

## Attitude and Management of Second-Hand Products in Developing Countries

Metta Kuning<sup>1</sup>, Sarawut Chesoh<sup>2</sup>, Kunwadee Srisuan<sup>3</sup>, Muhamad Rifki Taufik<sup>4</sup>,  
Pratistha Sharma<sup>5</sup>, Supaporn Panatnachee<sup>6</sup>, and Mayuening Eso<sup>7\*</sup>

<sup>1,7</sup>Centre of Excellence in Mathematics, CHE, Bangkok 10400, Thailand

<sup>1,3,4,5,6,7</sup>Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, Faculty of Science and Technology, Prince of Songkla University, Thailand

<sup>2</sup>Department of Science, Faculty of Science and Technology, Prince of Songkla University, Thailand

\*Corresponding author [mayuening.eso@gmail.com](mailto:mayuening.eso@gmail.com)

Received 31 July 2017 | Revised 30 December 2017 | Accepted 10 January 2018 | Published 29 November 2018

### Abstract

The aim of the study was to investigate the attitudes of people concerning second-hand products and to find out about the management of these products. The informants were three sellers from Thailand and five customers from Indonesia, Nepal, Nigeria, Bhutan, and Thailand. The research employed as qualitative method using mainly in-depth interviews and the data was analyzed by content analysis. Two second-hand product categories clothes and other products were mentioned in this study. The results showed that there were two terms of attitudes regarding second-hand clothes including acceptance and rejection. The sellers had a positive attitude towards second-hand products because of good profits, while the customers had concerns about sanitation/hygiene. The second-hand management practices for sellers were a cyclic process where they re-sell the same goods repeatedly, while the people included the customers from this study donated their unwanted goods for selling since the donation is an attractive way to reduce unused belongings.

Keywords: second-hand product, attitude, management, acceptance, rejection, sanitation

### ■ Introduction

Second-hand products can be defined by reuse of old but good products. They have gained in popularity over the years in many parts of the world. The second-hand market has been a lucrative business ever since it gained popularity. The reasons behind the popularity of second-hand products may be affordability, brand quality, cheapness, fashion craze, and the concepts of re-using and recycling. Second-hand markets are likely to progress through both trade liberalization and advancement of information technology. These markets are rising internationally, and they will have significant environmental as well as social and economic implications. In some cases, these developments will reduce overall product consumption. Also, this has environmental benefits when old goods are reusable; this postpones the waste disposal and thus benefits the environment. The need for encouragement of recycling and development of second-hand or second-order marketing systems has received increasing attention in recent

years. Today in many western cultures, second-hand markets are regarded as informal and small-scale business enterprises, unregulated retail formats, and as verge market (Han, 2013).

However, second-hand clothing imported into third-world countries, such as Malawi and Zambia, has become a crucial and engrossed clothing source. The developing countries have become a final destination of second-hand clothing, where international commerce is becoming an important argument among many critics throughout the world. Many studies focused on sustainability point of view concerning second-hand clothing, such as design and consumers' disposal patterns (Han, 2013). The consumer behavior in the usage of second-hand products differs individually, which affects sustainability or re-use. According to Connell and Kozar (2015) examined how knowledge for an environmental adequacy may prevent the formation of environmental attitudes and commitment to environmentally preferable behavior. He concluded that environmental knowledge is one of the essential

reasons for consumers making unsustainable choices; they will start to make good decisions if they are involved in the environmentally desired choices. Some studies clarify second-hand shoppers' motives and their attitudes toward second-hand consumption (Han, 2013).

The attitudes regarding second-hand products include positives and negatives depending on the individual. Usually, the attitudes of people are driven by social and economic statuses. The variation in attitudes to second-hand products due to social status is complex. Gregson and Crewe (2003) reported that the evidence of contamination by previous owners had affected people's readiness to buy items. The impressions of alterations in attitudes to reused products by social status are complicated. The decline in real-terms costs of many new products, notably clothes and home appliances, has reduced the price of reused goods and made new goods more accessible to the relatively underprivileged. A second-hand item or product, usually clothing, cannot be seen as other than highly contaminated because it is experienced as a perpetuation of the body of another person. Grooming and purification rituals do not satisfactorily eradicate the delusions of bodily impregnation (Roux & Korchia, 2006).

