Favorite Wardrobe

Result deck (short), Spring 2023
The Project

Background/method

Results Highlights

Recommendations
Investigating the potential for higher utilization of garments

- Sep 2021 – Aug 2023
- 2,3 MSEK (whereof 50% in kind from project partners)
- WP1 Technology solution and Recruitment → WP2 Measuring usage → WP3 Increase utilization
Background

- The production phase causes 80% of an average garment’s environmental impact over its lifecycle.
- Utilization is one of three important dimensions to achieve a more circular economy.

Source: Klimatpåverkan från svenskarnas kläder - Mistra Future Fashion
### Method Garment Wear Study

- A smart phone app was developed for the registration purpose.
- During the spring of 2022, 340 people registered their garment wear every day for a 100-day period.
- The users were recruited from the customer clubs of the three brands: Asket, Filippa K and Houdini. The users were offered a gift check from the brand as a thank you for participating.
- The garments were registered based on garment category, brand, purchase price and if they had been purchased second hand or new.
- The garment categories logged, including description of categories, are visible to the right. No logging of underwear, socks, shoes or training gear was done.
- Users were asked to register all clothes worn during a day, so including change of clothes during the day.
Method Other

• Survey
  - Before starting the registration period, the users were also asked to estimate the total number of garments per garment category in their wardrobe, in a Google sheet survey.

• Focus groups
  - During the autumn of 2022, four focus group sessions were held with, in total, 11 of the users from the study. Qualitative questions about the users’ wardrobes, the purchase and daily wear decisions and what makes a garment a favorite or not, were discussed.
  - Another 3 interviews and one short meeting with people working with garments and wardrobe coaching have been held on-line to further explore the qualitative part of the study.
  - The full project group has held one workshop to analyze the dataset from the user study and one workshop to develop the results based on the findings from the focus group discussions. Further results have been developed by the researchers.
About the users in the data set

- Predominantly male (156 of 251)
- Predominantly young (196 between 25 - 44)
- These are not "average users", since they belong to the brands' customer clubs. (Possibly people with more affordability, with more focus on quality and longevity than the average user.)
About the estimated wardrobe data in the data set

• We did not register new purchases and removals during the period, which affected the results of both the 1st and the 2nd inventory.

• The first inventory question was too vague (estimate not count).

• The word “Wardrobe” could have been interpreted as what is in the wardrobe now - not what is wrapped away in the attic (out of season) or in the laundry. Both in 1st and 2nd inventory.

• There might be erroneous data where many garments have been registered as one, in the dataset. (We found and corrected some of these).

• The data is self-reported.

• There might be social reliability issues (people don't want to admit to too many garment items).

• In the 1st inventory, at least 20% underestimated their wardrobe size, since they had at least 1 category with > 100% use.

• After the 2nd inventory (with proper count) some wardrobe size numbers were still "wrong" in terms of having used > 100% of the garments in wardrobe. Also, some users (24) lowered their total wardrobe number in the 2nd inventory and 45 raised it (as expected).

• The usage of wardrobe number was 63% (10% lower after the 2nd inventory than after the 1st)
Additional Survey

• During June 2023 the project had the opportunity to launch a survey in collaboration with Rethink Borås.

• The survey was conducted via Google Sheets and could be opened via a QR code. The survey was mainly spread via Rethink Borås’ pop-up store in central Borås, where it was promoted with a poster about the project. It was also spread via LinkedIn.

• In total 41 people responded to the survey. Out of these appr. 90% were women.

• The survey was elaborated by the project group and asked questions about size of wardrobe, difficulty of clearing wardrobe and preferred business models for higher wardrobe utilization, with the purpose of broadening the types of respondents in the dataset.
Results Highlights – Wardrobe Size

- It is difficult to keep track of wardrobe size, and in general people seem to underestimate the size of their wardrobe.
  - A high number of respondents logged more garments over the 100-day period, than what they had registered in their wardrobe. This persisted after the second inventory.
- Many people want to have a smaller wardrobe.
  - Focus group results showed that no one wants a bigger wardrobe and many wish to have a smaller wardrobe. The main reason is the unnecessary hassle of many garments.
  - The additional survey confirmed the results, with a somewhat higher tendency to be satisfied with the current wardrobe size.
  - The reason for actually having a bigger wardrobe than wished for is both emotional bonds, a perceived practical difficulty to clear out the wardrobe and get rid of clothes, an unwillingness to clear out things that will become useful in the future, and not accepting weight changes.
- Men have smaller wardrobes than women.
- Wardrobe size seems to increase with age.

"Den mentala inställningen att göra sig av med det man redan har behöver ändras. Men också att acceptera att man gått upp 10 kg sedan man fick barn - måste acceptera det."

"Har svårt att göra mig av med det, för det kan komma till nytta. Det kan komma sämre tider."

"Kanske kan det fylla ett syfte någon gång?"

"Det är skönt att ha lite grejer."

"Jag skulle vilja kunna bli av med plagg enklare."

"Jag vill gärna minska min garderob. Skulle vilja ha den mer minimalistisk. Bättre nyttjande och mindre stökigt. Men det är onödigt att göra sig av med de jag redan har."

