responses to identify common themes, that is topics, ideas, concepts, behaviours and patterns of expressions and meanings that showed up in the data repeatedly. With initial categories (pre-set categories) of disposal methods developed from previous literature, I was able to identify similarities and differences between the current study and previous literature.

According to Silvermann (2017), qualitative researchers attempt to offer commentaries on interviewees' statements and tend to use purely research-driven categories. However, in the analysis I did not only focus on the pre-set categories, some aspects changed as the iterative process of analysis brought up interesting and unique concepts that were not initially thought of. This process where unique categories emerge from the data is what Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003) refer to as emergent categories. The developed categories were then broken down into subcategories, and then data resorted into the smaller and more defined categories for greater differentiation. From this point, the categories were then organized based on the research aims and questions to be able to identify patterns and connections between and within the categories.

Finally, the identified themes and connections were discussed by relating them to previous literature in order to provide new insights into millennials clothing disposition behaviours. Also, quotations from the transcriptions were identified to provide support for the generated themes. Silverman (2017) describes another flaw that may affect the data analysis, that is, by focusing on just one interview extract without evaluating the context in which it was said or not comparing it to other extracts which may be contradictory (Silverman, 2017). However, in order to avoid this problem, I made sure to present results in the actual context of discussion and by presenting contradictory or opposing views from different respondents.

3.6 Research Validity and Reliability

The issue that is often mentioned with qualitative research is that of validity and reliability. Reliability is a term that is used in relation to whether the measures that are devised for concepts in social science research are consistent (Bryman, 2012). According to Saunders et al. (2009), reliability refers to the degree to which the data collection technique or analysis procedure will yield consistent findings. The concept of reliability is also closely linked to the criterion of replicability. That is the extent to which a particular study may be repeated by another researcher (Bryman, 2012). In order for the reliability of a study to be assessed, Bryman (2012) argues that it is important for the researcher to describe the research procedures in great detail thereby making replicability possible. Trustworthiness, credibility, and confirmability are also criteria for reliable qualitative research (Flick, 2009). In order to increase the credibility of this research, I spent prolonged time and engagement with the data in order to get a good understanding of the data, by having regular discussions with my supervisor to gain a neutral perspective and ensuring the use of appropriate terms of reference during the analysis and interpretations of findings.

Furthermore, in order for researchers to position themselves as conducting a reliable research as quantitative studies, social scientists are urged to mimic the procedures used by physical scientist, the best possible way (Whatmore et al., 2003). In doing so, researchers need to adopt a style of writing that is objective, precise, unambiguous, noncontextual and nonmetaphoric, in other words, an unproblematic and transparent writing style (Whatmore et al., 2003). By adopting this way of writing in the pursuit of knowledge; as in the case of this paper, the researcher was able to keep up the ideals of science which are objectivity, neutrality and accurate scientific results (Bryman, 2012). Maintaining these standards are not easy to achieve however in the current study, it was essential that the researcher presented findings exactly as they emerged from the data and free from any subjective beliefs, experiences and/or expectations by constantly reminding myself and taking inspiration from my discussions and feedback from my supervisor as well as the research literature used.

Research validity is concerned with the integrity of the conclusions that are derived from a research project (Bryman, 2012). Validity may be split in two; internal and external validity. Internal validity concerns whether the research is done in a way that the results that have been reached were based solely on the concepts and variables under study, while external validity is concerned with whether the results of the study can be generalized beyond

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the specific research context (Bryman, 2012). Taking this criterion into consideration, the current study was designed and conducted very carefully. The validity of this study is enhanced as the interview guide was formulated in relation to the research aims and questions. The open-ended nature of the semi-structured interview questions allows for more depth to the responses while staying relevant to the research aims. Participants were also asked to fully articulate their responses in order to avoid misunderstandings during analysis. Also, in order to improve the trustworthiness of the data collected, I asked a colleague to evaluate the themes and categories generated to get a second opinion.

3.7 Ethical considerations

Research ethics are concerned with the capacity of a social research to protect participants and the integrity of the study (May, 2011). In the course of the research project, researchers need to make decisions not because they are advantageous to the researcher or the project being worked on, but rather because they are concerned with what is right or just (May, 2011). The primary data collection method in this paper was conducting semi-structured interviews.

Interviews were conducted following deontological approaches to morality as detailed out in May (2011). This approach suggests that, ethical judgements in social research requires consideration of protecting respondents from harm or danger other than focusing on the consequences these ethical standards could have on the research (May, 2011). Deontological approaches emphasize doing what is right irrespective of consequences on the researcher or the research process. Thus, the interviews were conducted on these ethical considerations:

- There was informed consent where respondents freely gave their permission (verbally) to be a part of the study and for the interviews to be recorded in audio format. Respondents were further assured that the audio recordings would be solely used for transcriptions and for the purpose of this research.
- The research aims and process were explained to respondents, and they were assured of no perceived consequences for their responses.
- Respondents were encouraged to inform the researcher if they were uncomfortable with the line of questioning, at this point, they could opt out of the study.
- Respondents were informed that their names would be disguised as local Ghanaian names in order to ensure the anonymity, especially as participants will be quoted in the results.

Adhering to deontological ethical principles may entail some practical difficulties on the research process in terms of creativity or loss of research participants as there is the freedom to leave the study. However, following these standards were justified, as it prevents any harm or offence to the respondents in this study.

3.8 Limitations of the study

According to Booth, Colomb & Williams (2008) researchers may find it difficult to report limitations in their study. They advise that researchers try to fix, redefine or rebuild arguments to solve the problem, if it is not possible, researchers need to be honest and issue that disclaimer. In this project a purposive sample of 15 respondents were interviewed regarding their clothing disposal behaviours in relation to fashion-oriented impulse purchase due to time constraints and limited resources. In addition, majority of the participants (about 13 of them) were of other nationalities who had lived in Sweden between 1- 7 years with 2 Swedish nationals only. Thus, the research findings may not reflect the views of Swedish millennials and due to the relatively small sample size, the study may be limited in the extent to which the findings may be generalized.

4 .0 Results and Analysis

The aims of this research were to explore the methods of clothing disposal millennials use in relation to clothing items bought on impulse as well as the motivations for the method used. The first three chapters of this thesis offered a background to the problem surrounding clothing disposal and fashion-oriented impulse buying, a review of the literature surrounding these phenomena and the methodological design that was used for this study. In this chapter, the empirical findings and analysis of the data gathered from the interviews conducted will be presented. The chapter comprises two major sections (based on the research questions) on respondents' methods of clothing disposal and motivations for the method of disposition used. The first section 4.1, starts with descriptive overview of consumers experience with fashion-oriented impulse purchases. The next section 4.2, presents findings to the first research question and discusses a break-down of specific clothing disposal methods and how they engage in these behaviours. Then follows the section 4.3, that presents findings to the second research question on the motivations, intentions and reasons for respondents use of specific methods of disposal. Excerpts from the interviews will be added to serve as reference. To enhance readability, filler words such as "uh" or "uhm" will be excluded from the excerpts. Also, texts in capital letters refer to follow up questions the researcher asked in probing for more clarification or discussion.

