Conference or Workshop Item:

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Sustainable Fashion in China: Millennials' Second-Hand Clothing Intentions and Ecosystem Diversity

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1.Research Background

Fig. 1

Global Trend: Sustainable Fashion

- Circular economy is reshaping fashion industry
- Second-hand clothing market is expanding worldwide

China's Unique Context

- The world's largest apparel market (USD 326 billion in 2022)
- Generates nearly 20 million tons of textile waste annually
- Cultural barriers remain: hygiene concerns & social stigma

New Driving Force: Millennials & Generation Z

- Environmentally conscious & digitally connected

2.Research Aims & Objectives

Research Aim

Explore drivers and barriers influencing second-hand clothing purchase intentions among Chinese Millennials and Gen Z.

Research Objectives

- Identify key motivations for second-hand clothing consumption.

- Investigate barriers limiting consumer adoption.

- Analyse roles of online platforms, offline vintage stores, and upcycling brands.

- Examine cultural influences on consumer attitudes and behaviours.

- Provide strategic suggestions to promote sustainable fashion in China.

Fig. 2

3.Methodology

Phase 1: Qualitative Study (Semi-Structured Interviews)

- 20 interviews with second-hand fashion consumers
- Participant groups:
  - Xianyu users (n=8)
  - Offline vintage store customers (n=7)
  - Upcycling brand stakeholders (n=5)
- Thematic analysis using NVivo

Phase 2: Quantitative Study (Structured Survey)

- Sample size: N=306
- Questionnaire design based on interview findings
- Data analysis: SPSS
  - Regression analysis
  - Correlation analysis
  - Difference analysis

Fig. 3

Sample profile (N=306)

Variable			Number	%
Gender	Male		163	53.27%
	Female		143	46.73%
Age	Under 18		101	33.01%
	18-25		107	34.97%
	26-30		50	16.34%
	30+		48	15.69%
Education Background	High school or below		76	24.84%
	Associate/Bachelor's degree		174	56.86%
	Master's degree or above		56	18.3%
Employment status	Students		143	46.73%
	Employees		106	34.64%
	Freelancers/Entrepreneurs		43	14.05%
	Others		14	4.58%

Fig. 4

4. Research Findings

Qualitative Analysis of SHC Purchase Intention

- Key Drivers of SHC Purchase Intention
  - Economic accessibility (cheaper price, budget control)
  - Style & uniqueness (vintage, personalised fashion)
  - Eco-consciousness (reuse, reduce waste)
  - Positive shopping experience (treasure hunting, vintage store atmosphere)
  - Social influence (peers, influencers, online trends)

- Key Barriers to SHC Adoption
  - Hygiene concerns & trust issues
  - Return & refund restrictions
  - Fear of counterfeit products

4. Research Findings

- Popular Purchase Channels
  - 🛒 Online platforms
  - 🏬 Offline vintage stores
  - 👥 Social media communities & influencer stores

Fig. 4

Fig. 5

Fig. 6

4. Research Findings

Key Predictors of SHC Purchase Intention
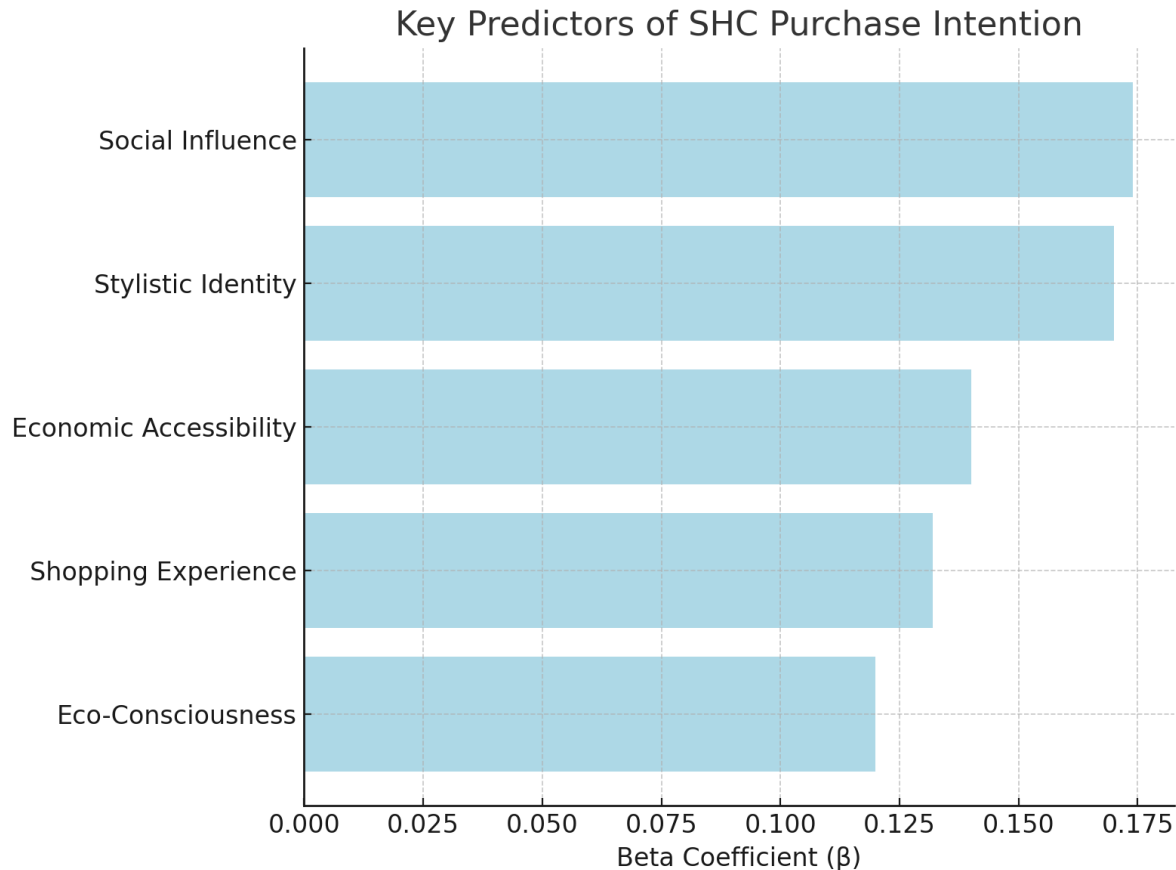
Synergistic Interactions Among Factors

