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Millennial and Generation Z Consumer Participation in Online Second-Hand Transactions in the Portuguese context

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MILLENNIAL AND GENERATION Z CONSUMER PARTICIPATION IN
ONLINE SECOND-HAND TRANSACTIONS IN THE PORTUGUESE
CONTEXT

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Resumo

Esta dissertação propõe investigar os principais fatores e motivações que levam os consumidores a participar em compras nos mercados online de segunda mão em Portugal, com o intuito de explicar a crescente tendência desse tipo de consumo. Além disso, busca identificar os desafios e obstáculos enfrentados pelos utilizadores dessas plataformas. Para alcançar esses objetivos, o estudo utiliza uma abordagem qualitativa, fazendo uso de entrevistas semiestruturadas, com foco na geração milenar (pessoas nascidas entre 1981 e 1996) e na geração Z (pessoas nascidas entre 1997 e 2012).

Os resultados indicam que os participantes procuram utilizar estas plataformas principalmente devido a motivações económicas, pro-ambientais, e também pela conveniência e pela busca de artigos de qualidade. No que diz respeito aos desafios e obstáculos, questões relacionadas com a confiança nas plataformas e nos vendedores, juntamente com limitações e problemas na logística e no controlo de qualidade, surgiram como os principais fatores problemáticos na adoção destas plataformas. Estes resultados têm potenciais implicações úteis para que empresas desenvolvam estratégias que lhes permitam envolverem-se nestes mercados com sucesso, especialmente as duas gerações mencionadas, através de modelos de negócios sustentáveis. Ao evidenciar as motivações por trás das transações online de segunda mão, este estudo também ajuda a contribuir para uma melhor compreensão do comportamento de consumo sustentável e do uso de ferramentas digitais entre os jovens no mercado de segunda mão em Portugal.

Abstract

This dissertation aims to investigate the main factors and motivations that lead consumers to engage in second-hand online shopping in Portugal, with the purpose of explaining the growing trend of this type of consumption. Additionally, it seeks to identify the challenges and obstacles faced by users of these platforms. To achieve these objectives, the study adopts a qualitative approach, using semi-structured interviews, with a focus on the millennial generation (individuals born between 1981 and 1996) and generation Z (those born between 1997 and 2012).

The results indicate that participants primarily use these platforms due to economic, environmental, and convenience motivations. Regarding challenges and obstacles, issues related to trust and confidence in platforms and sellers, along with limitations and problems with logistics and quality control, have emerged as the main problematic factors in the adoption of these platforms. These study findings have potential implications for companies to develop strategies that enable them to successfully engage in these markets, particularly with the two aforementioned generations, through sustainable business models. By highlighting the drivers of consumer participation behind second-hand online transactions, this study also contributes to a better understanding of sustainable consumption behaviour and the use of digital tools among young people in the second-hand market in Portugal.

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CE – *Circular Economy*

CC – *Collaborative Consumption*

I. Introduction

Online flea markets have become incredibly popular in recent years, revolutionizing how people purchase and sell products. In second-hand markets, also known as used or pre-owned markets, items are traded that have previously belonged to and been used by someone else (Miller & Brannon, 2022). Online second-hand markets are now far more widely used and popular than they were previously. This is due to a change in consumer behaviour, particularly among younger generations who view purchasing second-hand goods as a fashion trend (Hristova, 2019). Because of the development of digitalization, online marketplaces have become more and more popular. They allow customers to buy used goods in a variety of categories—including clothing, books, electronics, furniture, sporting goods, home care items, exercise equipment, bikes, and musical instruments—for a significant discount compared to the cost of new goods (Besedo, 2023).

For a number of reasons, it is essential to understand these markets. First of all, they provide a viable replacement for conventional consumption habits, aiding in resource management and environmental protection. Second, they create business opportunities for buyers and sellers, frequently promoting a sense of neighbourhood and shared economy. From a social and ethical perspective, the market for used goods is a viable replacement for the market for new consumer goods (Hristova, 2019). The analysis of online secondary markets also provides insight into the changing dynamics of e-commerce and the digital economy, which are quickly permeating every aspect of our everyday lives. (Hristova, 2019).

Essentially, studying online secondary markets is a research of a phenomenon that can have significant effects on society, the environment, and our economic well-being rather than just a study of consumer behaviour or market trends. We can learn a lot about how these markets operate and how they affect our world by researching this issue. Additionally, second-hand shopping is a system that competes with established retail establishments, indicating the presence of retail expectations that conventional channels are unable to provide (Guiot & Roux, 2010). The used goods market is expanding swiftly alongside the market for new products, which has led to predictions that the former could eventually overtake the latter in the future and put the producers and sellers of recently produced goods at risk of competition (Hristova, 2019). It is crucial to understand these expectations and

offer some insights into how customer behaviour, shopping motivations, and their related variables are volatile (Guiot & Roux, 2010).

The overall industry of second-hand markets was valued at \$405 billion in 2022, or around €385 billion and is expected to grow at a compounded average annual growth rate between 2023 to 2031 of 13,5%, which could amount to \$1,3 trillion or, using 2023's average usd to euros conversion, around 1,23 trillion euros (Transparency Market Research, n.d.). One of the most sold items in these markets are apparel and fashion related products, which is a category of second-hand items has specifically received some attention. By 2027, the size of the global second-hand clothing market is projected to have nearly doubled, growing at a rate three times that of the global first-hand clothing market as a whole (ThredUP, n.d.).

In Portugal, there are several platforms and applications for buying and selling second-hand products, including OLX, Facebook Marketplace, and CustoJusto. But more recently other notorious platforms have emerged, such as Vinted, which is more oriented to apparel products. These platforms allow users to buy potential high-quality products at a discount rate and at the same times allows sellers to dispatch used objects to make money and free up space in their homes. Although they serve the same purpose, each has each own unique features that inspire different levels of trust and usability from different people.

This investigation will focus on understanding the key drivers behind generation Z and millennial consumer participation in online second-hand markets. These factors that drive and influence consumer participation in second-hand markets (online included) have been examined, revealing a hierarchy of motivations in the literature. Economic gains, environmental consciousness, societal motivations, and ideological reasons were identified as drivers for participation (e.g., Abbas et al., 2020; Borusiak et al., 2020; Edbring et al., 2016; Hamari et al., 2016; Mukherjee et al., 2020; Moon et al., 2023; Padmavathy et al., 2019; Parguel et al., 2017; Sandes & Leandro, 2019; Sihvonen & Turunen, 2016; Zhang et al., 2021). Furthermore, consumers actively pursue high quality items, and the inherent convenience of these platforms significantly enhances their appeal.

Conversely, several challenges and obstacles associated with using these platforms have also been explored, such as social stigma, a lack of trust in the seller or product, and concerns about hygiene and cleanliness. (e.g., Borusiak et al., 2020; Edbring et al., 2016; Guiot & Roux, 2010; Mukherjee et al., 2020, 2020; Sandes & Leandro, 2019; Sihvonen & Turunen, 2016). Although there has been some investigation on this subject, the real of online second-hand shopping hasn't been extensively researched (Hinojo et al., 2022).

Younger individuals are more inclined to use these online platforms, and they represent an attractive market segment in terms of their willingness and ability to pay, even though it is true that they are also cost-conscious (Hinojo et al, 2022). Generation Z covers people born between 1997 and 2012, while millennials are individuals born between 1981 and 1996 (Dimock, 2019). Understanding generation Z's online consumption habits is essential because they are set to dominate internet searches for information about the post-millennial generation. (Dimock, 2019).

Although there has been research done on the online shopping patterns of generation Z and millennials in online platforms (Accenture, 2017; Avinash & Madhumita, 2022; Devi MentariUtomo, n.d.; Hieu & Loan, 2022; Laitkep & Repkova Stofkova, 2021; Melović et al., 2021; Mulyani et al., 2019; Srivastava & Culén, 2019), there is not a solid amount of literature on the consumer behaviours of these two generations specifically in online second-hand platforms, and that is this study contribute to the body of research.

With this in mind, this study serves the main objective of exploring and understanding the main drivers of consumption of second-hand markets in Portuguese generation Z and millennial consumers and the challenges faced by these consumers using such digital platforms. To fulfil with this objective a qualitative research approach with semi-structured interviews was followed. The empirical material for this study was collected by a sample of 10 Portuguese generation Z and millennials online second-hand markets consumers as its primary data sources.

The main results were that both generation Z and millennials are primarily driven by economic, followed by environmental, and then convenience factors. Economic reasons and sustainability are the prominent motivator for these generations, aligning with the broader trend of sustainable consumption, with affordability and high quality to price ration standing as a compelling reason for engaging in second-hand shopping, enabling access to quality items at reduced costs. Quality and convenience factors follow, with perceived brand value and platforms user friendliness influencing their buying choices.

Regarding several challenges and obstacles found in these platforms, trust and safety issues loom large, encompassing apprehensions about seller honesty, product quality, scams, and fraudulent activities. Trust in strangers and fear of conflicts often deter active involvement. Pricing regulation, logistics difficulties, and some hygiene concerns, particularly regarding intimate items, are also other limitations. Managing expectations regarding product quality and condition, as well as preserving the perceived value of second-hand items, can be

hard. Negative experiences, such as receiving damaged or misrepresented products, underline the need for better quality control and seller verification. Curiously, social stigma associated with buying second-hand products was not explicitly mentioned by participants, contrary to findings in the literature.

This project consists of five chapters. The next chapter presents an overall literature review of secondhand markets, drivers for consumer participation in secondhand markets, and then lastly generation Z and millennials consumer patterns in online markets. The third chapter describes the research methodology focusing the procedures used to collect the data and investigation objectives. Chapter four aims to describe the main finding and discuss them. The last chapter present the conclusions, implications, and suggestions for future research.

II. Literature review

2.1 Second-hand markets

A vast variety of objects, including apparel, furniture, electronics, books, and even automobiles, are available for purchase and sale in second-hand marketplaces. Since the earliest days of bartering, people have been trading and exchanging commodities they no longer need (Hristova, 2019). Even before the development of contemporary technologies, there already existed second-hand markets. (Hinojo et al., 2022).

Early in the 20th century, buying worn goods from second-hand businesses was seen as less respectable and more frequently linked with lower socioeconomic strata. But around the middle of the 20th century, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s, when the hippie movement embraced used clothing as a form of self-expression and a revolt against mainstream fashion, the perception started to alter (Hristova, 2019).