4.1 How Post-Purchase Negative Emotions lead to disposition behaviours

The following section presents a descriptive overview of respondents' experiences with fashion-oriented impulse buying. This helped build the argument of why respondents were faced with the decision to dispose of clothing in the first place. In this study, respondents mentioned that, they experienced feelings of regret and disappointment after engaging in apparel impulse purchases which led to their engagement in some clothing disposal behaviours. These feelings often came about when products did not meet respondents' pre-purchase expectations, problems with fit and size, product related variables such as poor construction, low quality fabric, stained apparel amongst others.

The following excerpts are examples of how consumers described their post-purchase negative emotions. Essaba and Abena recount feeling disappointed and regretful with their impulsive purchases causing them to hoard the item.

"… I got some pants that had stains on it. I was like maybe that is used or I don't know what happened with it. The way it happened I was a little bit shocked…Because it had the stains, I

didn't want to wear them because you know, my skin is sensitive and I don't know what might happen… so I still have it… in my wardrobe somewhere" – Abena

"…because I bought the things very fast, I didn't try the clothes, and then I realized when I got home that it was not really fitting well as I imagined in my head. So yeah, I was not 100% satisfied. And maybe now thinking about it, maybe I didn't really need them. When I see the clothes, I feel like it was a waste of money, I guess… and I'm not even using them" – Essaba

For Kofi, when the item he bought did not meet his expectations, he felt the retailer had not been honest with him and as a result felt scammed.

"Yeah so I ordered some clothes from online and I think it was like 4 or 5 apparels and when they came most of them were nice. But it was like one piece of the clothing that looked completely different from the picture that I saw online. When it arrived in reality it looked nothing like it so I was like, 'what is this?' It doesn't even meet my requirement and expectation. I felt like I had been scammed" – Kofi

Contrary to previous studies such as Fedorova (2017) who found that emotional response in the post-purchase stage of consumption led to product return behaviours regarding apparel bought on impulse. This thesis found that, when consumers were dissatisfied with their impulse purchases, they equally had emotional response, but the difference is instead of returning the item, they engaged in other disposition behaviours especially hoarding. A further explanation of why this is the case will be found in section 2 of this chapter where motivations for respondents use of disposal behaviours is presented.

4.2 Consumer use of clothing disposal methods

The following sections illustrate the multiplicity of options when it comes to respondents' disposal behaviours in relation to redundant clothing items often bought on impulse. Respondents eliminated clothing from their wardrobes using various methods. Analysis of the transcripts yielded six clothing disposal methods that the millennials in this study used. Reselling, re-using, giving out to friends and/or family, hoarding, swapping, and donating to charity shops and bins, were the disposal methods identified in this study, and will be discussed next in detail.

4.2.1 Hoarding

In this study, hoarding refers to the method of clothing disposal where consumers hold on to clothing items even though they're not being used, or when unwanted clothing items are moved into storage. Thus, when new apparel or clothing items that can be used are kept for one reason or another. Findings from this study showed hoarding as the most used clothing disposal method. 14 out of the 15 respondents in this study had at least one clothing item bought on impulse that they are currently keeping. These items ranged between jumpers, t- shirts, coats, jeans, dresses, and shoes.

"I actually have some items in my wardrobe that I haven't worn in a while. So, I bought a shirt super-fast and I wore it only once… then I didn't wear it again. It's not like I don't like it, but I don't know why I don't wear it to be honest. It's just in the wardrobe, it's very new so maybe I'll find something to do it with…" – Essaba

For one respondent, due to the lack of planning and evaluation before buying the item, there were problems with fit which caused her to hoard the item.

"… I saw this one dress close to the entrance and I just looked at it and I took my size. I just thought it would suit me… I didn't have the time to try it on because I had just 15 minutes to join the train. So, when I came home, I was very excited to try it on, but it didn't look good on me. It's still hanging in my wardrobe and I haven't worn it since." – Mansa

Interestingly, one respondent narrated how she was hoarding up to two boxes of barely worn and new clothing. According to her, some even have their tags on.

"….I was going through my old wardrobe… and I was faced with a pile of things that I been keeping. Some still have tags on them...they were maybe too small for me or they didn't fit well. And oh my gosh!!! I had to bring another box just for those items but I had to label the box, and I was so embarrassed to realise these were all the stuffs I have bought and I never wore because they didn't fit and I never returned it. So, I wrote on the box 'things in the lower half of the wardrobe'. So yeah, I now have boxes of things that I have never worn, like two boxes worth" – Akua

From the excerpts above, we can observe that consumers used hoarding as a method of clothing disposal for clothing items bought through impulse. This was consistent with previous studies such as Lee et al. (2013) who sought to investigate fashion disposition in young consumers. Results from their study showed that some individuals disposed of

unwanted clothing items through hoarding, usually by moving them into storage. Although findings from both studies are similar, the emphasis of the current thesis was on clothing bought through impulse and on the newness and usability of the clothing item. Thus, through the current thesis, we observe that some new clothing and useful clothing may equally be hoarded.

4.2.2 Giving out to friends and/or family

In this study however, the concept refers to consumers passing on unwanted clothing purchased through impulse to friends, family, neighbours, or acquaintances without any financial gain. For respondents, this was considered one of the easiest clothing disposal methods and was the second most used disposal method found in this study. For most respondents, redundant clothing items purchased through impulse were given out to friends, or to family members such as cousins, sisters, or mothers.

One respondent gives a vivid account of how an impulsive purchase led her to give out clothing. She alludes this to the fact that she is a girl, and the enthusiasm girls have during shopping often results in buying clothing impulsively that they regret afterwards.

"Yes it has happened to me because when I'm in the store, I have such a great enthusiasm about clothes and I'm like yeah I want to buy this, this and this… and then when I get home, I realize that I bought a lot of things that I do not need or I already have similar clothes so I don't really need them. I don't understand how it happens. But you know, girls are like that… we are so enthusiastic when we are in the clothing shop… So, when I get home and I think again then I'm like okay should I have this or maybe I don't need this now because I have so many jackets like 10 jackets and I don't need 11. Or maybe I realize that I have something similar so I'm like okay… this is so similar to this one, why did I buy it. So, in this case I give it to my sister or my cousins" – Abena

In the extracts below, Nii and Mansa also describe how they gave out unwanted clothing to a cousin and friend respectively. Although the clothing items were new, due to the impulsiveness of the purchase, they had problems with the fit and so had to dispose of these items.

"I remember there was a time I went out to purchase some items including some clothing items that I didn't really plan to buy. Also, I didn't really try them on well so, when I brought

the clothes home, some of them were not fitting me well… So, I had to give them out to my
cousin… and he was quite appreciative" – Nii

"Actually, right before Christmas I bought a jumpsuit but when it arrived it didn't fit me at
all. And I knew that I wouldn't wear it and kept it in the wardrobe for a while. But then I was
going to a friend and I took it with me because I knew that it would fit her better. So, she tried
it on, and she loved it, so I gave it to her." – Mansa

Other researchers such as Laitala (2014), referred to giving away as the method of
disposition where clothes are handed down to friends, family, neighbours or other
acquaintances without economic gain. However, they looked at clothing that were used and
mostly clothing at the end of life stage of its usefulness. Results from this thesis complements
such previous literature in the field of clothing disposal however, we observe that consumers
also give out unwanted clothing bought through impulse, that are new or useful to friends and
family. Thus, consumers do not only give out absolute obsolescent clothing items but also,
relative obsolescent items.