"Anledning: Mindre stökigt, lite miljösamvete. Nånting i att inte belasta hjärnan med onödiga beslut varje dag. Enkelt."

"Jag har min stil och behöver inte 100 plagg för att göra den stilen."
Many garments are used very seldom.

- There are 2953 garments that were only used 1 time during the period. These are 23% of the total number of garments used. (And 14% of the total wardrobe.)

- Jeans and jackets are the categories with the highest usage rates. These usage patterns could be replicated to other categories.

- Men have higher usage rates (7,7) per unique garments than women (5,5).
  - Men used 40+ unique garments and women 60+ unique garments over the period.
  - The ten most used garments in the study were all logged by men.
  - This is in line with men having smaller wardrobes than women.

- There is a tendency towards lower usage rates with age, which is in line with growing wardrobe size.

- The usage rate increases with garment price.

- The usage rates for the three brands are higher than for the “other” brand (in falling order: Houdini, Asket, Filippa K).

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Male: "Jag har 33 plagg i min garderob. Det är lagom."
The cost per wear is less related to purchase price and more to number of wears.

- Over the 100-day period (only) CPW is similar for jeans and t-shirts - with 3 times difference in purchase price.
- Over the 100-day period (only) CPW varies considerably less than purchase price between categories.

The cost per wear is considerably lower (up to 5 times for blazers) for second-hand garments than new garments.

There is an opportunity for higher garment utilization and less new garment purchases if cost per wear (for example choosing the word investment) is actively used in communication.

"Köper jag nytt tänker jag att jag ska ha den i 10 år, blir lite stressad över att göra ett bra val."

"Investera i stället för att shoppa. Om man kan kombinera med tre andra plagg är det en bra investering."

"Har mer och mer frångått pris, för att hitta något som håller länge."

"Pris inte så viktigt, eftersom jag väljer så få plagg."

"Jag investerar hellre mer pengar i rätt plagg."
Results Highlights – Favorite garment features

• For our user group quality, fit, comfort and materials were the most important features of garments when shopping. Price had become less important.

• Features of favorite clothes in wardrobe include: Comfortable, high functionality, easy to match (often one colour), quality, current style or trend and garments that raise self-esteem.

• Clothing at its best includes features such as adjustable, flexible, many functions, nice/pretty (fin), builds self-esteem, social code/belonging.

• Clothing at its worst is when stuff are not durable, when they are torn after washing, details without function, uncomfortable.

“Mest bekvämlighet som är viktigt.”

“Bekvämlighet och att jag ska känna mig bekväm i kläderna.”

“Pris spelar mindre roll nu än tidigare”

“När jag köper nya kläder är det en fråga om självförtroende”

“När de får en att känna sig som en bättre version av sig själv. De bygger självförtroende.”

“Det är relativt dyra plagg av god kvalitet. Tidlösa, klassiska, bra material. Lättmatchat med andra kläder.”

“Har mer och mer frångått pris, för att hitta något som håller länge.”

“Men jag tycker också om kläder för att de kan vara fina. Lite som konst.”

“God kvalitet, vilket mycket beror på materialet. Många är enfärgade - de blir jag inte trött på.”

“Högre kvalitet och bättre passform.”
Results Highlights – Potential for second-hand

• There is an opportunity for brand-specific second-hand (in store) sales. It would simplify the second-hand shopping experience and add quality assurance.
  – The additional survey showed that curated second-hand in brand stores was the second-most preferred business model with 56% of the respondents being positive.
• More expensive and high-quality garments are better suited for second-hand.
• For on-line second-hand sales it is important to offer free returns and good search functions.

"Jag köper begagnade kläder om det är dyrare kläder (typ skaljackor och jeans). Men annars köper jag nytt och på webben."

"Returnera är viktigt om man ska köpa det on-line."

"Finns för få bra vintage-butiker i Sverige. I vanliga second hand-butiker är det mesta för dålig kvalitet för att säljas alls."

"Det är låg träffprocent för mig att gå i second hand-butiker (p g a passform)."

"Om märkeskedjorna sålde sina egna grejer second hand, så skulle det kunna vara mer attraktivt."

"Väljer bort second-hand p g a att det inte är tidseffektivt. Oförutsägbart utbud är ett problem."

"Skulle gärna se ett begränsat utbud, alternativt mycket bra sökfilter."

"Håller med om att varumärkesgaranti för andra hand är bra!"

"Dyrare friluftskläder, eftersom de tål tidens tand. Även tweed-kavajer som håller bra."

"Det är svårt för mig att köpa andrahand. Det luktar konstigt och jag hittar aldrig något som passar mig bra."
Results Highlights – Potential for tailoring, repair, warranty and advisory services

• There is an opportunity for tailoring and repair services to be added to enhance the value of the product. Possibly in combination with long-term – even lifetime – warranty.
  – The additional survey showed that repair and tailoring services is the most preferred business model with 71% being positive to the service if in the vicinity of the user and 51% being positive if offered in store.