The second-hand market was further expanded in the 1980s and 1990s with the emergence of thrift stores and consignment shops. Through websites like eBay, Craigslist, OLX, and Custo Justo in Portugal, consumers may now more easily buy and sell used goods online thanks to the internet's advent in the late 1990s and early 2000s (Hristova, 2019).

The expansion of the second-hand goods market through the use of online platforms increased accessibility, decreased transaction costs, and facilitated the distribution of a wide range of commodities to a broad range of consumers (Hristova, 2019). Peer exchanges conducted in person developed into scalable, international platforms that attracted a larger market. Companies that facilitate these transactions, such as second-hand marketplaces, have seen significant growth and profitability (Lamberton, 2016).

Younger shoppers have become more and more accustomed to shopping at second-hand stores in recent years, thanks to shifting consumer habits and a rise in the popularity of worn goods as fashion statements. This market encourages ethical and sustainable consumerism in addition to providing a large selection of reasonably priced goods (Hristova, 2019).

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of the second-hand market in today's society. By extending product lifespans, it promotes sustainability. Additionally, it brings in money for sellers, gives buyers affordable options, and helps the used goods industry create

jobs. Additionally, it promotes ethical consumerism by diverting demand from potentially unethical or environmentally hazardous products, fosters a feeling of community through sharing and exchanging, and provides distinctive fashion and style options, including vintage things (Hristova, 2019). Additionally, second-hand businesses serve a special role in maintaining product value through repurposing and make a substantial contribution to environmental sustainability. They deal with societal problems, boost local employment, and improve society as a whole (Yawar & Kuula, 2021).

2.1.1 Circular economy and second-hand markets

In an age marked by increasing environmental concerns and a heightened awareness of the finite nature of Earth's resources, the concept of the circular economy (CE) has emerged as a crucial solution to address sustainability and resource efficiency challenges. This concept aligns closely with second-hand markets, where products find new life through reuse, refurbishment, and recycling. Highlighting the CE within the context of second-hand markets is significant because it underscores the pivotal role of these platforms in reducing waste, preserving resources, and promoting a more sustainable and responsible approach to consumption.

The CE is a framework that promotes waste reduction and sustainable resource management by promoting the 4Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle, and recover) (Yawar & Kuula, 2021). It offers a strategy for doing business that puts sustainable development into action and gives businesses chances to stand out, get an edge over competitors, and thrive. As a result, the negative effects of mass production and consumption are finally mitigated. It handles important concerns including pollution, global warming, and resource scarcity. Due to this, legislation favouring CE practices has been implemented in a number of nations (Franco, 2019; Yang et al., 2023). The main concept is on maximizing resource utilization and reducing waste production (Yang et al., 2023; Yawar & Kuula, 2021), seeking to balance the ecological, economic, environmental, and social systems in order to create lasting value while lowering societal and environmental costs.

By employing sustainable business practices to reuse resources and goods, circular business models aim to reduce resource consumption (Bocken et al., 2016; Machado et al.,

2019). They emphasize the connection between efficiency and well-being, which is essential for sustainable development (Yawar & Kuula, 2021).

In reaction to the unsustainable linear paradigm of excessive consumption and with a long-term emphasis on environmental protection, the CE was founded (Maitre-Ekern & Dalhammar, 2019). Its fundamental tenet is to preserve the value of product materials for as long as feasible. This is accomplished by extending product lifetimes and recycling parts. In contrast to open-loop approaches, which result in wasteful product development (Franco, 2019). The long-term objective is to switch from linear take, use and discard systems to regenerative and circular ones. (Yang et al., 2023).

Extending product lifecycles through three resource cycles—slowing, closing, and narrowing loops—is one useful strategy for putting the CE into practice (Machado et al., 2019). It is imperative to encourage consumers to match their consumption practices with the CE, and one efficient method to do this is through making second-hand product purchases. Businesses that sell used goods are in line with the CE since they increase product lifespans and use fewer resources. Through local and international redistribution, these platforms function within the CE's reuse category, maintaining the value of the product. As a result, second-hand markets satisfy society demands for affordable goods while having a positive impact on the environment and the economy (Yawar & Kuula, 2021).

Second-hand businesses play a crucial role by accepting returns, extending the use of products, keeping their value, and sustaining circular product flows despite the fact that they receive little attention in the CE literature (Yawar & Kuula, 2021). Second-hand businesses play a crucial role by accepting returns, extending the use of products, keeping their value, and sustaining circular product flows despite the fact that they receive little attention in the CE literature (Machado et al., 2019). This highlights the importance of understanding the motivations behind their consumption choices on these platforms.

One solution that uses the slowing resource loop approach is collaborative consumption (CC), which involves designing durable products and looking for ways to increase their lifespan (Machado et al., 2019). Reuse is a fundamental strategy for waste reduction in CC, which includes activities driven by sustainable objectives. Ownership arrangements and cooperative actions that support sustainable practices are particularly significant. Yawar and Kuula (2021) claim that cooperative alliances between stakeholders and firms that deal in used goods could promote sustainability initiatives and local application

of CE principles. By doing this, second-hand businesses can significantly contribute to addressing global sustainability issues while also achieving local sustainability goals.

Online collaborative platforms called second-hand platforms enable the exchange or sale of used products amongst people (Abbes et al., 2020). In CC markets, people coordinate the acquisition and distribution of resources in exchange for payment. These activities include trade, lending, retailing, leasing, offering, and interchanging among communities (Parguel et al., 2017). These online marketplaces let users directly purchase and sell used things, which is a type of CC (Hamari et al., 2016). Therefore, second-hand markets fall under the umbrella of CC as defined in the study.

An example of a CC is collaborative redistribution markets, which adapt to the various requirements and tastes of consumers on online platforms by redistributing used commodities among users. (Abbes et al., 2020; Binninger et al., 2015), which is the central theme of this study.

2.2 The consumer behaviour and participation in second hand markets

Second-hand purchasing motivations include both psychological and material reasons that influence customers to buy second-hand goods or through second-hand channels (Guiot & Roux, 2010).

Early contributions to the field of consumer behaviour were made by Belk (1974, 1975), who underlined that immediate environmental circumstances can have a big impact on customer decisions and that personal preferences aren't the only thing that decide them. These contextual variables interact with personal characteristics and situational situations, sometimes causing people to act differently from how they often do. Such circumstances may lead people to make impulsive purchases or take activities that are inconsistent with their long-term goals or ideals. Physical surrounds, time restrictions, and social circumstances are what Belk referred to as situational variables that affect consumer behaviour, stressing their impact on the choice-making process of consumers.

It is crucial to look into these consumer motives and behaviors in the context of online second-hand purchasing. Such research can give online peer-to-peer secondhand businesses helpful insights that will enable them to improve several areas of the buying

experience to foster a good mindset and promote future purchase intentions among consumers (Padmavathy et al., 2019).

2.2.1 Economic motivations

The term “economic gains”, as defined in Hamari et al.'s study (2016), essentially means to save money, which is an understandable incentive for a variety of consumers. Economic incentives include factors like pricing awareness, negotiating skills, and critical orientation, which entails forsaking mainstream markets in order to find branded goods at lower prices (Padmavathy et al., 2019). According to Sandes and Leandro's study (2019), People who have done second-hand shopping before frequently attribute their purchases mostly to financial considerations. Due to the favourable cost-benefit ratio, many see buying used things as a method to get great bargains. These factors were also identified as significant drivers for motivation in online second-hand shopping in Padmavathy et al.'s research (2019).

The pricing is a significant factor in determining a used brand's value in online secondary marketplaces and can be used as a reliable indicator of the product's value. In sales discussions, pricing is frequently brought up, especially if the product is expensive, as indicated by Sihvonen and Turunen's study (2016) on fashion brand valuation. Additionally, customers who are somewhat price-aware of their purchases are more likely to make second-hand purchases online, as highlighted in Hinojo et al.'s research (2022). Repairing devices might occasionally cost more than buying new ones, as mentioned in Edbring et al.'s study (2016).

However, the attractiveness of purchasing used goods goes beyond financial considerations. In order to meet their demands, consumers are motivated by a variety of consumption values that go beyond affordability, as emphasized in Moon et al.'s study (2023).

For instance, among lower-income consumers in India's bottom of the pyramid group, affordability, value for money, durability, and availability are major driving forces for the purchase of used goods, as indicated by Mukherjee et al.'s research (2020). Due to their restricted income and inability to afford new things, these consumers frequently choose used goods, demonstrating how financial limitations might influence this behaviour.

In a study by Edbring et al. (2016) conducted among young IKEA consumers, the consumption of used furniture was shown to be mostly motivated by economic factors. Saving money was commonly mentioned as the primary motivator by respondents; among students, this motivation was even stronger, accounting for 62% of their responses. This study showed that the chance to save money was a powerful motivator, especially for men who were more likely than women to prioritize economic factors.

Economic gains have been consistently identified as a key motivator for participating in CC, as shown in Hamari et al.'s study (2016). If participants in CC believe they can save money or make additional money, they are more inclined to participate. Hamari et al.'s research (2016) includes second-hand markets as a type of CC, where people communicate using online services and platforms, engaging in activities including trading, donating, and buying largely used products, transferring ownership from one user to another.

2.2.2 Environmental motivations

The connection between environmental concerns and the propensity to purchase second-hand products has been established in the literature. Although this motive may not be as powerful as economic considerations or the need for uniqueness, some people do purchase used goods for environmental reasons (Edbring et al., 2016). Similarly, Hamari et al. (2016) discovered that while perceived waste reduction and sustainability play a part in creating favourable sentiments around CC, financial rewards may be a more effective motivator for intentions to use such platforms. The aim of humans to strike a balance between attitude and action in order to lessen cognitive dissonance is how this phenomena is described in the literature (Edbring et al., 2016).

Customers see purchasing used goods as a method to help the environment by lowering the market's manufacture of brand-new things. This trend appears to be driven by sustainability, as both seasoned consumers and newcomers see it as relevant to their buying patterns (Sandes & Leandro, 2019). People who are extremely concerned about environmental and climate change issues typically spend more on used goods (Edbring et al., 2016), and specific consumer groups prefer second-hand products for eco-friendliness (Moon et al., 2023).