In this fast growing urbanized world with increasing population, waste has also increased tremendously. This paper will conceptualize and explore the attitudes toward and management of second-hand products. With increased waste the concept of reusing second-hand products has gained attention, taking into account environmental concerns globally.

## ■ Literature Review

### *The important of second-hand product*

Why second-hand product is still available and progress very rapid. Many kinds of the products make our life modern (Jensen & Hansen, 2014) with customers' acceptable price. They are easy to use, and most importantly they provide cheaper replacements of existing products (Noon, 2011). The price of attractive products is at a level commensurate with the customers'

ability to pay. More motivation, the items are unique, historic, rare, stylish, and nostalgic. Thus, the customers can easily come, enjoy, and purchase items in the store (Han, 2013; Noon, 2011).

The second-hand products would be residuals replaced by new things, so they are donated or distributed to other people, for example by donating clothes to a charitable organization. These organizations distribute for example to the victims of natural disasters. In addition, Parsons (2006) reported in terms of the relationship between seller and consumer that "Secondhand buying and selling often involves very personalized relationships at the point of exchange". These friendships were subsequently built up through this mechanism. Dealers often mentioned to their customers as 'friends'. These relationships were sometimes very long-standing and indicating continuity over years.

### *Attitude of second-hand product*

Thailand's second-hand products, such as shoes, bags, furniture, and especially clothes, are popular because they are cheap. The reused and remanufactured goods are cheaper than new, and they adjust the status and opportunities of the comparatively poor (Watson, 2008). In comparison, some people do not like second-hand products because they are concerned about contamination and diseases (Roux & Korchia, 2006). Some consumers perceive the used clothing essentially as rubbish, however the perceptions of some on the waste are associated with an endless cycle of buying and disposal (Roux & Korchia, 2006). In certain cases, second-hand things were not from shopping market but the cases had to wear clothes passed down from their sisters and brothers who had outgrown them. The wearing used clothes were expressed figuratively as a feeling of dispossession which derived from an involuntary encroachment and affected to the perception of their own identity and their own value (Roux & Korchia, 2006).

Furthermore, Noon (2011) reported that many of the respondents in the study commented and described on the fun and exciting of second-hand

shopping. The remarkable word was “Finding bargains were like a treasure hunt”. Hidden treasures were waiting to be found together with the possibility of their unexpected quality and their lowest price.

Therefore, the attitude of each person does affect, and the attitude also depends on social status, regarding the second-hand products.

#### *Management of second-hand product*

Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management (2006) reported that 15% of second-hand products given by the donor could be used immediately. So, the rest or 85% of second-hand products need to be separated, treated, and managed appropriately. The second-hand products are not only a concern for appropriate management, but their potential environmental impacts require attention. The study of Clausen, Blättel-Mink, Erdmann, and Henseling (2010) about eBay users revealed a relationship between the commerce of reused products and the protection of natural resources. They found that the environmental motivation and the readiness to act in a sustainable manner differed widely between (groups of) consumers. However, some used products transferred from one country to others countries as Han (2013) reported that second-hand clothes when unsold in thrift stores they would be sent to third world countries.

#### ■ **Methodology**

This study was a qualitative research. A combination of purposive and convenience sampling were conducted with eight informants which were five consumers from Indonesia, Nepal, Nigeria, Bhutan, and Thailand and three sellers from Thailand. The personal, non-structured and in-depth interview was conducted with two main themes; attitudes and management. The interview had been recorded as per the permission of the respondents. The recorder device was used to collect the data. Some interviewees were audio recorded for approximately 30 minutes. Interview data interpretations were overviewed first, and the researcher identified themes. Potential consumer participants were contacted by the researcher

at the Faculty of Science and Technology, Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus, and seller participants were contacted on Sunday at “Rusamilae Market”. The subjects were interested in engaging in a face-to-face interview. The objective of the study was to investigate the attitudes of people and find out about the management of second-hand products.