- Social Influence & Shopping Experience (r = 0.512)→ Better user experience enhances social sharing

- Stylistic Identity & Social Influence (r = 0.439)→ Fashion individuality gains social validation

- Economic Accessibility & Eco-Consciousness (r = 0.382)→ SHC seen as both affordable and eco-friendly

4. Research Findings

Demographic Variations in SHC Adoption

Gender Differences in SHC Purchase Intention
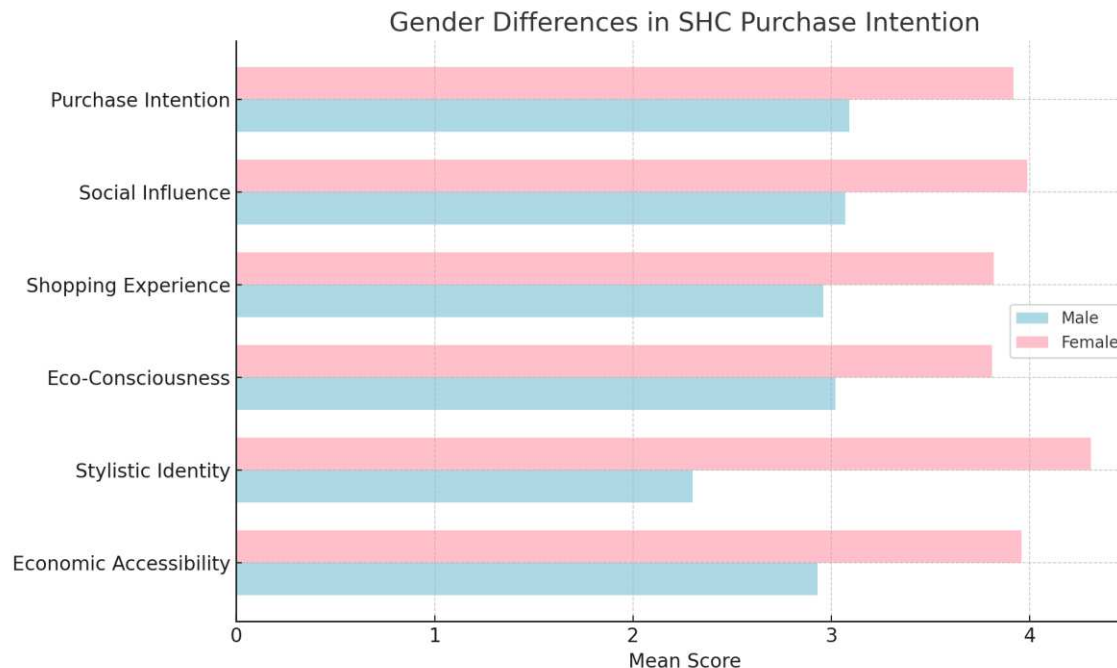
- Gender Differences:
  - Female consumers show significantly higher SHC purchase intention than males.
  - Especially strong in:
    - Stylistic Identity ($F=505.852$, $p<0.001$)
    - Social Influence ($F=57.548$, $p<0.001$)