4.2.3 Reusing

Reusing includes when respondents redesign their redundant clothing items into
something new. This may also include repurposing, that is when consumers continue to use
unwanted clothing items by finding new ways to use them. In this study, respondents
mentioned making new items out of unwanted clothing to give it a new use. In doing so, they
could for instance, turn a dress into a skirt, make shorts out of a pair of trousers, or turn a t-
shirt that didn't fit well into a new style of outfit that suits them better.

"…I try to make some changes, sometimes there are some details that I don't like about the
clothing and then I try to make some changes and I end up using it. If it is just like cutting
short the sleeves or something, then its something that is not very complicated to do…if its
like that then I could do it or then I ask my mother because she is better at these things. I had
a few dresses that I didn't feel very comfortable with, but I liked the fabric and I liked the way
the skirt was so I asked my mother to cut it into half and to make some changes and then I
started using it" – Yaa

One respondent, Akua, describes how she redesigned a top she had bought impulsively, and
was unsatisfied with, to serve a better purpose.

"I bought a couple of t-shirts which I really didn't need but, I just wanted to indulge... So I got these t-shirts with some fun quotes on. I wanted them to be plain and just go well with jeans; to be very basic. But when they came, the neck was very high, and it was not flattering, it was kind of chocking me a little bit. So, I took scissors to them and cut the top to make it kind of off the shoulder shirt." – Akua

One respondent also mentioned redesigning clothing items by adding embellishments or making embroidery patterns in them to give it a new chance at being used.

"My t-shirts, if I get bored of them, I try to do some small knitting on them, I will try and change something about it and use it" – Esi

 In repurposing, some respondents mentioned using redundant clothing items as rags for cleaning in order to give it a new use than originally intended.

"I bought these tops that came and had some prints in front of it. In the pictures it looked nice, but when it came, it was childish... like it glitters in light. I used it a few times, then I kept it for a while, but now, I use it to clean the windows. It's black so you can't even see that it's dirty" – Emefa

Previous literature (e.g. Yee et al., 2016, Joung & Park-Poaps) also found that consumers tend to reuse clothing items, by repurposing or redesigning their old clothes. Through repurposing, clothing was used as rags, and by redesigning, new clothes were made from the old ones by adding some details and embellishments to give it a new use. However, the current study demonstrates that new and useful clothing may be repurposed for cleaning and not necessarily old clothing as found in existing literature. This finding therefore contributes to existing literature by indicating how new and useful clothing may be used for cleaning (contrary to its originally intended purpose).

4.2.4 Donation

Donation refers to the method of disposition when clothing items are given out to an organization, religious groups, charitable shops or to communities or groups of people in need. This form of giving out does not include friends or family and also comes with no economic gain for the consumer. Organizations where donations are made may be non-profit with charitable purposes, although some may be profit based. In Sweden examples of such charitable organizations may be Emmausföreningen, Röda Korset, Erikshjälpen, and Myrorna.

Almost all respondents in this study had engaged in donation in Sweden or elsewhere. From all the methods of disposal mentioned by consumers, donation was the third- most used clothing disposal method. This is a little different from the results found by Bianchi and Birtwistle (2010). In their study, donating to charities was the most common method of disposing clothing. However, results from this thesis showed that, respondents donated not only to charity bins, and shops but to communities in need and through non-profit organisations and volunteering clubs.

"I have actually bought things that when it came… there was nothing wrong with them but I just felt like someone else needed it than I did so,I had to donate it. I have done that a few times... normally it depends on where the need is coming from….or where I have seen the need because as a member of a volunteering club, we do a lot of donations…" – Fiifi

"If you don't wear the clothes then it actually becomes pollution because you are not using it… so what I try to do is, if I see that I'm actually not going to use something then I donate the clothes at least it gives the opportunity to be sold at second hand shops or something. What I actually do is that there is those containers for clothes donations and that is where I leave the clothes" – Naadu

"There's this second-hand shop, it's called Erikshjälpen, that is owned by my church and they sell second-hand clothing, so I donate there" – Nii

For one respondent, the donating act usually happens not in Sweden but in another country where he has family and so visits often. For this respondent, it is another way to dispose of unwanted clothing.

"There are a lot of stores there that are really keen about accepting other peoples' items. You know you have more people living in poverty and stuffs. So when I usually go on holidays...the stuffs that I don't need I try to take them with me and then donate them to the stores there and stuffs like that so they can give them to some people after" – Kofi

4.2.5 Reselling

Reselling involves the process when a consumer changes ownership of a possessed clothing item in exchange for money through different channels such as the internet, garage sales or flea markets (Laitala, 2014). Respondents from this study indicated they resold redundant clothing item through the internet, mostly Facebook and e-bay, or to individual persons they know. Items that were resold included shoes, jackets, trousers and dresses.

"there was a time I actually tried to resell things on ebay… I actually sold a leather jacket." – Yaa

"…I had some winter jacket, the colour and size was quite off, not my style you know. It was still nice, it looked very good in pictures, but I was not comfortable wearing it outside. So I put it on Facebook, there's this Loppis page, and I got a girl who contacted me, she wanted to try it on. So we arranged the time, she came to see it, tried it and liked it, so she bought it. It was that easy…" Emefa

"… when it came, I had to look for people who could perfectly fit into that size and sell it to them. So, I took my time, I didn't even rush, and sold it as if they bought it online themselves. It was at the same price and I didn't increase anything. SO, DID YOU SELL IT ONLINE? No… I just sold it to a friend's friend… I knew this person, so that is how the whole thing went on." – Fiifi

Similarly, reselling was used by respondents in the previous studies (Joung & Park-Poaps, 2013; Norum, 2015). In these studies, consumers resold unwanted clothing to second-hand and consignment stores, thus, from the consumer to businesses (C2B resale). The difference however is, in this thesis, consumers described reselling unwanted clothing items to other consumers through the internet indicating consumer to consumer (C2C) resale.

4.2.6 Swapping

Swapping refers to the clothing disposal method where clothing is exchanged for other clothing, usually through an informal meeting between friends or in an organized setting with a larger number of participants. From the analysis, this was the least used method to dispose of clothing bought on impulse. Only one respondent mentioned exchanging redundant clothing with friends in this study, this was even years back and while she lived outside of Sweden.

"… together with my co-workers and my friends we will talk a lot about fashion and clothing and other things. Then someone will say 'Oh I don't know what to do with it' so we will exchange…my friend gave me a few jumpers that she said it didn't look nice on her, so do I want them I said Yes" – Akua

Similarly, Fisher et al. (2008) in their study, found that swapping involved exchanging clothes, usually with family members. In their study, swapping was used mostly among females and mostly involved fashion accessories

4.2.7 Other methods of clothing disposal: Retailers' Take-Back system and discarding to the bin

As has been identified above, respondents in this study employed various methods to dispose clothing bought on impulse that had become redundant. From the analysis above, hoarding was the most used clothing disposal method, followed by giving out to friends and family, then donation, re-using, reselling and finally swapping. Other methods that came up during the interviews were disposing into the trash and disposing through retailers' take-back systems. These take-back systems allow consumers to return used clothes to retailers in order to source a reuse and recycle system for apparel and fibers (Corvellec & Stål, 2019). In Sweden, retailers such H&M, KappAhl, Lindex, Indiska and Filippa K, have recently introduced in-shop take-back systems where consumers could dispose used clothing (Corvellec & Stål, 2019). In this thesis, three respondents mentioned having knowledge of retailer's take-back systems although they had never used this method. To them, it was an option they could explore if it were suitable to them in the future. Other participants also mentioned using the take-back system but not in relation to fashion-oriented impulse buying or in relation to clothes that were in good shape and still usable, which was the focus of this thesis. For these respondents, the main reasons for using other disposal methods instead of the take-back systems, were based on their convenience and the opportunity for the item to be used by someone else.

