

New Clothing in Charity Retail: The Discrepancy Between Second-Hand and First-Hand Consumption

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to define a new phenomenon in second-hand retail which has seen an influx of new clothing starting to populate UK-based charity shops. Previous research on the modern charity shop has been explored from a social adoption perspective, analysing how consumer behaviour has adapted and changed over time.

Design: This paper however adopts a systems design approach, through a series of semi-structured, informal interviews with consumers and industry experts, including a charity retail manager, policy experts and a Ghanaian non-governmental organisation.

Findings: The data collected questions how a distribution and regenerative model can work with contemporary consumer culture, whilst being adaptable to the current second-hand clothing economy. Resources which flow into the proposed model will sustain even distribution to keep clothing out of landfill by utilising regenerative qualities that ebb and flow in a localised economy.

Value: This will prevent the demise of clothing longevity and promotes new opportunities through the use of systems thinking, material studies and service design methods.

Keywords: consumption, second-hand, charity retail, new clothing.

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