4. Research Findings

Demographic Variations in SHC Adoption

- Preferred Purchase Channels:
  - Most popular: Social Media Platforms (67.69%).
  - Online Platforms (61.9%)
  - Offline Vintage Stores (54.42%)
- Age-based Patterns
  - Younger consumers (≤25) prefer social media for SHC
  - Older consumers (26+) prefer offline vintage stores

Preferred Purchase Channels for SHC

Channels
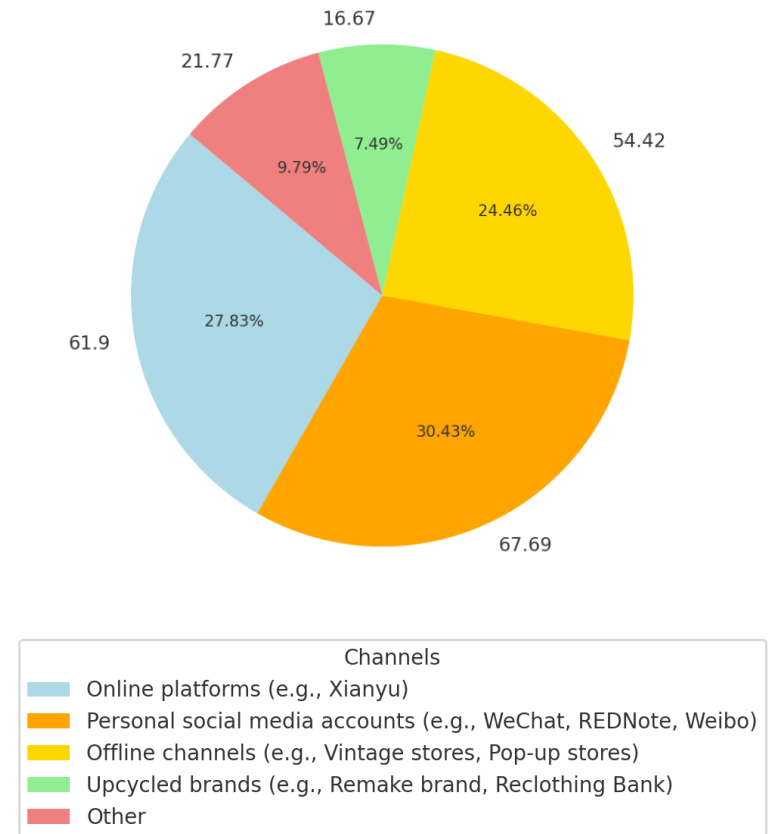- Online platforms (e.g., Xianyu)
- Personal social media accounts (e.g., WeChat, REDNote, Weibo)
- Offline channels (e.g., Vintage stores, Pop-up stores)
- Upcycled brands (e.g., Remake brand, Reclothing Bank)
- Other

Fig. 7

5. Discussion

Economic Accessibility & Pragmatic Environmentalism

- Economic accessibility enables SHC adoption but is not the strongest motivator
- SHC perceived as both cost-saving and environmentally friendly (r=0.382)
- Eco-consciousness ranks lower (β=0.120) than social or stylistic factors
- Environmental impact of SHC viewed pragmatically, not ideologically

Social Influence & Stylistic Identity

- Social influence (β=0.174) is the strongest predictor of SHC purchase intention
- Followed by stylistic identity (β=0.170)
- SHC associated with vintage aesthetics, uniqueness, and fashion exploration
- Fashion individuality increasingly shaped and validated by social media

5. Discussion

Synergies in Platform Optimization

- Strongest correlation: Social influence & Shopping experience (r=0.512)
- Trust & hygiene concerns remain key barriers
- China's SHC platforms blend commerce, content, and community engagement

Demographic Differences

- Female consumers show higher SHC engagement, especially in style & social influence
- Younger consumers (≤25) prefer social media channels (67.37%)
- Older consumers (26+) prefer offline vintage stores (43.75%)
- No significant differences across education or occupation

6. Conclusions

Research Findings:

- 5 key determinants of SHC adoption: Economic Accessibility / Stylistic Identity / Eco-Consciousness / Shopping Experience / Social Influence

- Social Influence & Stylistic Identity → strongest predictors

- Economic and Environmental motivations are interdependent (SHC perceived as saving money and sustainable consumption)

- Gender differences: Female consumers more engaged, especially in style & social influence

- Younger consumers prefer social media; older consumers prefer offline vintage stores

- Platform optimization (trust, hygiene, return policies) enhances engagement

Practical Recommendations

- Strengthen social media marketing & influencer collaboration

- Improve platform trust: verified sellers, authentication, return policies

- Tailored marketing strategies by gender & age

- Policy support: subsidies & eco-labels for circular platforms

7. References

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Thank you!

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