On the other hand, for clothing items that were discarded into the trash, respondents described them as clothing that were completely ruined and could not be used by anyone. This method was not further developed in the results as the condition of the item; that is clothing that is completely worn out and not usable – absolute obsolescence, is not the focus of this study. In addition, respondents mentioned that clothing items such as underwear, which may be considered unhygienic to be passed on to another user, are often discarded to the trash. They describe cutting up the items into smaller bits before discarding them.

4.3 Motivations for clothing disposal method used

In the following section, the researcher provides insight on the intentions for, and reasons why certain disposal methods may be used above others. Analysis of the motivations for millennials' clothing disposal methods highlighted the complexity of disposal decisions. The results indicated that, respondents had several reasons for the method of disposal used. As outlined within six overarching themes, clothing disposal behaviours were influenced by

- convenience and ease of the disposal method

- the desire to serve greater good

- the clothing characteristics

- personal benefits

- avoiding feelings of guilt or regret

- future usefulness

In the next section, these identified themes will be discussed in detail.

4.3.1 Convenience and ease of disposal method

First of all, previous research on clothing disposal has acknowledge that individual characteristics including the self-concept, experiences, and perceptions of the context in which they live, influence the method of clothing disposal they use (Albinsson & Perera, 2009). In this thesis, the clothing disposal methods chosen and used was based on how convenient or easy respondents found the method. Convenience and ease were associated with the consideration of how easy it was to use the specific disposal method, previous experience of the difficulty associated with reselling items, as well as difficulty in returning items. This result was consistent with the findings from Birtwistle and Moore (2007). In their study to find out how consumers disposed of their fashion items, the results showed that, clothes were taken to charity based on convenience. Thus, convenience was the main reason why people disposed of unwanted items through donation.

In this study, some respondents discussed the issues with the return process that motivate them to use easier disposal methods such as giving out to friends and donating to charity. For instance, when the retailer does not have any return policy that is, "products sold are not returnable" or when the return process was perceived to be a hassle or complicated, then they would prefer to use a simpler disposal options. The excerpt below shows one respondent narrating how he would have liked to return an item bought on impulse but, due to the complexity of the return process, he decided to give it out.

"I think it's difficult… like how the processes of returning clothes is. Because you have to get like a note or like a stamp you know...and then go back to the delivery point. I had to fill the… this note with different information on why I am returning the item…then I have to buy a package, which also cost money in order to put the clothes in. Then I put this note on the packaging before I return it. So, returning the clothes becomes troublesome and annoying. It

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takes so long, usually you don't want to return the clothes… So for me, it's either I donate it to the charity bin or I give it away to someone who needs it" – Kofi

Also, the ease at which one respondent finds redesigning of redundant clothes, makes reusing the best method of clothing disposal for her. According to Akua, because she is handy and good with sewing, she sees reusing as an effortless process compared to other disposal methods. She completely enjoys the process of reusing and finds herself even helping friends and family to reuse their unwanted clothes.

*"…I bought this shirt on impulse, that I made into a new style. I am really handy in sewing so I was very comfortable doing that. So yes, I have no problem in altering clothes. Similarly, my partner, he bought some jeans and they had too many holes in them and then didn't want it. So I said 'hey give it to me and I will sow it up for you'…I sewed them up for him …he was actually going to throw them away, could you believe that?....He was going to throw them away until I intervened and Yeah he wears them now...*WHY DO YOU RESUE IN THIS CASE? *I think because I am really good with sewing, for me, it is not scary or intimidating to do that. I am happy to do that… so I don't mind giving it a go…" – Akua*

In addition, four respondents mentioned that the time and energy involved in using some disposal methods motivated them to choose some over others. For instance, one respondent describes the difficulty involved in reselling a redundant item

"…I have a lot of things in my closet that I want to resell, but I haven't done it yet. I haven't tried with clothing because I get a headache from selling stuffs… People express interest, then you have to wait for them to come pick it up, its just time consuming. I mean, I want to resell, but I would rather donate it to the charity bin and save myself the hassle" – Naadu

4.3.2 The desire to serve greater good

Whereas the purchase of clothing on impulse were to provide satisfaction to the consumers or to serve individual purposes, at the disposal stage, many tended to consider how the method chosen would benefit someone else, society or the environment at large in terms of sustainability and climate change. The theme, desire to serve greater good encompassed the altruistic desire to help others in need, to prevent the item from going to waste, to be used by someone else and, to donate to charity bins and shops so the item can be sold in second-hand shops to generate money for a worthy cause.

For Aseda, the desire to help others and protect the environment are the main motivations for reselling and donating redundant clothing.

"I mean, if I buy something on impulse that I don't like, I will rather sell for a cheap price so other people can use… or donate to a charity organization. In that way it will be a good thing right? I always gave a lot of things that I don't use to developing countries because I know they struggle there. So that they don't need to buy other clothes, in a way to protect the environment. In my point of view" – Aseda

Similarly, Yaa and Adjoa describe that donating to charity shops and bins, provides the opportunity for the disposed clothing to be used by someone else in another way. Additionally, donating their redundant clothing through charity organisations offer them the chance to be able to help people in need. By donating to the charity bin as well, money can be generated from the sold items and used for their charity programmes.

"… so what I try to do is, if I see that I'm actually not going to use something then I donate the clothes at least it gives the opportunity for someone to use it, if it is sold on second hand shops or something. Sometimes what I also do is that there is those containers for clothes donations and that is where I leave the clothes. At least they can make some money out of it and the clothes can have the possibility of been reused" – Yaa

"back in my country, we have local donating bins where you can drop your old clothes to like your community. They will handle them or you can find some online channels to donate through. So, you can send clothes that you are not using and they will donate them to like people or children in need. I think it's good that the things that I don't need may help others" – Adjoa

Aside donation, giving out to friends and family also provides the means for an unwanted item to be used by someone else instead of going to waste.

"… I think I like giving things away…if someone like something that I am not in love with, then I don't mind giving it away. That goes with some items I gave to my sisters and a scarf to my mum. I don't need it and someone who likes it gets it. So for me, giving it to them… I think it's a is a win-win… I am satisfied with this" – Maame

Similar to the findings in the study by Bianchi and Birtwistle (2009), results from the study showed that consumers with values of altruism and social responsibility found donation to be an opportunity to do something good. From the current study, the theme desire to serve

greater good represents respondents socially responsible conduct and the desire to help people and society at large, highlighting a sense of altruism that motivated their choice of clothing disposal method.

Contrarily, Ha-Brookshire and Hodges (2009) in their study of socially responsible behaviour found that, none of the respondents in their study considered social consciousness as the primary motivation for their clothing donation behaviour. Participants from their study mentioned that donating clothing was a means to accomplish more self-oriented and utilitarian functions than a socially oriented goal. One respondent from their study argues that; *"dropping off used clothing at a local donation center is not in itself an act of charity; instead, people who buy merchandise from the local donation center are the ones making the contribution to society"* (Ha-Brookshire and Hodges, 2009, p. 186). For this respondent, donating to charity was not enough if people were still indulging in overconsumption.