Dealing with the second-hand product is affected by some dominant factors. Knowledge of choosing clothing, belief in wearing second-hand, and social norms are becoming the main factors in making decisions (Xia, Monroe, & Cox, 2004). The first coming of second-hand products affected the behaviors on purchasing. The second-hand products offer competitive price and quality as well. Second-hand products give opportunities to people who want a good product but do not have enough money. Even though the second-hand products provide some valuable opportunities, each person has his own attitudes facing them. Contamination, poor hygiene, and social norms have also become considerations on purchasing second-hand products (Kastanakis & Voyer, 2014). Moreover, contamination is not really a problem if you know what you have to do. The desire for re-used products is not so simple. Everyone wants be matching, looking great, and be honored as well. Appropriate products are what people want to have. We are now investigating the customer attitudes and management of second-hand products in several developing countries.

#### ■ **Findings and Discussion**

##### *Overview of second-hand products*

Every country has its own origin of the second-hand items, so this is a source of some differences by country. A respondent said that it is just a transformation from the old trading to convenience trading. Another respondent said the second-hand products provide what people need like good quality and good price as well.

*“Presently is barely because for new item is very expensive, so people usually like to go to this second-hand market because it is much*

*cheaper. Those sometime the quality might be the same as the new product, much cheaper that what much people want to. Yes, very popular in Nigeria. Other provinces in Nigeria have second-hand market, every province has second-hand market. You know some people are very rich and some people are very poor, then second-hand market has to be there for poor and rich people” (Customer, Nigeria).*

The existence of second-hand becomes a solution for people who do not have enough money. Often-times, the difference between poor and rich people is very dramatic, so the price for a new product with good quality cannot match both, and then second-hand product helps reduce this contrast.

*“For the origin, in the last decades we did not used to buy something using money. We used to buy something using our products like exchanging them, we call it barter system. It’s not just with rice with rice, rice with oil, but sometimes its tables and may be clothes also. May be this is one of the reason how of second-hand market came in existence” (Customer, Indonesia).*

The exchange of products without involving money/pricing is called barter. This kind of trading has ancient roots but has continued to recent times. The products exchanged need not always be new, although they might be unused. The second-hand market can be viewed as an evolutionary offspring of bartering. The good traded may come from within the same country or may be imported. Some respondents said the second-hand books and clothes came from donations.

*“It usually came in donations from other country for usually clothes and books. For people started selling these things and started making money from this.” (Customer, Nepal)*

*“For the second-hand clothes, they came from donations or from other country like Korea, China and others” (Customer, Indonesia).*

Furthermore, electronics second-hand products are imported as well. However, one respondent from Indonesia said the electronics second-hand products were not imported but put to re-use from the previous owner.

*“For electronic barged for example phone, it is imported from USA or China or Japan, but for clothes are mostly from Nigeria” (Customer, Nigeria).*

*“But for electronic stuffs, it’s like circle. For me if I have new stuffs and if I am bored with the old one, I just sell it to second-hand store. And then may be someone buys my phone in second-hand store. So, we have circle for electronic stuffs but for clothes we don’t have circle for clothes” (Customer, Indonesia).*

Mostly we found second-hand products were sold by conventional techniques, but Bhutan has a different style for selling second-hand products. Nowadays, we can do everything online even sell second-hand products. The second-hand products are well-known.

*“I think they sell online, electronic stuff. It is not popular for second-hand market” (Customer, Bhutan).*

There are many reasons underlying why second-hand markets are popular. They help solving the social problem of high contrast between the poor and the rich, and the sources of the goods may involve import, donations, or previous local owners.

#### *Attitudes on second-hand products*

With the focus on consumption and management of second-hand products, our study helps to enhance knowledge about by tracing several themes. An important aspect that should be clarified is attitudes regarding second-hand products. The dictionary meaning of “attitude” is a settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, typically one that is reflected in a person’s behavior.

One modern trend in products and marketing is fashion and styling. Everybody has the desire to look good and present themselves well with the latest fashion trends. According to Johnson, Lennon, and Rudd (2014) social science theories from economics, psychology, social psychology, and sociology were enabling studies of human behavior (Johnson et al., 2014). Since the trends in fashion and technical knowledge on various things grow in strength, whether regarding clothes or highly technical devices, people have the urge to know more and to use the products by themselves. Due to the above reasons, the concept of reusing/recycling may have given rise to the second-hand markets. The popularity of second-hand markets is increasing throughout the world, attracting especially people in third-world countries. This also drives people with their own intuition to adopt or reject products by their personal tastes. However, worries about the source and potential contamination of second-hand products give rise to negative attitudes.