Borusiak et al. (2020) suggest that the decision to buy used goods is greatly influenced by ideas about sustainability and environmental responsibility. When there is knowledge of

the environmental advantages and a sense of personal responsibility for environmental issues, personal norms, which are influenced by an individual's values and beliefs, favor second-hand purchases. Similarly, Hinojo et al. (2022) revealed that those who care about the environment buy more used goods on online marketplaces.

However, there are conflicting findings regarding sustainability in the context of second-hand transactions. Parguel et al. (2017) delve into how used peer-to-peer networks may unintentionally encourage excessive consumption, potentially at odds with the sustainability objectives frequently linked with the sharing economy. They contend that although used goods markets have the potential to promote sustainable purchasing, they can also encourage consumers to engage in risky shopping practices like extravagant consuming. When consumers believe they have already made a moral and sustainable choice, such as buying used items, they may purchase more or less carefully. This tendency could be especially noticeable on used peer-to-peer platforms. Customers who are both materialistic and ecologically conscientious may utilize these platforms to buy things they don't absolutely need but find enticing because of the liberated environment these platforms offer. This self-licensing effect on used peer-to-peer platforms can be explained by the lowering of cognitive dissonance. Consumers may experience cognitive dissonance when they make a moral decision, such as buying used items, but then indulge in excessive consumption. Consumers may use self-licensing as an explanation for their behavior to reduce this contradiction. (Parguel et al., 2017)

2.2.3 Social motivations

Belk's study in 1974 explored the idea of social impact, which relates to how others' beliefs and deeds might affect how consumers behave when making purchases. For instance, people's readiness and desire to engage in online second-hand transactions are indirectly influenced by social influence and the significance of their jobs, as noted by Zhang et al. (2021). A key element in building platform loyalty intents is a sense of community membership, which can act as a motivator. Participating in CC activities leads people to view other community members as partners, fostering a partnership dynamic that strengthens their sense of community, as observed in Abbas et al.'s study in 2020. Some individuals opt

to participate in CC just because they love it and think it's a worthwhile way to engage with the community, as reported by Edbring et al. (2016).

On the other hand, those in rural and suburban areas at the bottom of the socioeconomic pyramid buy branded used goods to achieve social recognition because they see them as status symbols that can improve their social standing in their neighbourhood (Mukherjee et al., 2020). This is consistent with the theory of social comparison, which aids in explaining the drivers behind second-hand purchases among customers at the bottom of the pyramid (Mukherjee et al., 2020). As they identify cheaper brands with lower status symbols, these buyers choose to avoid them and instead choose branded used goods for the recognition they offer. Additionally, their children may want pricey labels to project wealth after being exposed to many brands at school or college, which may force their parents to accommodate their tastes (Mukherjee et al., 2020).

2.2.4 Ideological motivations

The urge for consumers to express their originality and distinctiveness through their purchases on these platforms is referred to as ideological motivation. Additionally, it gives consumers a sense of satisfaction and nostalgia when purchasing pre-owned products, as well as a sense of security and assurance that their purchases will be safe (Padmavathy et al., 2019). Customers find meaning and fulfillment as part of a hierarchy of reasons that might affect their purchasing decisions, whether they are motivated by hedonistic, utilitarian, or ideological factors (Sihvonen & Turunen, 2016).

To sate their desire for distinctiveness, individuality, and the expression of their personalities, consumers frequently turn to second-hand consumption. Many consumers believe that these desires are the main drivers behind their second-hand home product purchases, as observed in Edbring et al.'s study in 2016.

Mukherjee et al. (2020) arrived at similar findings, stressing the satisfaction of dreams as a driver for second-hand buying among the bottom of the pyramid rural and sub-rural Indian populace. Although they cannot afford new things, these consumers long to acquire branded goods. They can achieve their goals by buying branded used things.

2.2.5 Practicability and convenience

Online second-hand customers are significantly influenced by the factor of convenience, with an emphasis on the usefulness and user-friendliness of the products, as noted by Padmavathy et al. (2019). This element of convenience is cited as a driving force for customers looking for products in online second-hand stores who want to spend as little time and effort as possible, increasing the overall appeal and effectiveness of the buying experience (Padmavathy et al., 2019). People's readiness to engage in such activities is directly impacted by perceived convenience and simplicity of use, which have also been identified as factors influencing people's propensity to engage in online second-hand transactions, as demonstrated in Zhang et al. (2021).

However, in the research conducted by Abbes et al. (2020), the main factor influencing loyalty intentions toward online collaborative redistribution platforms was not found to be convenience of use. It was discovered to be a key intrinsic characteristic though, that influences consumers' intents to remain loyal to the brands that are offered on these platforms.

2.2.6 Quality and value

Regarding product features and condition, perceived quality is a complex and context-dependent factor. It is a relative and arbitrary concept (Sihvonen & Turunen, 2016). Sellers frequently claim that the products on online secondary marketplaces are in outstanding condition, sometimes even comparing them to brand-new goods. Buyers evaluate the quality of these products using the product descriptions and images. Over time, quality and price become key determinants of a used brand's worth, influencing buyers' willingness to pay for such things (Sihvonen & Turunen, 2016).

People's participation in online second-hand transactions and their intents to purchase used goods are significantly influenced by their perceptions of value and quality (Mukherjee et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2021). High quality is a driving force behind second-hand purchases, especially in product categories like kitchens, shelves, wardrobes, and furniture for tables and chairs (Edbring et al., 2016). Due to their perceived authenticity and

high quality, used goods are favoured over cheaper brands by consumers in rural and suburban areas at the bottom of the food chain (Mukherjee et al., 2020).

A study by Fernando et al. (2018) demonstrated a variation in how new and used goods were valued by internet customers. Compared to buyers of new goods, who place a higher value on quality and brand recognition, buyers of used goods are more motivated by financial incentives like reduced pricing but also feel greater uncertainty and perceive less acquisition value, e-loyalty was therefore demonstrated to be highly influenced by acquisition value.

The value of products is constantly shifting in the context of online second-hand fashion markets. While fast-fashion things lose attractiveness as they go out of style, vintage and timeless classic objects appreciate in value over time. Perceived value is affected by accessibility and brand availability as well. When an item is taken off the market, its perceived worth and level of uniqueness increase. On the other hand, wide availability across many different channels can lower the perceived value of a brand (Sihvonen & Turunen, 2016). Relating to the aspect of availability, Edbring et al. (2016) had similar findings: they determined that the availability of goods that are no longer sold in conventional stores is a driving force behind second-hand consumption.

In online secondary marketplaces, brand authenticity is a critical factor, particularly for more expensive commodities. Genuine products can be distinguished from counterfeits by their authenticity, which is prioritized as product prices rise due to the perceived risk involved (Sihvonen & Turunen, 2016).

Fashion labels are valued significantly differently in second-hand markets due to design. To increase the perceived worth of the goods, sellers may draw attention to the nation of origin, location of purchase, and product history of the brand. Sometimes, perceived value is influenced by factors other than just price and quality, such as a brand's fashionability (Sihvonen & Turunen, 2016). Three factors make up a brand's origin: its nation of origin, its point of sale, and the former owner of the branded item. Customers can benefit from lower prices while still getting fashionable, high-quality things in exceptional condition by taking the importance of product condition and maintenance into consideration (Sihvonen & Turunen, 2016).

2.2.7 Other elements/drivers/motivations

There are additional factors explored in the literature that, while not extensively discussed nor identified as primary motivators for online second-hand consumption, have nonetheless been observed in certain studies and warrant consideration.

It has been discovered that perceived enjoyment significantly improves attitudes about CC and the intention to use CC services. When people love participating in CC, which in this case includes second-hand markets, they are more likely to do so (Hamari et al., 2016). Additionally, certain product attributes have been listed, such as being deemed fun and cool, in Edbring et al.'s study in 2016, yielding similar findings. Moon et al. (2023) also discovered the presence of a consumer group that values the enjoyment of shopping.

It has been claimed that the potential of selling their old goods is alluring and is positively viewed by experienced players, indicating a more active role for consumers in the market. This increasing consumer enthusiasm for buying and selling used goods could contribute to the increase in the availability of these goods on the market, which could explain the phenomena of the growth of second-hand markets (Sandes and Leandro, 2019).

Hinojo et al. (2022) examined additional contextual elements and personal traits associated with the inclination to buy used goods on internet marketplaces. In Spain, having kids, using the internet frequently, being a guy, being young, and the lack of close physical merchants can all lead to a rise in the demand for used goods on online marketplaces.

Online shoppers often choose to buy things with sensory aspects (such as cosmetics) from websites that sell new goods and non-sensory products (such as electronics and pen drives) from websites that sell used goods, as indicated in Fernando et al.'s study in 2018.

2.2.8 Challenges and obstacles

In the realm of online second-hand markets, there are various challenges and obstacles that have gained recognition, constituting crucial aspects of this domain. Similar to the factors driving participation, these challenges and impediments are essential for comprehending the dynamics of the online second-hand market.

Numerous barriers have been identified that can hinder consumers from engaging in online second-hand markets. One noteworthy challenge is the lack of confidence in the

quality of products and the trustworthiness of sellers (Mukherjee et al., 2020). Second-hand items lack warranties and insurance, raising questions about their reliability and safety (Guiot & Roux, 2010). A major obstacle to CC adoption is mistrust of new people (Edbring et al., 2016). Rural and suburban consumers at the base of the economic pyramid frequently prefer personal, informal channels over online or offline retailers for obtaining second-hand goods due to their trust in acquaintances, concerns about purchasing stolen or counterfeit goods, the requirement for partial payments, and time constraints (Mukherjee et al., 2020).

While photos and material descriptions can help consumers evaluate the worth and quality of things in online secondary marketplaces, it can be difficult to gauge the value and condition of clothing in particular (Sihvonen & Turunen, 2016). This difficulty may also extend to evaluating other items on these online platforms.

Additionally, buying used items has been linked to social stigma, arbitrary rules, and social influence, which act as barriers that prevent the adoption of used goods (Borusiak et al., 2020; Mukherjee et al., 2020; Sandes & Leandro, 2019). The idea that buying used products is socially unacceptable in one's social circles is still another barrier. It's interesting to note that experienced participants who previously had these preconceived beliefs frequently witnessed a substantial change in their perceptions after discovering the advantages of buying and selling used goods online, leading them to accept this practice (Sandes & Leandro, 2019).

According to Zhang et al. (2021), It is clear that people consider the capital and time costs, which acts as a barrier that directly affects their willingness to participate in such transactions, because perceptions of cost have a significant negative impact on willingness to engage in online second-hand transactions.