4.3.3 Clothing characteristics

The characteristics of the clothing item were important motivators of the disposal methods most respondents used. Specifically, the fit, fabric, colour, quality, construction as well as the sentimental value of a clothing item influenced consumers' disposition decisions. For Abena, the sentimental value of an item she bought with her ex-boyfriend makes it easy for her to let go of it. Instead of reusing or keeping it as she does with other redundant clothing, she prefers to donate this one. When asked why she had to donate a redundant clothing item she had purchased on impulse, she responded:

"I used to wear these clothes with my boyfriend, so then I broke up with him… and I didn't want to wear it again. That is because it reminds me of him…so yeah, it happens" – Abena

On the contrary, other respondents expressed difficultly in parting with redundant items that held sentimental or important associations. For example, Esi could not part with some items that she felt emotionally attached to. For her, she would rather hold on to a product that she feels attached to or will stretch the use of the item so she can have it for as long as she can.

"…like especially when I like something, I will try to use it as much as possible in different ways, so I don't get rid of it as fast as possible. And for some of my clothing I do have some attachment to them …you love the clothe and...you are used to actually seeing it so you don't want to take it out of your sight. Because I feel like the clothing are with us in the good days or bad days and sometimes, we connect some happy moments with some clothing…"- Esi

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Similarly, previous studies (Albinsson &Perera, 2009; Lee et al, 2013) found that participants in their studies found it difficult parting with some clothing items due to the emotional and sentimental attachment to the item. In the study by Lee et al. (2013), some respondents felt that some specific clothing were a reflection of their self-identity, or brought memories of significant life events and that made it difficult for such items to be disposed of even if they were no longer in use.

Another aspect of the clothing characteristics was the physical make of the clothing item. For most items that consumers had purchased on impulse, they mentioned having problems with fit and size, colour, quality, fabric or the construction of the item. When consumers had such problems, they found ways to dispose of the times. For instance, Aseda describes how she bought a pair of boots on impulse and after receiving them, she didn't like them because it looked entirely different, she likens this to ordering a McDonald's burger. Also, the boots didn't fit well and was of poor quality leading her to hoard the item.

"I needed a boot for winter and then suddenly I saw on Amazon that these boots, the price was really cheap then I bought the boots… the funny thing was that in the picture it was actually cool but when it came it wasn't you know. When It arrived at home it wasn't the same. In the picture it was nicer, but then when you get them then it's not really the same. It's like the typical hamburger from McDonald's, you know you see the pictures and then you want to try it. But when you buy the hamburger it's not the same as the picture. So, this was how exactly I felt with this boot. SO, WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING TO DO WITH IT? I still have it. I *am keeping it and maybe I will give it out to someone who wants it. Because I don't think anyone would pay money for it."- Aseda*

Additionally, Akua discloses how she purchased some clothing on impulse from an online retail outlet. She had problems with the quality and tailoring making it even difficult to give it out. Because of this, she is storing it in her wardrobe.

"...the material was not good. I felt that it was a cheap material that was going to bubble up soon.... if I wear it about 3 or 4 times then the material was going to be ruined. Also the fitting was very strange on the hips…it was very tight but then, on the thigh it was loose so...it was very kind of strangely made…Yeah and for that reason I couldn't give it to someone because usually if I bought an item and I am not wearing it, I could give it to someone else, but not with this one. Because… it was really kind off strangely put together. The tailoring basically was not good" – Akua

For Maame, buying a clothing item with poor fit, gives her motivation to lose weight. But because she is unable to do that, the clothing ends up in storage.

"I think the physical shop makes me shop more…And sometimes I have a lot of regrets because of things that I bought and then I was thinking 'oh...I will lose some weight and then it will fit'...and then I don't lose weight and it still doesn't fit. Then I end up with the clothes… that I am not wearing." – Maame

Similarly, Fisher et al. (2008) found in their study that, some consumers felt the need to discard clothes because they did not fit properly. For some of these consumers, clothing that first appeared to fit in the shop, looked differently after getting home making them regret their purchase. In addition, other respondents referred to clothes that no longer fitted after some time and often due to weight gain. For such consumers, keeping the item was justified because they projected that they could use it in the future when they have lost some weight.

4.3.4 Personal benefits

Some respondents through the interviews indicated that the method of clothing disposal used was because they could gain some benefits out of it. These motivations reflected a self-oriented rather than socially oriented motivation. For instance, reselling was associated with gaining some financial compensation, reusing was done when some details of the item were liked and not necessarily because of social or environmental benefits.

"I think the main reason for me is price, because even if I am not satisfied with it, I know I can find someone that I can sell it to, then I can get some margins from it." – Nii

"sometimes I sell my clothes on facebook, because I know I will not be using them... Once, I sold a winter jacket… there's this Loppis page, and I got a girl contact me, she wanted to try it on. So we arranged the time, she came to see it, tried it and liked it, so she bought it. I got some money back that I could invest in something else more useful – Emefa

On the other hand, some participants mentioned that because they wouldn't want to reduce the financial value of the clothing through reselling, they would rather return the item back to the retailer. Even though returning clothing items was not the focus of the study, it was interesting to note that respondents' quest for personal gains, motivated them to return their items than to donate or give out.

The excerpts below show two respondents describing why no or low personal gain will influence the choice of disposal method.

"...for instance, if I want to sell it, I think I will have to sell really low below my purchase price and I didn't want that you know I will lose money yeah. So, I don't think it was a good idea to resell it, it was not reasonable" – Kwaku

"I think for me it comes down to the price...clothes are quite expensive you know. So, you don't want to lose the amount of money invested(…) I think the best one…talking in the sense of like....personal achievement and stuffs will be donating, but like I said I live in Sweden and I have bills to pay you know so...I don't want to let an unused clothing sit there when I can return it and collect several hundreds of Krona you know…So for me it feels like more reasonable and logical to return the item"- Kofi

As indicated in the excerpts above, respondents' motive for using certain disposal methods such as reselling, was to get some financial compensation from the unwanted item. In addition, they were less likely to engage in reselling if the economic value of the item was likely to reduce. The need for financial compensation is consistent with findings from Joung and Park-Poaps (2013) who found that economic concerns predicted consumers clothing resale and reuse behaviours.

Other respondents mentioned that although they might have bought an item on impulse that they are unsatisfied with, sometimes, there may be certain aspects that they like and that influences the method of disposal used. An interesting finding from this study was that some respondents decided to use unwanted clothing indoors because they felt these clothing were not fit to be worn outside. For example, Yaa recounts how she bought an item and disliked some aspects of it but decided to use it indoors instead of using other disposal methods. By doing this, she is able to find other ways to use the item instead of feeling it was a waste of money.