*"It is not a good thing, it has a risk. No, the people who don't have enough money will go there. And I will not prefer for the second-hand product, except it has a good store. If we like, yes we can buy. If we don't like, yes we don't need to buy. Yeah, it is not hygienic but for me, the second handbook is not a problem"* (Customer, Bhutan).

The customers do worry about the hygiene of a product but could accept second-hand books, which means the customer mainly is concerned about products that could carry some diseases.

*"I think second-hand product is always good to use when it's for things like books, and electronic stuff and vehicles. So, I don't feel good to wear second-hand products like clothes. Because I am worried about the hygiene and I too don't know what its source is and who does it belong to?"* (Customer, Nepal).

Similar to the Bhutanese customer, the customer from Nepal also worried about hygiene. Moreover, the

source of a second-hand product remains unknown and it might come from diseased or dead people.

*"Mostly Indonesians they don't want to wear second-hand clothes because we pretty worry about the diseases carried clothes. Even we wash it we worry about it. But for electronic stuff like mobile, we often buy second-hand if we do not have enough money or if we want to change our phone"* (Customer, Indonesia).

The second-hand electronic products also seem to be very popular in the developing countries, but usually, people who are well off and who can afford brand new goods do not want to buy second-hand electronics. According to Guiltinan (2009), easy access to new products also deters consumers from getting themselves into trouble with repairs, and the consumers are not altogether certain about repair outcomes.

*"I like the second-hand product because of low price and high quality. Sometimes I get branded stuff. And if sometimes I cannot wear the clothes which I bought but I don't regret instead give others to wear because it is always cheap. I normally like to buy pants which are not more than 300 baht"* (Customer, Thailand).

*"In Southern Thailand especially in four provinces i.e. Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat and Songkhla second-hand markets are popular. Since the second-hand market is popular many people are involved in this business, there are many sellers that sell second-hand products around the market. The kind of products like clothes (including from inner-cloths to outer clothes and caps too), blankets, bed-sheets, shoes, toys, utensils, machinery equipment's and antique products are sold in the second-hand market. The reason for gaining popularity of second-hand market is that the people want good products at the cheap price. Also from the second-hand market, the sellers are making a good income and also the profits"* (Seller no.1, Thailand).

The key motivational factors influencing second-hand consumers were a desire to pay less, search for a fair price, hunt for bargains, and the gratification in having paid a bargain price. Therefore, since second-hand goods are generally cheaper than new goods, indirect price discrimination between used and new goods encourages thrifty consumers to buy second-hand products with price advantages (Guiot & Roux, 2010).

*“The way they felt about the second-hand items was not important. The most important is for them to get a second item whether nice or bad so far it’s cheap and affordable, they feel happy and like I said before, how much can you afford? So, when they go to second-hand market for an instant in Nigeria if you go very early you will get the very good product, you know I think Sunday market that from 9 until 12 pm, but in Nigeria you will get from 6 am until 2 pm for an instant. Then if you go very early, there is high probability you get better goods and better quality then so, when you go nine am. Some things for me is new, and some things for me is from a second-hand market. I prefer to buy new. For my own opinion, I love to get a new phone, new laptops. But what I love to buy in the second-hand market, I might get clothes, there is not new, I don’t mind about it. There is a possibility that these second-hand products carry disease but even the new clothes, it is possible there is a disease, that’s why if you got new clothes you have to wash it, then the disease definitely disappear. Since I put much detergent to wash clothes, in the washing machine. I have no problem with it” (Customer, Nigeria).*

*“When we sell the second-hand clothes, we set the price of the clothes according to the quality of the clothes. Actually, the price starts with the low margin because we have same products in different shops as-well and customers can always check in different shops before buying the products. Also, the second-hand products*

*have to be quickly cleared off to avoid the residuals. Thus, we set up the strategies to urge customers to have the motivation to buy our products” (Seller no.2, Thailand).*

The hedonic and recreational motivations such as treasure hunting, authenticity, social interaction, and nostalgic pleasure defined the most representative pleasures enjoyed during second-hand shopping. Moreover, the pleasure of scanning, the bargaining (Guiot & Roux, 2010) and the freedom from hectic work schedule are also pleased uniquely provided by second-hand retailers. These unique characteristics attract many second-hand consumers who enjoy second-hand shopping, not merely for economic advantages or sustainability issues, but for spending leisure time.