Other commonly mentioned barrier to purchasing second-hand products include Concerns about hygiene are the main deterrent to people purchasing used goods (Edbring et al., 2016). There is a worry that used objects may introduce bugs and insects into their homes, possibly triggering allergies. Similar issues were raised in a another study, which also found that a significant barrier is the belief that used goods can be possibly contaminated with germs or unfavourable energy from the prior owner (Sandes & Leandro, 2019).

A product's former owner may have an impact on how valuable people believe it to be. A garment's perceived worth, for instance, may be positively influenced by a prior owner who has taken good care of it, whereas a past owner who has a pet that may cause allergies may have a negative effect (Sihvonen & Turunen, 2016). These factors may account for

people's reluctance to use used goods that clearly bear the imprints of past owners, as observed by Edbring et al. (2016).

Another hindrance mentioned is a propensity for buying brand-new items as opposed to used ones. Some people simply prefer newly produced goods and do not see used goods as a good option (Edbring et al., 2016).

2.3 Generation Z and millennials consumer patterns in online transactions

2.3.1 Millennials

Several factors have been discussed to play a crucial role in shaping millennials online buying behaviour. Customer happiness is one of them, and it has been demonstrated to have a major beneficial impact on customer loyalty. Customer loyalty is largely influenced by product quality, followed by delivery speed and customer service (MentariUtomo & Haryanto, 2021). Millennials are more likely to engage in positive behaviours like repeat purchases, good word-of-mouth recommendations, and more involvement with the online platform or merchant when they are happy and delighted with their online shopping experiences. (Avinash & Madhumita's, 2022). Millennials value convenience and time savings, and they are more likely to search for a greater variety of products on numerous online platforms (Melović et al., 2021).

This may suggest that millennials place a high value on well-made, interesting, and user-friendly websites (Melović et al., 2021). They are more likely to utilize more well-known shopping websites, which is also predictable given the amount of their devoted patrons, as this is a crucial sign of a website's dependability (Melović et al., 2021). This website's trustworthiness reflects the degree of millennials' confidence and belief in the online platforms and merchants they interact with. Millennials' online purchasing behavior is influenced favorably by the certainty that their personal information will be safeguarded, their transactions will be secure, and the goods or services they purchase will satisfy their expectations (Avinash & Madhumita's, 2022).

Additionally, social issues have been covered. Social media and internet reviews have a significant impact on millennials' purchasing decisions (Melović et al., 2021), which indicates some level of social influence influencing online buying behaviour. Millennials are

more likely to purchase a good or service online if they witness others doing so, specifically through the opinions of friends and peers. This suggests that if their friends express a high level of satisfaction with their online shopping experiences, Millennials will develop a favorable attitude toward making an online purchase (Melović et al., 2021).

Social stigma, on the other hand, was discovered in another study to be a barrier for online second-hand purchase, according to Srivastava and Culén's (2019), Because second-hand markets are generally associated with getting rid of things rather than redistributing high-quality items, they may cause social stigma and quality issues.

Trust and social awkwardness were two other social difficulties that were noted. People prefer to transact with those who are similar to them in terms of age and background because they perceive them to be more trustworthy, and they feel uncomfortable interacting with people who are significantly different from them, leading to a reluctance to engage in peer-to-peer exchanges. Trust issues, followed by perceived risk, had a negative effect on online second-hand buying behavior (Srivastava & Culén, 2019).

Related to risk, similar findings were outlined by Melović et al., (2021), Millennials are less inclined to purchase something online if they believe there is a high level of danger involved. Millennials are more likely to purchase from a website they trust than from a site they don't, indicating security concerns. Trust has also been linked to risk and has been highlighted as a crucial element that negatively influences online buying behavior.

Moving on to demographic variables, MentariUtomo and Haryanto (2021) revealed that millennials' online shopping habits are influenced by their age, gender, and income, with younger millennials being more likely to shop online more frequently and spend more money. The survey also discovered that female millennials were more likely to shop online than male millennials, and that both the frequency of online purchases and the amount spent were significantly positively impacted by income level. However, it was discovered that male customers spent more money on online buying than female consumers, despite the frequency of online shopping being the same for both sexes, according to Melović et al. (2021). Additionally, it was shown that younger millennials made purchases more frequently than older millennials, in the study by Melović et al. (2021), Men prefer doing their online purchasing on more well-known websites than women do, to a greater extent (Melović et al., 2021)

According to certain research in the literature, millennials are a high-spending demographic who spend a lot of money online (Avinash & Madhumita's, 2022). The need to

save money, however, was also shown to be a major factor influencing millennials' increased interest in second-hand marketplaces. Millennials were willing to accept minor visible flaws as a trade-off for buying things at a lower price, as long as the seller was upfront about the flaws (Srivastava & Culén 2019), highlighting affordability aspects. However, their motivations go deeper than that since individuality and emotional ties to the item are also prized. For instance, they are intrigued by the backstories of the objects and the apparent ties the previous owner had to them, which piqued the participants' interest in the object (Srivastava & Culén 2019). They are also concerned about quality, notably the lack of quality control on second-hand marketplaces because there is no established method for judging the state of the products (Srivastava & Culén, 2019).

Lack of knowledge of second-hand platforms' existence or their advantages is one of the other barriers for online second-hand purchasing that has been identified in the research. Another obstacle was market invisibility because using second-hand platforms required deliberate effort and prolonged screen time, which made them less visible and accessible than first-hand markets. Millennials can also think that second-hand platforms were unsupportive and uninformative, leaving them to handle every aspect of the transaction process on their own (Srivastava and Culén, 2019).

The two main aspects that influence millennial online shopping and second-hand shopping seem to be convenience and trust. Trust fosters enduring relationships with online retailers by giving customers a sense of security and dependability. Sustainability and environmental motivations were also suggested by Srivastava and Culén (2019) regarding millennials intentions in online second-hand shopping. Overall, millennials are drawn to seamless purchasing experiences that go beyond traditional retail because of how easy and satisfying they are. These features shed light on the fundamentals of how millennials shop online.

2.3.2 Generation Z

According to a 2017 report entitled “Generation Z to Switch the Majority of Purchases” by Accenture (2017), this upcoming generation is the next major powerful consumer group in the consumer market and is a generation that is controlling and reshaping the digital retail world of today and they are also interested in new shopping methods (Accenture, 2017).

Generation Z prefers online shopping platforms that offer highly engaging and interactive experiences, frequently through visual elements like images or videos, which is why platforms like Instagram fulfil their visual needs and are their preferred choice for online shopping. Generation Z's engagement with online shopping is influenced by their first impression of product pictures (Mulyani et al., 2019). The report by Accenture (2017) confirms these conclusions, highlighting the value of using visuals like videos and images to build an integrated shopping experience across different channels and devices to appeal to generation Z buyers and facilitate customization and hyper-personalization. This generation appears to be more tech savvy, as evidenced by the fact that they are more likely to check in store for more information, chat with an online sales assistant, ask friends' opinions via social media, text, or phone, and ask family members' opinions via social media, text, or phone than younger or older millennials, indicating a greater level of digital proficiency to use such platforms (Accenture, 2017).

In relation to social media, a seller's social media presence is a significant component that affects how clients in generation Z shop. They anticipate vendors to be active on social media and maintain a strong online presence (Laitkep & Repkova Stofkova, 2021). In 2017, Accenture emphasized that Generation Z is a socially conscious generation that has strong ties to the internet. They frequently base their purchasing decisions on the opinions of their family, friends, YouTube videos, and social network users. They look to social media sites like YouTube, Instagram, and others for shopping inspiration. being eager to make purchases directly on these visual social networks. According to Accenture's worldwide consumer study, 69% of generation Z consumers are interested in making direct purchases through social media, suggesting that social media is set to become a significant purchasing channel for this group. In addition, 37% of generation Z have expanded their use of social media for making purchasing decisions over the past year, and 44% of them view it as a major source of product inspiration (Accenture, 2017).

Social networking networks are a common place for Generation Z consumers to conduct their online buying. Social media platforms include tools that let users leave comments and ratings, according to Mulyani et al. (2019). Contrary to popular opinion, influencers have very little bearing on genery well-known online users. Contrary to popular opinion, influencers have very little bearing on the purchasing habits of clients in the generation Z. They don't let popular online users affect them; instead, they rely on their own research and the feedback of other clients (Laitkep & Repkova Stofkova, 2021).

Contrary to popular opinion, influencers have very little bearing on genery well-known online users. One significant element that affects generation Z clients' shopping behavior is the website's design. An attractive style and simple navigation on a well-designed website may draw in and keep visitors (Laitkep & Repkova Stofkova, 2021). Additionally, this generation places a high value on utility, fun, and numerous other benefits including simplicity, time and effort savings, and the ease with which one may purchase online and compare items and pricing (Mulyani et al., 2019), which is related to website quality and design. The convenience of online shopping is highly valued by Generation Z because it allows them to do their shopping from anywhere with an internet connection and saves them time and effort. They also expect online shopping platforms to be responsive and user-friendly, preferring platforms that offer a quick and easy shopping experience (Hieu & Loan, 2022). Generation Z emphasizes convenience-related features in online buying platforms heavily. This contains rapid payment choices, dependable and timely delivery, and user-friendly navigation., as noted by Hieu and Loan (2022). Similarly, Laitkep and Repkova Stofkova (2021) revealed that generation Z's purchase decisions were significantly influenced by merchant reviews and dealing with well-known, trustworthy suppliers. Overall, this generation highly values the quality of the websites they while also being tech savvy. (Hieu & Loan, 2022).

Online shopping appeals to Generation Z as well due to the huge selection of goods offered. They like having a wide variety of options to pick from (Hieu & Loan, 2022).

Another important issue that affects how customers in generation Z shop is the significance of delivery options and the availability of online payment options. They choose online payment alternatives and quick, dependable delivery options (Laitkep & Repkova Stofkova, 2021). This can relate to the findings by Accenture (2017), that this generation Z is willing to pay for quick delivery and has a greater desire for quick delivery than do millennials.

This generation places a high value on online buying security and firmly believes that it is safe to do so now. However, some people had negative online buying experiences, which could damage the reputation of online retailers (Mulyani et al., 2019). The degree to which Generation Z members trust online retailers and marketplaces influences their purchasing decisions. When customers have faith in the platform and the vendor, they are more likely to make purchases, and their impression of trust in the online shopping environment affects their online purchasing behavior. They take into account elements like the service's dependability and the seller's credibility (Hieu & Loan, 2022).