"… it also happens the other way round that I buy things also because they have a good discount… after buying I see that the quality was not very good quality and sometimes the item is so cheap that it cost more to send it back if they don't have the option where you can return for free. But sometimes I end up keeping because I am thinking well, it's not something that I can use outside, maybe I can use it when I am in the house and that is usually how I end up using things if they fit and are rather comfortable. So yeah if I buy things and I regret but I cannot return them, then I keep them and wear it in the house even though I don't like it

very much… because you know, since I bought it and spent some money at least I give it some use" – Yaa

An interesting and unique finding that was gleaned from this study was, for one respondent, personal gain was the ability to borrow back an item they had given out when the need arose. According to Abena, when she has no need for clothing bought on impulse, she sometimes gives them out to her sister or cousin so they can loan it to her for an event.

"I don't sell them because if I give it to my sister or my cousins, then I can ask for it back... Like I mean not to take it forever back... But if I need it once, then I would say 'can I just wear it for this party or this event" (…)yeah, in most cases I will go for giving out to my sister or cousin especially when I know I will need the item…" – Abena

According to this respondent being able to borrow back the item when needed motivates her not to resell. This indicates a self-oriented motive for the method of disposition used where personal gains outweigh the altruistic desire to help others.

4.3.5. Avoiding feelings of guilt or regret

Under this theme, consumer's knowledge on sustainability influenced the method of clothing disposal used. Some respondents from this study indicated that because they did not want to engage in disposal behaviours which contribute to waste or in attempts to protect the environment, they preferred to use some methods over others. As Mansa describes, buying impulsively makes her feel guilty thus, keeping an item she would not use was a better option than discarding into the trash.

"… I would like to say yes that I think about the environment in this case but I don't think that I did when I bought this dress actually. I guess I feel a little bit guilty now about that. But maybe that is one reason why I still keep it, because if I just throw it away that will really be a waste to the environment…So I guess maybe by still keeping it I am still protecting the environment" – Mansa

In addition to environmental concerns, the method of disposal may be a way to deal with buyer remorse. For respondents who regretted the purchase decision especially due to the impulsive nature of it, disposing of the item helped them to forget the negative post-purchase emotions. According to Emefa, when she is unable to return an unwanted item, hoarding the clothing helps her to avoid seeing the item and remembering that she made a poor purchase decision.

"Its just kind of remembering that disappointment if I ever come across it in my wardrobe again. I don't like that. So, I usually put some effort in trying to return it but every time I return something it's so much hassle that it's just easier to leave it at the back of my wardrobe and try not to think about it. So, the latest way that I have handled my things is just put it in the back of my wardrobe and leave it". AND WHY THE WADROBE THOUGH? *it's because it's the darkest place…its where I can't see it to remind me of my dissatisfaction so yeah subliminally, I am putting it in a black hole somewhere" – Emefa*

According to Fedorova (2017) in their study of product returns related to impulse buying, results indicated that when consumers experienced negative emotions such as guilt and regret, after an impulsive purchase, consumers were most likely to return the item. However, in this thesis, the post-purchase negative emotions resulted in various kinds of clothing disposal behaviours, mostly hoarding.

Additionally, other respondents mentioned donating to charity as a means to cope with their negative post-purchase emotions. When such consumers were faced with unwanted clothing items due to disappointments with their impulse purchases, donating to the charity bin was a way for them to forget their regrets. For instance, Akua describes her donating to the charity will help her forget her feeling of disappointment.

"…I don't know, I was faced with disappointments when I had to take all the things that I don't wear out…it felt like a big failure on my part and a big waste of money … so I felt very silly and disappointed with myself. I don't know why they were in the closet, so I just took them and dropped it off at the charity bin and out of my sight… so I didn't see them again" – Akua

Although donations are mostly associated with socially related motives of altruism and charity, some respondents such as Akua, engaged in donations to help alleviate the negative feelings associated with impulse buying. This is consistent with findings from the study by Ha-Brookshire and Hodges (2009) who found that participants in their study donated to charity not out of altruistic motives but in order to declutter, and avoid feeling guilty about their consumption behaviour.

4.3.6 Future usefulness

Consideration of the future usefulness of redundant clothing motivated respondents in this study to use certain clothing disposal methods instead of others. Respondents' decision to

use a particular clothing disposal method was based on the intention to personally use certain items or dispose of it through one or more disposal methods in the future. For such respondents, the anticipation of future use motivated the use of certain disposal methods especially hoarding.

One respondent, Adjoa explains that she hoards clothing so she could give to her friends later if they wanted it. However, the COVID 19 situation is preventing her to meet these friends so she anticipates giving it out when the situation calms down. Aseda also describes that she is keeping some redundant clothing hoping to find someone who will need it.

"...usually, I will just keep it. I don't need them because they cannot make me happy. I am considering giving them to my friends. But also for the last few months, we cannot contact friends like in person" – Adjoa

"... I am keeping it because I'm waiting to find someone who is in need so I can give it to the person. Ask the person 'do you like this boot' and then give it to the person. FOR FREE? *Yeah for free…" – Aseda*

Apart from the fact that some respondents hoard clothing in order to donate or give it out to others in need, some respondents reported they keep unwanted clothing because they anticipate that they may use it in the future. Such respondents believe that they do not have use of the clothing items now, but they anticipate that change in personal style, working situation or a change in fashion trends will make their redundant clothing useful in the near future. For example, Mansa anticipates that in the next 5 to 10 years, she could change her fashion style and then a clothing item she is keeping now, will become useful.

"I guess it's still in my wardrobe because I still like it… and I think that maybe one day I would like to wear it…because I have had other clothing that I have never worn in my wardrobe and then I keep them for years… but I may start to use them like 5 to 10 years from now if I keep them. Because I think that people in some way change their style, at least I do. I changed my style a bit... So maybe my style will change, I don't know maybe in 3 years then I can wear it." – Mansa

An interesting finding from this study was that one respondent believed that it was important for her to hold on to redundant clothing since fashion trends keep repeating themselves, she would find use for the item sometime in the future. According to Esi, some fashion trends

will come back in the future and she wouldn't want to regret not having this item when that happens.

"to begin with, most of the clothes that I buy, it is out of impulse. It's not that I am planning it, so I keep them in my wardrobe. I just have this feeling that I will wear them Someday… or because I think it isn't in fashion now. But because we have seen that many things that are not in fashion now they can come up again after a few years, so I think like I will regret it if I give it away. So, I will keep it for some years and maybe it will come up again" – Esi

Consistent with Esi's rationale for hoarding in this study, Lee et al (2013) mention that, hoarders often experienced negative feelings when they had to dispose of clothing based on the assumption that they might need to use such items at a future date. Such negative feelings about discarding clothes based on the concern that they may need or want these items in the future may suggest feelings of loss of control (Lee et al., 2013). Thus, hoarding may be a consumption behaviour that consumers may engage to exert control over their possessions.

4.4 Respondents' general perspectives on impulse buying and sustainable clothing disposal

Respondents in this study exhibited a general understanding and awareness of how their clothing consumption and disposal behaviours may or may not impact the environment. Some respondents described a general unwillingness to stop indulging in impulse buying. One respondent (Fiifi) compares impulse buying to physical reflexes such as blinking of the eye. According to him, saying he would stop engaging in impulse buying is exactly like saying he can stop himself from blinking the eye. Similarly, Adjoa believes that when she sees some items, it is destiny bringing them together, so she needs to buy them. Other respondents also mention that occasionally, they will engage in fashion-oriented impulse buying due to the abundance of options and constant retail offers such as discounts. Thus, instead of completely quitting fashion-oriented impulsive purchases, respondent rather describe exerting more efforts into disposing of their unwanted clothing items sustainably by reusing, reselling and donating to charity shops and bins.