• Advisory services and possibility to test garments before purchasing could decrease purchases of garments that are not worn.
  – The additional survey showed that advisory services for support in buying “favorites” were preferred by 29% of the respondents.

"Livstidsgaranti är en bra idé. Då är jag villig att betala ett högre pris. Att känna tillit till ett företag och lita på vad de säger."

"Garanti eller lagningstjänst är bra."


"Livstidsgaranti är en bra idé. Då är jag villig att betala ett högre pris. Att känna tillit till ett företag och lita på vad de säger."

"Jag tycker att det är bättre om det (reparation) finns i butiken."

"Rådgivning. Att man får hjälp när man ska rensa sin garderob och kanske löpande."


"Att kunder kan skapa en profil utifrån tidigare köp och preferenser."
Results Highlights – Potential for rental models

• The potential for rental are deemed highest for “seldom-use-wear”, like party wear, outdoor wear, children’s clothing and garments that are not worn close to body.
  – The additional survey confirmed that short-term rental is more preferred (46%) than subscription services, which was the least preferred business model (12%).
• It could be difficult to find your own “style” when renting or subscribing.
• Subscription could enable more variety in the wardrobe.
• It is not clear whether rental and subscription is really better from an environmental perspective.

"Funktionskläder är mer intressant. Och allt som man inte har för nära kroppen."

"Hyra är inte min grej riktigt, kan hyra fest och uteplagg. Hyrgarderob kan ju trigga konsumtion, men kan ju i vissa fall vara bättre, för vissa kategorier av plagg."

"Har inte hyrt, men skulle gärna göra det, speciellt festkläder och de kläder jag använder mer sällan."

"För vardagskläder är det svårt att hitta min stil i hyresmodellen."

"Vardagsplagg är nog lättare att äga än att hyra, för att vi har en relation till dem på något sätt."

"Är det en lyxprodukt att hyra, eller är det billigt?"

"Skulle vilja se mer bevis på att det blir bättre hållbarhetsmässigt. (med hyra)"

"...fel passform, färg och modeller hon ej valt vilka inte passade ihop med hennes garderob, använde kanske 1 av 4 plagg."

"Prenumerera för att kunna växla mellan olika varianter av samma plagg, t ex en jacka. Måste vara fräscht/hyfsat nytt."
Results Highlights – Potential to enable garment tracking and recirculation

• The logging of garments in the study clarified the number of garments used and not used for the participants.

• Disposing of garments is difficult both because of a perceived practical difficulty to clear out the wardrobe and get rid of clothes and an unwillingness to clear out things that will become useful in the future.

• Hence, there is an opportunity to support users in both tracking garment use and finding the right recirculation option.

  – The additional survey showed that advisory services for clearing out the wardrobe was preferred by 22% of the respondents and an app solution to keep track of wardrobe was preferred by 34%.

“Rådgivning. Att man får hjälp när man ska rensa sin garderob och kanske löpande.”

“Jag kände redan innan att jag använder lite av min garderob och var sugen på att rensa ut. Blev då mer medveten om vad jag använder och inte.”

“Jag skulle vilja kunna bli av med plagg enklare. Det tar tid att kontrollera och sortera plagg för olika återanvändningssyften.”

“Man ser hur man använder samma grupp av kläder igen och igen. Man hade så mycket mer kläder än vad man tänkt.”

“Har svårt att göra mig av med det, för det kan komma till nytta. Det kan komma sämre tider.”

“Känsla av att jag borde ha bättre koll på min garderob och vad jag använder. Hade tänkt börja logga själv. Blev mer medveten om vilka kläder man använde.”

“Jag märkte att jag använde vissa kläder mycket.”
Recommendations brands/retailers

• Reduce number of garments and models in shops.

• Introduce environmental/LCA info on garments. Even better: Price in sustainability effects.

• Offer repair, rental (selected garment categories) and brand-specific second-hand.

• Offer life-time (or long) warranty.

• Avoid “more for less” type of offers.

• Support your customers in buying the garments they need and will love, through for example advisory services and possibility to test before buying.

• Support your customers in circulating their low-usage garments by enabling and promoting wardrobe clearing and recirculation, through for example advisory services, app support etc.

• Create a community and inclusion to build trustworthiness.
Recommendations for consumers

- Count your wardrobe to get a starting point.
- Keep track of your clothes and your wardrobe size.
- Understand your needs and wants. Buy only potential favorites.
- Activate your wardrobe through circulating your low-usage garments to other users.
- Consider cost per wear and not only purchase price, when shopping. Look at the purchase as an investment.
- Consider what types of garments would be more beneficial to rent (cost-wise, hassle-wise) than to own.
- Demand warranty, repair, tailoring services and second-hand sales from retailers and brands.
Recommendations other actors / policy

- Regulations requiring environmental/LCA info on garments.
- Regulations requiring product longevity or quality labelling of garments.
- Producer responsibility and warranty requirements for garments.
- Taxing environmental harm.
- Actively talk about and implement changed norms and behaviours in relation to clothes and fashion.
- Develop the knowledge about sewing and repair in society and in the school curriculum.
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