Last but not least, price has a significant impact on generation Z shoppers' purchasing decisions. Before making a purchase, they frequently evaluate prices from several sellers since they are price-sensitive (Hieu & Loan, 2022; Laitkep & Repkova Stofkova, 2021). However, they are impulsive shoppers and more likely than millennials to buy anything because they were in the mood to buy it, they happened to see something they liked, or a friend or family member had recommended it (Accenture, 2017). The risks of online shopping, such as the possibility of financial loss or the exposure of personal information, are taken into account by Generation Z. These dangers may influence their purchasing decisions (Hieu & Loan, 2022). Additionally, they also place significant importance on product quality when conducting online transactions, as suggested by Hieu and Loan (2022).

Overall, generation Z customers exhibit distinct online shopping habits characterized by a strong focus on convenience, immersive visual experiences, and the integration of social media into their e-commerce interactions. They stand out as a generation of digital consumers who prioritize seamless shopping experiences, visually appealing product presentations, and the influence of social media on their shopping journeys.

III. Methodology

The objective of this study is to explore and understand the main drivers of consumption of second-hand markets in Portuguese generation Z and millennial consumers and the challenges faced by these consumers using such digital platforms. To fulfil with this objective of investigation a qualitative approach was followed and the most pertinent literature regarding these topics was first reviewed.

The source of data was semi-structured interviews of Portuguese generation Z and millennials online second-hand markets consumers. This data gathering approach provides freedom and room for creativity in the study without deviating from the main goal of having the participants answering the questions, since it allows the interviewees to provide materials and information that wasn't previously mentioned and could be useful.

The sample is composed of 10 participants and, naturally, a total of 10 interviews were conducted, each lasting between 20 to 30 minutes (see Table 1). The interviews were carried out during the months of June and July and the last one in August 2023. Eight of the interviews were conducted through phone call, and two by the platform zoom. The interviewees were divided into two categories: generation Z and millennials. The participants' age ranged from 20 to 31 years old, with a balanced mix of genders (5 males and 5 females). Exactly half of the participants belong to generation Z and the other half were millennials. All participants stated to be either current or former university students and demonstrated varying experience in utilizing online second-hand platforms.

The script consisted of 22 questions where interviewees were able to answer openly, and it emphasized several aspects of online second-hand consumption, such as buying and selling, drivers and motivations (see Appendix 1). Respondents were ensured about the confidentiality (their identity was kept anonymous for data protection purposes), anonymity, voluntariness of the study, and the fact that the interviewees were going to be recorded, which they agreed to. Respondents were not rewarded in any way for participating in the study.

The answers to the questions were all made in the Portuguese language and later translated into English by the author of this dissertation. As mentioned previously, the group of individuals that participated in the study were chosen based on their interest and involvement in these second-hand market platforms. All interviews were transcribed. They were later reviewed, analysed and the main results of each taping regarding emerging themes

of consumption behaviours of online second-hand markets was documented, with further consolidation of all the results in the chapter IV: Results discussion.

Table 1 - Interviewees sample

Interviewee	Gender	Age	Generation	Current occupation
E1	F	25	Z	Working
E2	M	24	Z	Working
E3	M	25	Z	Working
E4	F	22	Z	Student
E5	F	20	Z	Student
E6	M	27	Millennial	Working/student
E7	M	27	Millennial	Working
E8	M	27	Millennial	Working
E9	F	29	Millennial	Working
E10	F	31	Millennial	Working

V. Results and discussion

In this section, the analysis and discussion of the interviews is presented. Data were analyzed against the literature and representative quotes were identified to illustrate the main results of the study.

The first section presents the main drivers of online second-hand consumption that emerge of the data source and the second section presents the challenges for online second-hand purchasing. Furthermore, section 4.3: shall also account for other findings and themes.

The qualitative exploration however shows that second-hand buying is familiar to all the respondents with certain interviewees showing more engagement and interest in second-hand shopping than others. Most findings that have emerged are in line with previously mentioned research. The respondents referring to their experiences and personal opinions to answer the questions, showing a range of motives, many of which were linked to the literature.

4.1 Main drivers of online second-hand consumption

4.1.1 Economic motivations

Affordability emerges as a key factor driving participation in online second-hand platforms by finding cost-effective alternatives. All generation Z and millennial respondents alike highlighted the financial advantage of acquiring items at a fraction of their original retail price. The ability to secure high-quality products and rare items at reduced costs appeals to financially conscious consumers seeking value for their money. Most of the interviewees (E1, E2, E3, E6, E7, E8 and E10) stated it was the primary driver. For example, the interviewee E6 stated: “Better prices. I can purchase a semi-new product at a much lower price this way. Price is the main factor. [...] The fact that it's second-hand immediately lowers the price, especially when the quality is still good”.

Similar answers were given for what had been the best benefits for using second hand markets and platforms. The interviewees gave answers such as “Finding good opportunities with good price-to-quality ratio.” (E1); “Quality-price ratio. In other words, you get a low price and good quality. There's nothing to complain about. [...]” (E5) and “Economic values

and the impact on both the environment and personal life [...]” (E10). These positive experiences emphasized the attractiveness of maximizing savings by purchasing pre-owned items, finding satisfaction in receiving items in good condition and view it as a money-saving opportunity (E2, E8): “If they are in good condition, I feel satisfied and content for having saved money” (E8). The ability to make these purchases that align with budget situation without compromising on quality resonates with them.

Economic motivations also align with the desire to make informed financial decisions. One millennial respondent's view encapsulated this sentiment, “[...] If I feel that you need something or if it fits within a certain context, I evaluate the price, it won't be the first option that I see. Often, I conduct research to ensure the product is fair in order to make the best possible deal” (E9).

Engaging in these platforms offers individuals the opportunity to access premium and branded products at significantly lower costs compared to purchasing new items. Participants recognized the potential to find unique, vintage, rare but most importantly high-quality items on second-hand platforms for lower prices (E1, E2, E5, E6 E9). Regarding generation Z participants, this can be attested by the following transcripts: “Additionally, the appeal of uniqueness is a strong motivator, especially for vintage clothing and other distinctive articles.” (E2). In turn, millennials also highlighted the appeal of owning quality products without the hefty price tags associated with new purchases, as shown in the following excerpt:

[...] You can purchase a semi-new product at a significantly lower price. [...] For example, a new Apple Watch. I can find semi-new or even new products with warranties. Sometimes, there isn't much differentiation between brand new and slightly used items. The fact that it's second-hand immediately lowers the price, especially when the quality is still excellent. [...] (E6)

The economic benefits of such platforms extend also to selling, going beyond just buying good quality items for lower prices. Selling items on online second-hand platforms presents an opportunity to earn money from items no longer needed. The ability to turn unused items into revenue further enhances the attractiveness of these platforms (E3, E6). For instance, a millennial participant shared: “The best sales involved my grandfather's wood

because there was high demand for wood and the market was inflated, so I took advantage of the situation and sold it” (E6) and a generation Z participant stated: “I bought the Nintendo Switch on Black Friday for 250 or 240 euros and managed to sell it at the same price, making it the best deal after a year” (E3). This dual benefit of finding great deals as buyers and capitalizing on demand as sellers underscores the financial gains and potential profit generation inherent in online second-hand transactions.

In summary, economic motivations, characterized by affordability, cost-effectiveness, access to high quality and premium products, and the potential for profit, play a critical role in driving participation in online second-hand platforms for both generation Z and millennials. These motivations can reflect their financial situations, bargain hunting, and good value for their money. In general, these findings align with previously mentioned studies (Edbring et al., 2016; Hamari et al., 2016; Hinojo et al., 2022; Mukherjee et al., 2020; Moon et al., 2023; Padmavathy et al., 2019; Sandes & Leandro, 2019; Sihvonen & Turunen, 2016).

4.1.2 Environmental factors

Based on the responses from both generation Z and millennials, the evidence suggests that environmental consciousness and sustainability play somewhat important roles in influencing their decisions to buy from online second-hand markets, with varying degrees of intensity, with 4 interviewees stating environmental issues to be one of the main drivers of participation in these platforms after question 4.1 (E4, E5, E8, E9, E10). For example: “Sustainability and environmental issues. It's been quite some time since I bought clothes firsthand” (E4). Several interviewees (E1, E2, E4, E5, E8, E9) highlighted that sustainability concerns were essential regarding their usage of second-hand platforms in question 20, as shown in the following excerpt by one generation Z and a millennial interviewee:

High importance, there's a lot of buzz about this subject everywhere, internet, television, communication, social media... We should pay attention to it, and every action makes a difference, and having the opportunity to contribute through

these platforms helps both the environment and your wallet, so why not try and deserve success in these endeavours. (E2)

It's very important and relevant for us to be conscious consumers, using these platforms to promote more circularity and less consumption. Excessive consumption is important to reduce as well; we need to buy according to our needs. Sometimes, I prefer to list products at a higher price or buy higher-priced items because setting a higher price discourages immediate consumption [...]. (E9)

Two females belonging to generation Z interviewees expressed concerns specifically about the negative environmental impact of the fast fashion industry (E1, E5). To address this, they choose to buy second-hand items, avoiding support for excessive consumption and disposal of cheaply and waste promoting made products and means of production. These two specific interviewees showed great knowledge and insights of what happens behind the scenes in the fast fashion industry, as shown in the statement of interviewee E1:

[...] If I can buy something to prevent waste with good quality, I prefer this in order to contribute to the decrease of waste. For example, I never buy clothing from fast fashion” (E1)

Regarding the issue of fast fashion and home products [...] Companies are also producing a greater diversity of products at a lower cost, leading people to buy and dispose of items more frequently rather than buying second-hand. It's important to provide other forms of evidence to prove that the products are of sufficient quality, such as detailed images, videos, better descriptions, mannequins, etc. Markets should strive to raise awareness among people to adopt more conscious consumption and inform them about the dangers of fast fashion markets. (E1)

While others mentioned it as an important driver and still recognizing its importance (E6, E7, E10), but not demonstrating the same level of priority as the aforementioned participants. For example, interviewee E7 said that: “Even though I consider sustainability in life, when it comes to second-hand products, it doesn't carry much weight on the scale. But, of course, I do think about it [...]” and interviewee 10 also stated:

Not always the primary factor [...] but I try to ensure that all choices in the daily life [...] consider the impact we have on sustainability. [...] the economic aspect often ends up being the better option.