#### *Management of second-hand products*

Nowadays, the waste has been increased tremendously with the rise in population. The waste is expected to increase as per the demand and supply of the consumers. Due to the reason the management of waste has been immersing issue worldwide. As the management of waste is questionable therefore the second-hand product is also taken as one of the solution for the waste management. The management of second-hand product is the process of controlling or dealing with the existences and residuals. Second-hand product is usually popular in developing countries which consist of clothes, electronic wastes, shoes, bags etc. For managing household waste many people donate their clothes to charitable organizations which works for the social cause like for disaster victims, or sell them to a dealer to sell in the second-hand markets. According to Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management (2006) reported about the percentages of using the items in disaster donations: 70% of the donated goods are junk; 15% can be used immediately; and 15% can be used later in the recovery. Unwanted and unasked for ‘gifts’ are often a burden that drags down recovery efforts. Some countries are donors while others are the recipients

due to economic and historic circumstances. Thailand is both a donor and a recipient, with large second-hand markets for distributing goods. How to manage second-hand products in each country?

*“Many people donate their own clothes. So, it’s easy to find clothes and it’s not expensive for new clothes. So they don’t want to buy second-hand product. People donate their clothes to foundations and especially orphanage but if they cannot use it any more, like for rubbish clothes they bury it as, I said we cannot burn our clothes” (Customer, Indonesia).*

*“In my home we do have clothes that should be managed. We usually manage it by donating it. We usually face natural disaster in our country like flood, landslide and earthquakes. So, many organizations work for them to provide basic necessity for them and we help them by collecting our clothes and stuffs which we don’t want to use. And in another case we manage the old clothes which are useless by converting it into something useful like making cushions and sheets of clothes for cleaning and something else. If the clothes will be useless then we send it with waste collector” (Customer, Nepal).*

*“Some foundation, donation, transfer to developing country, transfer it to dump site, or throw it away” (Customer, Bhutan).*

*“Give to another person or my mother. My mother often kept my cloth when I came back to my hometown. Sometime I gave to member in my family” (Customer, Thailand).*

*“Almost second-hand product seller, we don’t have residual product because when we sell until end of week we have customer from another area (outside from three provinces) buy all of residual in very low price for sell another place and then we will buy new second-hand product set for sell for next week it look like a circle of sell and buy second-hand product” (Seller 3, Thailand).*

From the results above, the second-hand product management can be concluded for both the sellers and customers using flowchart revealing as Figure 1. It seems there were the cyclic pattern of the route from and to where the residual of belongings to be entered and transferred, respectively, in viewpoint of the customers and sellers.