This chapter provided an analysis of the results generated through this research. The results indicated that, the millennials in this study were influenced by six factors to use the different clothing disposal methods identified. The results indicated that respondents used more than one clothing disposal method. By analysing the motivations for disposal method

used, the current research has presented new insight to consumers' clothing disposal behaviour after engaging in impulse buying. The overcall connections between impulse buying and clothing disposal behaviours as well as the theoretical and managerial implications of the empirical findings is particularly discussed in the next chapter.

5.0 Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to contribute to the understanding of consumer post-purchase behaviours in contemporary fashion consumption by exploring clothing disposal behaviours after impulse buying. Due to the relatively scant literature on post-purchase behaviours after impulse buying as well as the newness of the concept of clothing disposal, disposal behaviours of clothing bought on impulse has not been extensively researched yet. Therefore, the present study aimed to contribute to the understanding of this aspect of consumption which has been neglected within previous literature.
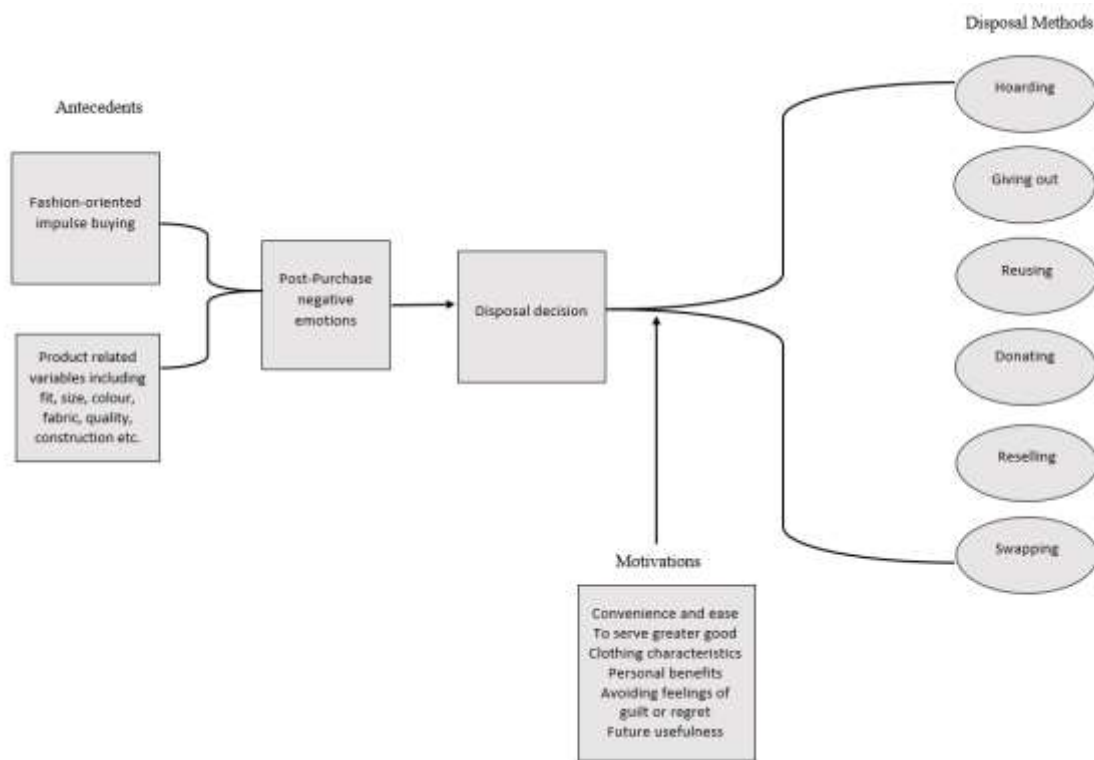
5.1. Summary of research results

Figure 5. A figure summarizing the research findings

From the figure above, the summary of the findings from this thesis consists of four components that influence millennials clothing disposition behaviours: the antecedents, post-purchase negative emotions, disposal decision and motivations.

The antecedents included respondents' fashion-oriented impulse buying behaviours and product related variables. From the results, respondents who engaged in fashion-oriented impulse buying described feeling dissatisfied with their purchases often due to the lack of careful considerations before the purchase. In addition, product related variables including poor fit and quality, poor construction, product defects or items not meeting initial

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expectations led to consumers experiencing post-purchase negative emotions. These negative emotions included regret, guilt and disappointment with oneself and the purchase made. With this, the post-purchase negative emotions as experienced by respondents resulted in consumers owning clothing items they did not want and were then faced with the decision to dispose of such unwanted items. However, the disposal method used was influenced by convenience and ease, the desire to serve greater good, clothing characteristics, personal benefits, avoidance of feelings of guilt or regret and future usefulness of the item– described as motivations, in the figure above.

From the interviews, respondents emphasized how convenience and ease motivated their choice of disposal method. For such respondents, disposal methods such as donating, and hoarding were seen as less stressful compared to other methods. Not only was it convenient, it saved them time and effort. While convenience and ease of the disposal method informed some respondents' choice of method, others found the desire to serve greater good as most prudent. This desire was mostly influenced by altruistic motives of helping others in need and sustainable motives of protecting the environment. Several respondents discussed the influence of their knowledge on sustainability and concerns for environmental issues, on their clothing disposal behaviours. Although respondents mention the difficulty with controlling their impulse purchases, they mention that they are consciously making the efforts to consider sustainability in relation to their consumption patterns and disposal methods. In doing so, they often look for clothing items branded as "ecological", "organic cotton", "sustainable", "made from recycled materials" or "fair-trade". Also, when disposing, they try to consider the most environmentally friendly method to use. For most of these respondents, donation to charity shops and bins, giving out to friends and family, reselling and re-using were sustainable disposal methods that allowed redundant clothing items to be put to use in different ways either by themselves or by different people. Thus, the integration of sustainability and eco friendliness into their fashion consumption patterns strongly influenced their clothing disposal behaviours.

The study also contributed to the understanding of how clothing characteristics influence consumers' choice of clothing disposal method. While previous studies such as Albinsson & Perera (2008) and Lee et al. (2013) found that consumers may keep clothing items with high sentimental value instead of donating or giving out, the current thesis identified that some consumers will rather give out or donate clothing items that brought negative or unpleasant memories. Thus, this finding highlights the other aspects of the

sentimental value attached to a piece of clothing and how that influences the choice of disposition method.

Furthermore, this research increased our understanding of the inherent dynamics that characterise consumer disposal behaviours. For instance, uniqueness of the finding 'giving out with the intention to borrow when needed' demonstrates one respondent's personal interest in giving out unwanted clothing to family members. According to this respondent being able to borrow back the item when needed motivated her not to donate to charity. In addition, respondents need for financial benefits from their unwanted clothing items, motivated the use of reselling methods. For such consumers, giving out unwanted items to friends or family, or donating to charity was not preferable since it did not provide any form of personal gain. These results highlight individual motives for the disposal method used instead of an altruistic or sustainable motive.