Overall, the findings highlight a growing trend of conscious consumerism and the adoption of more sustainable practices to reduce the environmental impact of their consumption choices, which leads them to actively seek out and support online second-hand markets as a means to align their consumption habits with their commitment to sustainability and a more environmentally friendly lifestyle. Sustainability was an essential consideration for many participants when making second hand purchases, which goes in line with the literature (Borusiak et al., 2020; Edbring et al., 2016; Hamari et al., 2016; Moon et al., 2023; Sandes & Leandro, 2019). However, it does not represent the most important aspect of their choices regarding second-hand consumption.

4.1.3 Social motivations

Relating to the previous section of environmental factors, a significant social motivation for participating in online second-hand platforms is a heightened awareness of sustainability and environmental concerns. It is not the environmentally conscious behaviour per say, but the importance participants gave to the overall awareness of other peers in to doing the same, which can help creating sense of community and shared values (E5, E6, E9 For example, a generation Z respondent mentioned: “I will try to consume less fast fashion and encourage people around me to do the same. [...] I can also influence people to use these platforms. [...]” (E5) and a millennial stated:

Being conscious consumers is very important and relevant, especially when using platforms to promote more circularity and reduce excessive consumption. It's crucial to buy according to our needs. Sometimes, it's better to list products at a higher price or buy at a higher price because it discourages immediate consumption. [...] (E9)

This suggests that engaging in second-hand transactions not only aligns with personal values but also contributes to reshaping social norms and fostering a culture of conscious consumption, and one participant (E6) realized that there is a growing interest in their social surroundings regarding participation in such platforms: “People are becoming increasingly demanding, and the trend towards reusing is growing [...]”

The influence of peers and social circles was also shown to play a role in shaping individuals' interest in online second-hand platforms. Nine out of the ten participants across both generations indicated that they learned about these platforms from friends, social media, and online advertising (E2, E3, E4, E5, E6, E7, E8, E9, E10). This underscores the role of social networks in spreading awareness and normalizing participation, as we can see in the following transcripts by one generation z and two millennial participants:

It was a trend; I saw many people using it. Curiosity led me to try it out. [...] and A combination of mediums. [...], internet, social media, search engines, and recommendations from other people. (E2)

Through the internet. You directly discovered Facebook Marketplace through Facebook, and for the other platforms, it was through word of mouth. (E7)

Naturally, through word of mouth, sharing experiences of using platforms. Some online advertisements and sharing through word of mouth on social media. (E9)

In summary, social motivations for participation in online second-hand platforms encompass sustainability concerns, conscious consumer behaviour, fostering community, and peer influence. These motivations reflect a broader shift in consumer values toward more mindful and environmentally conscious choices. As these generations continue to engage with these platforms, their commitment to these social motivations is likely to shape the evolution of the second-hand market landscape. In general, these findings are in line with the reviewed literature (Abbes et al., 2020; Edbring et al., 2016, Mukherjee et al., 2020, Zhang et al., 2021).

4.1.4 Practicability/Convenience and accessibility

The attractiveness of online second-hand platforms goes beyond sustainability and environmental considerations and economic. For example, as online second-hand platforms continue to evolve, the focus on practicability and convenience is likely to remain strong. Respondents envision further enhancements, such as improved categorization, better search filters, and quicker delivery options. These innovations aim to enhance the user experience, making the transition from traditional retail to online second-hand shopping even more seamless and improving user friendliness and practicability aspect of these platforms (E1, E4, E7), as expressed in the following transcripts:

Improving the delivery service for goods is crucial, as many products get lost in distribution and take a long time to arrive. [...] In the case of OLX and similar platforms, I believe that there will be more diversity of products or services, and this can happen when people have better incentives to sell products rather than discarding them. (E1)

[...] better categorizations and visibility and not given priority to an item that is buy sold for 0 or 1 euros, in order to achieve better filters. It doesn't make sense to find products of 0 or 1 euros since it ends up take visibility away from deals that are indeed worth it and are correctly listed. (E7)

The access to a diverse range of items on online second-hand platforms has become a significant driver for engagement. Both millennials and generation Z respondents highlighted the convenience of exploring a plethora of diverse range of products conveniently aggregated in one digital space. Respondents pointed out, the accessibility and diverse range of products these platforms have allow people to buy what they intend easily, underlining how the vast selection caters to varying preferences and needs (E1, E2, E5, E8) as seen in the following transcripts, related to questions 5, 10.1 and 12.

You can literally find everything you need with just a click, and there's a wide variety of products that can reach you quickly and easily. Sometimes, even more conveniently than if you had bought from a physical store or a large online store. When buying second-hand, you might even meet up with the person on the same day. (E2)

It caters to the general public. For instance, Vinted offers a broader range and diversity of people, and sometimes, you can even get better deals. Vinted, for example, has a larger international user base [...] [and] better accuracy in detailing the product's condition. (E8)

One generation Z participant indicated the efficiency of these platforms in locating specific items that might not be readily available through traditional retail avenues (E3): “One advantage I didn't mention earlier is that you can find books that are no longer available on official websites. For instance, books that are out of print or have been discontinued”, illustrating how online platforms cater to particular needs that might be challenging to fulfil offline.

The ability to conduct transactions seamlessly from the comfort of one's own space and the time-saving element of online shopping are another important aspect. One respondent from generation Z succinctly put it: “[...] Perhaps it's better to buy a product that can be delivered in 2-3 days rather than waiting for a month [...]” (E1). The ease of purchasing and selling on these platforms minimizes the need for physically visiting various locations, reducing effort and time expenditure.

Convenience-driven motivations have led to shifts in consumption patterns. The desire for convenience, coupled with sustainability, has influenced respondents to explore second-hand according to their needs, indicating conscious and rational approach (E3, E4, E8), for example interviewee E8 claimed: “My patterns will continue to adapt according to my needs. I use these platforms not regularly but when there's a necessity”.

To sum up, the practicability and convenience offered by online second-hand platforms are significant motivators reshaping consumer behaviour. The accessibility to diverse products, efficiency in finding specific items, time-saving transactions, and ease of use all highlight the increasing importance of these platforms in the modern shopping landscape, confirming previous findings (Abbes et al., 2020; Padmavathy et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2021).

4.1.5 Quality and value

The significance of product quality is closely intertwined with economic motivations, in general, participants emphasized that the value and quality of products are important factors influencing their purchases on these platforms, often considering the brand and quality of items when deciding to buy used products. They prefer good-quality items over those of questionable quality (E1, E2, E5, E6, E9). And their emphasis on product quality also stems from its role within the price-quality ratio, rather than being solely based on quality as an isolated factor, as noted in the transcripts in 4.1.1 Economic motivations, and shown in the statements of interviewees E1 and E9, respectively: “When I realized that the products were of good quality and it wasn't worth spending more on brand new items. [...] I could find lightly used, high-quality products that were more cost-effective to buy than new items” and “[...] higher price discourages immediate consumption, and on the other hand, investing in something with higher value also often means better quality and durability.”

When questioned about if they are more drawn into everyday products that can be bought at a very low price, or seek to buy extremely rare but expensive items in these platforms, 4 out of 5 generation Z respondents preferred the first option (with E5 stating that in general seeks both) and 3 out of 5 millennials chose extremely rare but expensive items (E6, E7, E10), which may suggest that millennials may tend to be more likely to consider the high quality and rare items.

Regarding the evaluation of the quality of the products in the second-hand platforms, participants were questioned on the best way to evaluate the quality of items on second-hand markets and online platforms. The results suggest that relating to the act of buying, interviewees consider detailed listings and quality photos to be important to assess an item's condition: "Quality of photos and the detail in the descriptions of ads" (E1). The condition and age of an item are key considerations. Buyers compare these factors to price and quality and assess the condition of packaging, which impacts their perception of the item's quality "[...] Check the condition of the box and packaging. [...]" (E6) and in-person inspection and testing for expensive or critical items "[...] Test it on the spot. [...]" (E6). The condition and age of an item are also important considerations: "The condition of the object in terms of conditions, if it's very used, new [...]" (E3).

Another key element are reviews and ratings for both sellers and products. Participants seek reassurance from the experiences of others. "[...] Critiques and reviews of both the seller and the product [...]" (E2). Buyers favour platforms with rating systems. These systems provide added trust and transparency, as claimed by interviewee E8: "I appreciate platforms like Vinted for their item classifications and detailed information. They make it easier to evaluate listings' quality and set accurate expectations."

In general, good quality-price ratio and items in great condition are key aspects for these consumers. The findings mostly corroborate the literature, most notably with previous studies (Edbring et al., 2016; Mukherjee et al., 2020; Sihvonen & Turunen, 2016; Zhang et al., 2021). When it comes to value-oriented consumption, both generations seek value in their purchases. They are more likely practical and use their money intelligently, looking for good deals and affordable options in order to achieve great value for their money, which was discussed in 4.1.1 Economic motivations.

4.1.6 Product types

Commonly purchased items by interviewees included clothing, electronics, furniture, and books. Some participants also explored niche markets for collectibles and hobby-related items. The most sold items were clothing, electronics, and home appliances.

As mentioned previously, some participants sought everyday products at low prices, while others sought rare and expensive items for their uniqueness. In regard to the variety of products, with more disposable income, some millennials might be more willing to buy

larger-ticket items, such as furniture, electronics, and even vehicles, from second-hand platforms.

Respondents have varying preferences when it comes to buying used items. They generally like purchasing electronic products and household appliances, but dislike intimate products such as underwear and lingerie:

Likes: Electronic products and household appliances, as they can find good deals in these markets even if the products were previously used. Dislikes: Intimate products, lingerie, etc. (E1)

I dislike footwear and intimate clothing. I wouldn't mind buying other clothing items. Specifically, regarding footwear, I am not fond of it. Would consider buying electronics, but with great caution. Would prefer to pay a bit more for something slightly used or in good condition, especially for expensive products. There's always a bit of risk, no guarantees, but depending on the product and its value, I might consider it. (E3)

Underwear. Even if they buy it new, they wash it as soon as it arrives home. They have sold bikinis but never bought them. [...]
(E9)

Many respondents express caution when considering used technology products. They highlight concerns about the rapid depreciation and wear and tear of electronics, indicating a preference for slightly used or new items in good condition (E3, E7, E9), as shown in the following excerpt:

Sometimes I consider buying electronic equipment, but it depends. Often they [sellers] have to explain things [...]. I can find many items in very good condition, for example, headphones when they break and they need a replacement the next day unless the prices are the same as new, in which case I think twice due to billing and technology concerns. (E9)

Some respondents appreciate vintage clothing and unique/exclusive accessories, particularly items with an interesting history. They enjoy wearing vintage clothing frequently, as shown in the following statements: “I like books. I like unique earrings and necklaces, sometimes handmade by the seller. I enjoy vintage clothing, particularly items that are quite old and have an interesting history. I enjoy wearing vintage clothing often” (E4); “the appeal of uniqueness is a strong motivator, especially for vintage clothing and other distinctive articles” (E2).