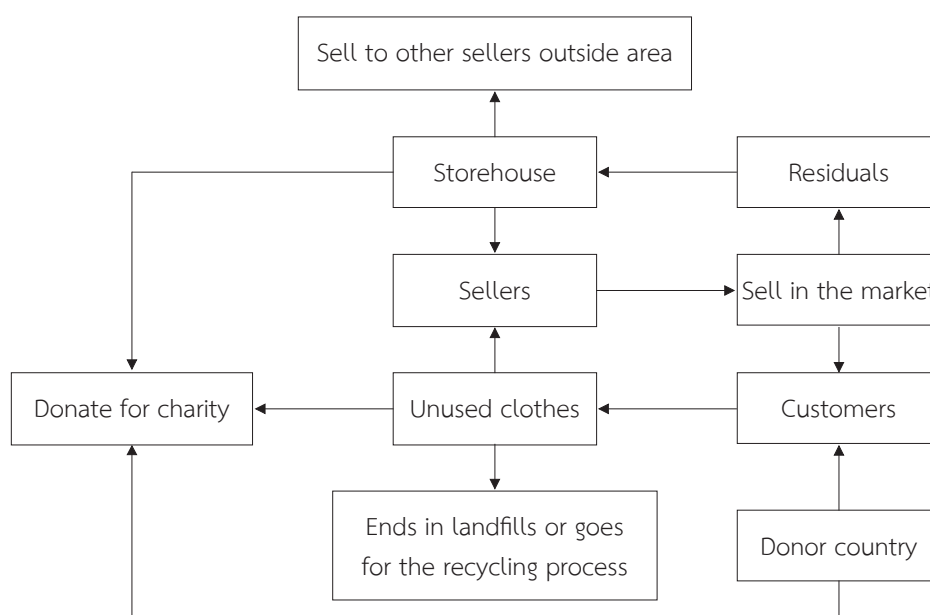


Figure 1: Flowchart shows the second-hand product turnover

## ■ Conclusions

This current study made a distinction between types of second-hand products: clothing and others. The attitudes regarding second-hand clothes were either acceptance or rejection, depending on level of hygiene concerns. In terms of management, the main source of second-hand goods was donations. Donors can in this way reduce their unused belongings and help the recipients at the same time. The second ranking source was purchasing residual products for resale to other sellers outside area.

## ■ Limitation of the Study

The informants from this study for both sellers and customers might not be able to be representative for the developing countries. Here, the study tries to show the opinion from the various sellers and customers. However, it is hard to find the sellers from other countries around this area Thailand southernmost province. To keep going doing this research then only three Thai sellers were chosen. For the customers we can find easily the postgraduate international students from Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus. By conveniently, five customers from five countries were chosen to be the main informants for the study. For further study, the collecting data from more and various samples is required, it might get more spacious and comprehensive information.

## ■ Acknowledges

This research is supported by the Centre of Excellence in Mathematics, Commission on Higher Education, Thailand.

## ■ References

- Clausen, J., Blättel-Mink, B., Erdmann, L., & Henseling, C. (2010). Contribution of online trading of used goods to resource efficiency: An empirical study of eBay users. *Sustainability*, 2(6), 1810-1830.
- Connell, K. Y. H., & Kozar, J. M. (2015). *Roadmap to sustainable textiles and clothing*. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-287-164-0>
- Gregson, N., & Crewe, L. (2003). *Second-hand cultures*. Oxford: Berg Publishers.
- Guiltinan, J. (2009). Creative destruction and destructive creations: Environmental ethics and planned obsolescence. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 89(SUPPL.1), 19-28.
- Guiot, D., & Roux, D. (2010). A second-hand shoppers' motivation scale: Antecedents, consequences, and implications for retailers. *Journal of Retailing*, 86(4), 383-399.
- Han, J. (2013). Understanding second-hand retailing: A resource based perspective of best practices leading to business success. Retrieved from <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu>
- Jensen, S. D., & Hansen, J. (2014). *The world of second-hand goods-a different community* (Master's Thesis). Lund University, Sweden.
- Johnson, K., Lennon, S. J., & Rudd, N. (2014). Dress, body and self: Research in the social psychology of dress. *Fashion and Textiles*, 1(1), 1-20.
- Kastanakis, M. N., & Voyer, B. G. (2014). The effect of culture on perception and cognition: A conceptual framework. *Journal of Business Research*, 67(4), 425-433.
- Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management. (2006). Donated goods management planning: Civil Defence Emergency Best Practice Guide [BPG2/06]. Retrieved from <https://www.civildefence.govt.nz/cdem-sector/cdem-framework/guidelines/>
- Noon, D. J. (2011). *Changing patterns of consumerism: The rise and rise of the second hand: A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Visual and Material Culture at Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand* (Doctoral Dissertation). Massey University, New Zealand.
- Parsons, E. (2006). Dealing in second-hand goods: Creating meaning and value. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 7, 189-194.
- Roux, D., & Korchia, M. (2006). Am I what I wear? An exploratory study of symbolic meanings associated with second hand clothing. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 33, 29-35.
- Watson, M. (2008). A review of the literature and research on public attitudes, perceptions and behaviour relating to remanufactured, repaired and reused products. *Centre for Remanufacturing & Reuse, (March)*, 1-26.
- Xia, L., Monroe, K. B., & Cox, J. L. (2004). The price Is unfair! A conceptual framework of price fairness perceptions. *Journal of Marketing*, 68(4), 1-15.