Although donations are mostly associated with socially related motives of altruism and charity, some respondents in the current study donated to charity in an attempt to alleviate the negative feelings of guilt or regret associated with their impulsive purchases. For such consumers, donating to charity helped them to handle their negative post-purchase emotions. On the other hand, some respondents hoarded unwanted items in order to prevent the feeling of guilt with discarding clothing in the trash. As mentioned in the results section, the study by Fedorova (2017), found that post-purchase negative emotions experienced after impulse buying, led consumers to return the items. Contrary to the findings of Fedorova (2017), this thesis identified that consumers post-purchase negative emotions resulted in clothing disposal behaviours other than returns. These findings further enhanced our understanding of the relationship between impulse buying and clothing disposition.

For respondents who anticipated the future usefulness of an unwanted item, hoarding was the dominant method of disposition used. For some respondents, the expectation that current fashion trends will come back in the future prevented them from giving out or donating unwanted clothing.

Finally, with the last part of Figure 5 (the disposal methods), Jacoby et al.'s (1977) disposition taxonomy will be applied as the discursive framework for the methods used. Respondents in this study exhibited the tendency to dispose of their unwanted clothing predominantly by keeping the product and permanently disposing of it. By keeping, respondents engaged in reusing and hoarding. From the analysis, hoarding was the most used

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method as 14 out of the 15 respondents had one or more redundant clothing that they were keeping. By permanently disposing, respondents mentioned giving out, donating or reselling unwanted clothing. Although not included in the taxonomy, swapping of clothes between or among friends, represents a form of permanent disposition method. Swapping was identified as a method of disposal in this study however, it was the least used method by respondents.

The third component of the taxonomy by Jacoby et al. (1977) was temporarily disposing of the clothing item. This included renting or loaning the item to someone else. Respondents in this study did not engage in renting or loaning unwanted clothing item. The hygienic aspects of renting or loaning clothing especially in a time of COVID 19 (Finch, 2020), may be the reason why respondents in this study did not engage in temporary clothing disposal behaviours.

As shown within the course of the analysis, based on consumers' fashion-oriented impulse purchases and some product related variables such as poor fit and quality, consumers may experience post-purchase negative emotions such as guilt, regret, and disappointment that eventually leads to the decision to dispose of an unwanted clothing item. To this end, the six disposal motivations identified through the second research question were seen as factors that influences the disposal methods consumers used.

5.2 Conclusions, Research Implications and Recommendations for Future Studies

As mentioned earlier in the research background, retailers pry on fast-fashion to produce new clothing lines (every two to three weeks) at very low prices, thus increasing consumers tendency to buy on impulse. With this consumption pattern, consumers may be more inclined to dispose of unwanted clothing frequently thereby increasing the problem of textile waste. Based on this premise, the current study sought to explore consumers clothing disposal behaviours and motivations for the disposal method used in relation to fashion-oriented impulse buying among millennials.

Firstly, the study has made a significant knowledge contribution to the theoretical field of clothing disposition by exploring millennials motivations for and use of various clothing disposal methods after engaging in fashion-oriented impulse buying. This study has enriched our knowledge of how and why millennials use certain clothing disposal methods above others while revealing the personal, social and environmentally related motives underlying the use of each method. Secondly, the research revealed that, clothing items that are unwanted may not necessarily be unuseful. Focusing on relative obsolescent clothing

items, the study has contributed to the understanding of how clothing items in good condition, or sometimes even new, may be unwanted for one reason or the other and as a result, may be disposed of in one or more ways.

Furthermore, this research on clothing disposal behaviours of millennials after engaging in impulse buying may have several practical implications for retailers and manufactures. Due to the rising issues with overconsumption and the increasing problems with textile waste, knowledge on the motivations and methods of clothing disposal of millennials is important for developing programmes and social policies targeted at achieving environmentally friendly clothing disposal activities. Respondents in the current study expressed their inability to stop engaging in fashion-oriented impulse buying, but rather, preferred to dispose of unwanted clothing in more sustainable ways. According to Yee et al. (2013 p.3), "the efforts to preserve the environment can only be realized if the citizens are well informed, aware of and fully committed to improving the quality of the environment". Thus, it is incumbent on clothing manufacturers and retailers to provide more information on effective and sustainable clothing disposal methods. For instance, clothing tags that often have care instructions, could also include information on how to dispose of the clothing items including retailers' take-back systems (where applicable).

As most respondents in this study recounted hoarding at least one unwanted clothing, providing information on disposal methods alone will not necessarily lead to behavioural change. Retailers could engage with consumers more, by creating digital platforms where pre-owned clothing items (in new or fairly used condition) could be resold to other consumers at cheaper prices. That said, It is important for retailers to understand that the responsibility for fashion disposition may not reside exclusively within the realm of the consumer, thus, they need to play their part in the fight against textile waste.

Future studies could investigate retailers' interest in participating in fashion disposal programmes and empirically evaluate the impact of such programmes on consumers clothing disposal behaviours. Bearing in mind the relatively small sample size in the current research, future studies could explore the research aims with a larger sample size to enhance the generalisation of findings.

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Appendix

Interview guide

What you have shared here will be kept confidential and your names will not be used. Names will be replaced with pseudonyms. For example, it may be changed to local Ghanaian names as I transcribe the interviews. If you wish not to be part of the study during or after the interview, please let me know and it's completely okay

I will begin by asking for demographic information:

Name, Age, Location of stay

1. Have you engaged in clothing impulse purchase recently?
2. How often would you say you engage in apparel impulse purchases?
3. How would you describe your apparel (clothing) impulse purchases? How does it happen? In terms of online shopping, brick and mortar shops, mall visits, with friends/ spouse…
4. How similar (or different) are your apparel impulse purchases in relation to other products?

5. Can you tell me more about your most recent/ memorable apparel impulse purchase?
6. Would you say you were satisfied / dissatisfied with your impulse purchase?
7. Why were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the purchase? **could you explain yourself why these feelings were positive or negative?
8. What exactly was it that made you satisfied or dissatisfied/regret?
9. How would you say your friends or family influence your satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the clothing item?
10. How did you handle this dissatisfaction? (What did you do then?) (What decision or action did you take?)
11. Has this affected your choice of brand or going to the shop/website to buy?
12. How has this experience affected your subsequent apparel impulse purchases?
13. Would you say this is how you normally handle your dissatisfaction with purchases? Or is it different with impulse purchases?

14. Can you describe a time when you returned, resold, reused, donated, hoarded or disposed of a clothing bought on impulse? (These questions were asked individually)

15. ***Is there any other thing you did with such clothing besides what I asked? If yes include it in questions 14, 16,17, 18***

16. How did you go about this? For example, how did you sell it, on Facebook etc? Where did you donate it? Which charity shop or second-hand shop did you donate to? etc.

17. Why(factors) did you resell, reuse, donate, hoard or dispose of the clothing? (take it one by one)

18. How often do you return, resell, reuse, donate, hoard, or dispose of apparel?

19. Is there any reasons for the use of one method above the other? How does the clothing item influence the method used?

20. Do you think of the environment/ sustainability when deciding what method to use?

21. How would you say your knowledge of sustainability has affected how you handle apparel? or get rid of a clothing item you no longer want?

22. Do you think there is enough information on sustainable ways of disposing of unwanted clothing?

23. Do you think you can ever stop engaging in fashion-oriented impulse buying?

Considering what we have been talking about today, do you have any further suggestions or contributions? Is there anything you feel we have left out?

Thank you for your time and opinions. You have made an important contribution to my research and I hope you have enjoyed our discussion.