Overall, the respondents' preferences and dislikes when buying used items are influenced by factors such as product category, concerns about quality and hygiene, and the specific nature of the items.

4.1.7 Other elements/drivers/motivations

Regarding the interest and adoption of online second-hand market platforms, most participants became interested in and started using them during their college years or early adulthood. Word-of-mouth, social media, and TV commercials were the three most common ways participants learned about the existence of such platforms. Several participants mentioned that they initially used offline settings for second-hand transactions before transitioning to online platforms for convenience and wider options.

Enjoyment was not found to be the second most important motivator for CC participation. Participants participate in these platforms and purchase second hand products mainly for rational reasons, namely, to get great quality at a good price. There wasn't shown an excitement and enjoyment as the reason to participate in these platforms, with many participants stating that their motivation also come from necessity and not pleasure, which mostly doesn't corroborate with previous mentioned findings in the literature (Edbring et al., 2016; Hamari et al., 2016; Moon et al., 2023).

4.2 Challenges for online second-hand purchasing

4.2.1 Lack of trust and confidence

While online second-hand platforms offer various advantages, concerns related to trustworthiness, seller veracity, and overall safety have emerged as notable barriers to active participation during the interview. Trust was a recurring concern, in the context of buying from or selling to strangers (E6, E4, E10). For example, a millennial stated “[...] Regarding the act of buying, trust is a big issue.” (E6). Trust was not only a factor regarding negative aspects of platforms, but it was also the main reason some participants chose one platform over the other (E2, E6, E8, E9), which was discussed in question 5 and 10, as we can see by the following claims by interviewees E6 and E8:

Trust. For example, on Facebook Marketplace, you can view people's profiles to see if they are genuine or not, check for mutual friends, or see the pages they follow. This way, you have a better chance of taking action to recover your money in case the deal goes wrong.

[...] the ability to trust more. The fact that you can buy and have an intermediary involved adds confidence, even though there's a fee, as the product goes to a specific location and you can go there to inspect it. So, it offers more trust despite not having direct personal contact.

Understanding why a seller is parting with an item can build trust: “Understanding why they are selling, because it helps to trust the type of person.” (E6), with effective communication with the seller is essential. Buyers request additional photos and descriptions when uncertain, as noted by interviewee E10: “There’s a space where you can state the condition of the clothing with photos; if you have doubts, you can ask for more photos, and the person can send them.”.

Also related to trust issues, the process of verifying the authenticity and quality of items listed on these platforms emerges as another concern and the absence of a standardized

mechanism for assessing the condition and authenticity of items can create scepticism among potential buyers. Of course, people interested in the items sold in these platforms can still evaluate the quality of the products through various measures, as it was pointed in 4.1.6 as it was pointed previously, but some barriers may still arise.

Participants have encountered issues where products didn't meet their expected quality standards, both as buyers and sellers, indicating a need for quality control. Regarding the act of buying, concerns and negative experiences regarding experiencing delayed deliveries, and other involved receiving damaged or sellers misrepresented products were noted. Protection against scams and fraudulent activities is a priority for participants (E4, E3, E8, E10), as transcribed below:

[...] when I bought a pair of pants from a French seller, and when they arrived, they were not in good condition, quite worn out, and it was bad because I wanted to give them as a gift. I did get my money back, but it was still annoying. Another time, I bought a personalized wine glass as a Christmas gift for my godmother, and when it arrived, it was broken, probably due to the shipping. I did receive a refund, but it was frustrating (E4)

“For example, when you buy something like an electronic device, it may have no use at all. Sometimes, when you open it, it doesn't seem as good as it initially appeared. That's technology. [...]” (E8)

Some participants have encountered issues where products didn't appear to have defects or were not as described in the listings and expressed concerns as sellers, unknowingly selling defective item (E6, E10). These experiences sometimes led to negative ratings and challenges in resolving the situation. One participant stated he has sold items that he did not know were damaged, which can also induce trust issues on people engaging in these platforms, as experienced by interview E6:

It has happened twice where I sold something that was damaged without realizing it. One time it was with car rims and tires. There were some issues with the tires that I didn't notice, and a few days

later, the buyer said the tire was damaged. It's different from selling in a physical store because here, you're selling a product that's either second-hand or even new, and you don't know how people will react to the product because there are no regulations, and quality parameters aren't standardized. (E6)

Pricing regulation also falls within the view of trust and safety concerns. To be more specific, a one respondent expressed the concern for greater regulation to ensure fair pricing, particularly for sustainability reasons. The absence of effective pricing controls can create discrepancies and raise concerns among users, involving a lack of confidence in sellers' unethical practices to get attention: "There are some expert hagglers who offer 1 euro or even 0 euros for public negotiations" (E7). Such practices can lead to dissatisfaction and erode trust in the online second-hand marketplace experience.

Negotiating prices can be challenging, with some buyers attempting to negotiate to the very end, often with prices that don't make sense to sellers. Negotiation was identified as a part of the process but can be more challenging with unrealistic pricing expectations by one participant: "Sometimes there are more difficult people who want to negotiate with you until the very end and offer prices that don't make sense, but that's part of the process" (E7).

Lastly, logistical challenges related to product delivery and in-person transactions also contribute to trust and safety concerns, also impacting the overall convenience and appeal of second-hand online platforms. Some participants (E1, E5, E7) have experienced issues related to product quality and trust, including poor ratings and delays in deliveries. This can lead to uncertainties and risks for both buyers and sellers:

[...] Bad experience was when a vinted item that I bought got stuck in customs. The distributor couldn't clear the Funko Pop product from customs (DPD). They didn't provide an explanation afterward." and "Improving the delivery service for goods is important because many products get lost in distribution and take a long time to arrive. (E1)

To sum up, trust and safety concerns, encompassing seller practices, verification, logistical challenges, protection against scams, quality control, and pricing regulation,

constitute significant barriers to active participation in online second-hand platforms. Addressing these concerns and enhancing trustworthiness and safety measures can play an important role in fostering greater user confidence in these digital marketplaces. These findings are in general aligned with the literature (Edbring et al., 2016; Guiot & Roux, 2010; Mukherjee et al., 2020; Sihvonen & Turunen, 2016).

4.2.2 Social stigma

Social stigma was discovered in the literature reviewed to be associated with buying second-hand products, which could be considered as a non-acceptable social behaviour from peers in their social cycles (Borusiak et al., 2020; Mukherjee et al., 2020; Sandes & Leandro, 2019).

In the provided answers, there is no explicit mention of social stigma associated with participation in second-hand online platforms. The respondents primarily discuss their experiences, motivations, preferences, and concerns related to these platforms, focusing on practical, economic, and trust-related aspects. Social stigma or barriers related to participation in these platforms do not appear to be prominent themes in the responses you provided, which doesn't corroborate with the literature.

4.2.2 Hygiene and unsanitary concerns

In the responses provided, in general there is no major hygiene and unsanitary concerns related to buying second-hand items, not appear to be a prominent obstacle in the information gathered. Participants in general express a sense of indifference when it comes to purchasing second-hand items, emphasizing the importance of quality and condition. There were only some concerns about hygiene and product quality regarding certain products that were second-hand (E1, E2, E3, E5 E6, E7, E8, E9, E10, but in general almost all interviewees were comfortable with purchasing used items. The condition of the product is crucial to respondents' acceptance of second-hand items. Questions 7 and 8 provided insights regarding these issues, for example: “[...] I dislike underwear and other hygiene

products.” (E2) and “Everything depends on the condition in which she receives the product.” (E9).

E7, E8, E9, and E10 also had similar answers from the ones above. As we can see, the attitude of indifference extends across different types of products, and respondents have varying preferences when it comes to buying used items. They generally like purchasing electronic products and household appliances, but dislike intimate products such as underwear and lingerie. Some participants indeed did view certain types of products as undesirable, such as items of a personal or intimate nature were underwear, bras, and hygiene products very much likely due to them being unhygienic (although not specifically stated).

A few participants even showed an interest in the history of the product and many participants express satisfaction in giving items a second life and feel happy when others use and enjoy them, which proves that the notion of utilizing something that had a previous owner can be seen as a positive (E4, E6): “I even like to know that a product was used by someone else” (E6).

Importantly, participants report no negative emotions, such as disgust or concerns about lower quality associated with buying second-hand products, as claimed by interviewee E7: “I have never felt anything negative, like disgust or lower quality.”

In summary, the results highlight a generally positive and accepting attitude towards second-hand consumption, emphasizing the significance of product quality and condition over its previous ownership. The respondents did have some concerns regarding quality and hygiene, due to the specific nature of certain used items. Therefore, the results don’t corroborate the findings of Edbring et al. (2016), Sandes and Leandro (2019) and Sihvonen and Turunen (2016).

4.2.3 Other constraints

Based on the information provided, there is only one mention for preference between personal, informal channels to online channels in the context of second-hand online platforms. Some individuals stated that they had sold and bought items either by meeting with the sellers/buyers personally or by sending/receiving the item through the mail, but only one specifically stated that she preferred face to face transactions with people she knew:

In recent times, online platforms have evolved, and the trust they convey has also improved. I have used OLX in the past but was always hesitant to use it extensively. I preferred to trade with someone I know rather than necessarily using OLX because I didn't always feel safe conducting transactions to the point of meeting the person in a shopping mall, etc. (E9)

One participant mention that they initially sought out cheap shipping options but became less pleased when shipping costs increased: “When I created an account, there were cheap shipping cost options. When shipping costs increased, I didn’t like it so much, so one needs to pay attention to that” (E4). This highlights the importance of paying attention to shipping costs, as they can impact the overall experience. The same interviewee mentioned discontent with tax declaration, that after reaching a certain threshold of sales, they must begin declaring their earnings: “Starting from this year, after 30 sales, we have to begin declaring our earnings. These are the difficulties and advantage” (E4). This regulatory requirement is identified as a potential challenge.

Managing expectations regarding the act of buying and selling can also pose as a potential challenge. Two interviewees (E8, E9) acknowledge the importance of managing expectations specifically when it comes to product quality. For example, when buying electronic devices, they recognize that technology can sometimes disappoint compared to initial expectations: “[...]when you buy something like an electronic device, it may have no use at all. Sometimes, when you open it, it doesn't seem as good as it initially appeared” (E8).

Maintaining the perceived value of second-hand items and set adequate prices can also be a challenge to participants, as claimed by interviewee E9: “It's more challenging to sell when you set prices you consider appropriate and reasonable”. They aim to preserve the value they would expect when buying second-hand items and set prices accordingly.

Most of the bad experiences reported by four interviewees (E4, E6, E7, E8) either stemmed from logistic company not carefully handling the product or from human error, as shown in the following excerpts:

In the case of the glass, the person should have packaged it better.
Regarding the pants, it's difficult, in fact, to control if people are

being honest or not. Maybe I should have asked for more photos.
There wasn't much else to do; sometimes, it's a risk you take. (E4)

The bad experiences were due to human error and quality control;
it didn't have anything to do with the person. (E6)

In summary, the majority of participants express overall satisfaction and that their experiences have generally been positive, however they have encountered a few significant challenges or setbacks when using second-hand markets and platforms. These challenges include issues related to shipping costs, tax declarations, product quality, trust, negotiation, managing expectations, and maintaining value. The responses highlight the complexities involved in second-hand transactions, emphasizing the importance of transparency, trust, and effective communication for successful experiences.

V. Conclusion

5.1 General conclusions and contributions

This qualitative dissertation contributes to the body of literature that examines the motivations and challenges behind involvement in online second-hand markets (e.g., Abbas et al., 2020; Borusiak et al., 2020; Fernando et al., 2018; Gullstrand Edbring et al., 2016; Hamari et al., 2016; Hinojo et al., 2022; Moon et al., 2023; Mukherjee et al., 2020; Padmavathy et al., 2019; Parguel et al., 2017; Sandes & Leandro, 2019; Sihvonen & Turunen, 2016; Zhang et al., 2021), using semi-structured interviews as its data sources. The results show that Generation Z and Millennials actively participate in online second-hand markets, primarily driven by economic, environmental, and convenience factors. Challenges and obstacles may arise mainly due to trust and security reasons, and product quality as well.

Generation Z and millennials actively participate in online second-hand markets, primarily driven by economic, environmental, and convenience factors. Economic considerations were found to fuel engagement in online second-hand platforms, serving as a significant and primary driver for both generation Z and millennials active involvement in these markets. The opportunity for affordability, getting great deals and potential financial gains facilitate such behaviours and contributes to the increase in popularity of these digital marketplaces.

Sustainability factor are also prominent motivators for these generations, aligning with the broader trend of sustainable consumption. Buying second-hand is viewed as an ethical choice aligned with their commitment to sustainability and responsible consumption. They recognize that second-hand items generally have a lower environmental footprint compared to new products, as the production of new goods involves resource-intensive processes. By opting used items, they indirectly reduce the demand for new production and its associated environmental impacts. Despite their possible financial limitations, generation Z also demonstrates a deep commitment to environmental sustainability. Their economic motivations are intertwined with their desire to reduce waste and contribute to a circular economy. For them, buying second-hand is not just about saving money; it's also a means of aligning their values with their consumption choices

Participation in online second-hand platforms was shown to also be driven by a variety of social motivations, as highlighted by the insights provided by generation Z and

millennials. These motivations shed light on the ways individuals perceive and engage with these platforms within the context of their generation, social context and personal values.

Quality and convenience factors follow, with many participants stating they prefer high quality products unique and rare items, with perceived brand value significantly influencing their buying choices. Practicability and convenience play a vital role in motivating individuals to actively participate in these platforms, reshaping their shopping habits and consumer behaviours, as discovered in the semi-structured interviews.

For both generation Z and millennials, several factors influence their platform choice and favourites when it comes to buying and selling second-hand items online, including positive experiences, convenience, user-friendliness, a large selection of items, and trustworthiness and positive reviews from other users also influenced their platform selection.

However, several challenges and concerns inhibit their full participation in these markets. Trust and safety issues loom large, encompassing apprehensions about seller honesty, product quality, scams, and fraudulent activities. Trust in strangers and fear of conflicts often deter active involvement. Pricing regulation, logistics difficulties, and some hygiene concerns, particularly regarding intimate items, are also other limitations. Managing expectations regarding product quality and condition, as well as preserving the perceived value of second-hand items, can be hard.

The absence of comprehensive quality control measures and regulations further amplifies concerns. While some platforms incorporate automatic processes for evaluating listings, the lack of uniform standards for assessing product quality and condition persists. Negative experiences, such as receiving damaged or misrepresented products, underline the need for better quality control and seller verification. Curiously, social stigma associated with buying second-hand products was not explicitly mentioned by participants, contrary to findings in the literature.

Both generations collectively contribute to the growing popularity of second-hand marketplaces, transforming these platforms into not only economic hubs but also centers for conscious and sustainable consumer behaviour. Some foresee their consumption habits becoming more sustainable, marked by a growing inclination towards second-hand markets.

In summary, generation Z and millennials exhibit favourable attitudes towards online second-hand markets. To further nurture trust and growth in these platforms, addressing trust and safety concerns, along with challenges related to pricing, logistics, and hygiene, is

crucial. Preferences among users are diverse, driven by economic and quality reasons, sustainability, and convenience and trust. The future of second-hand markets holds promise, with technological advancements and an increased focus on sustainable consumption habits.

The results present in this study have several implications. They can serve to identify potential opportunities that can be explored by businesses and help organizations in the future to develop better tailored strategies to better attain competitive advantage,

Regarding trust and safety, these platforms could invest in seller verification processes to build trust among users, like identity verification, user ratings, and reviews to help buyers gauge the reliability of sellers. Secure payment and transaction options to protect both buyers and sellers from potential scams and fraud is also an important aspect.

Although difficult to implement, quality control mechanisms to ensure that products listed match their descriptions, and their condition is accurately represented is also very important. Platforms could create more options to detail the state of the item in order to achieve an accurate description. Furthermore, one video per item could be an interesting aspect.

Prioritizing open and transparent communication channels between buyers and sellers, by encourage users to ask questions and seek clarifications on product details through pop ups in the website can also increase trust.

Although most platforms offer a wide range of items, expanding the range of product categories available on the platform could attract a broader user base. Explore niches that might be currently underserved in some second-hand markets. Collaborate with specialized sellers or influencers who can bring unique and sought-after items to the platform can be of value in order to attract more traffic to these platforms.

Regarding sustainability, promoting sustainability as a core value of your brand by highlighting the environmental benefits of buying and selling second-hand items, such as reducing waste and extending product lifecycles can also encourage further consumption.

Creating marketing campaigns that resonate with the target audience, emphasizing affordability, sustainability, and the presence of high-quality items in online second-hand platforms, can build a sense of community among users through forums, social media groups, or dedicated sections on the platforms platform, by encouraging users to share their experiences and tips for successful second-hand shopping.

5.2 Limitations and future research

This study adds to the literature by studying the behaviours between different generations of the Portuguese population (millennials and generation Z in Portugal) to have a better grasp of the motivations drivers for participating in online second-hand markets in post-COVID times.

It is also essential to acknowledge the inherent limitations that may influence the generalizability of the findings. One significant constraint pertains to the research methodology employed. Utilizing semi-structured interviews and engaging with a sample size of 10 participants offers valuable insights into individual experiences and perspectives. However, the small sample size could potentially limit the broader applicability of the study's conclusions to a larger population. Moreover, the qualitative nature of semi-structured interviews may introduce subjectivity and interpretation bias into the analysis. As participants share their viewpoints and experiences, nuances in their responses could be influenced by personal biases or variations in interpretation and conflict of interest where the researcher might have looked more into themes and results inside interviewees answers that proved his preconceived notions and the main findings of the literature. While this approach offers depth and richness to the exploration and other benefits (as mentioned before), it's crucial to acknowledge the potential for individual differences to impact the study's outcomes.

Future research scientific studies could consider expanding the sample size and employ a mixed-methods approach (both qualitative and quantitative) to enhance the robustness and generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, they could also utilize populations from different countries to investigate social differences between cultures regarding participation in online second-hand markets, in order to achieve better findings that can be tailored for different businesses and organizations acting in different countries.

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Annexes

Annex 1: Interview questions.

1. Can you describe when did you first became interested and started using online second-hand market platforms?
2. Where did you learn from the existence of such platforms?
3. Did you use to engage in second hand transactions in an offline setting (physical shop, fair, etc)?
4. Have you ever bought items in second hand online platforms that you used to buy in physical stores?
- 4.1 What motivated you to make such transition and to buy second hand items in general (top of mind)
5. What factors do you consider when choosing which second-hand online platform to use?
6. What type of items do you purchase in these second-hand online platforms?
7. How do you feel about purchasing items that may have been used by someone else?
8. What type of items do you like or dislike to buy used by someone else?
9. How can you best evaluate the quality of items on second-hand markets and online platforms?
10. Which online platforms have you used and what are your favourites?
- 10.1 Why is X platform you favourite?
11. How often do you use second-hand markets and platforms?
12. What have been the best benefits of using second-hand markets and platforms for you?
13. What are some drawbacks or challenges that you have experienced when using second-hand markets and platforms?

14. Have you ever sold items on a second-hand market or platform? If so, what was your experience like? Does the fact of selling used products also influence greater flexibility or tolerance to buy second-hand products?
15. What type of items you sell the most in second hand markets?
16. What items do you pretend to sell or buy but can't due to certain limitations of the platform?
17. Would you say you are more drawn into everyday products that can be bought at a very low price, or seek to buy extremely rare but expensive items in these platforms?
18. Tell me about both your best deals and worst deals/experiences in second hand platforms.
19. In your opinion, what could have been done to prevent those bad deals/experiences?
20. How important are sustainability concerns to you when making purchasing decisions?
21. How do you think second-hand markets and platforms can improve or evolve in the future?
22. How do you see your consumption habits evolving in the future regarding second-hand markets and platforms?