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The Principle of Rarity on Vintage Clothing:

Consumers' preferences and self-expression

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Abstract

Title: The Principle of Rarity on Vintage Clothing: Consumers' preferences and self-expression

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Rarity is a widely discussed topic in consumer behaviour as perceptions of scarcity suggest a higher value and preference for the product or service considered. Within the fashion realm the rarity principle is often highlighted in luxury to grant exclusivity. However, the role of rarity should be also considered in vintage fashion, as vintage clothing is usually perceived to be unique, different and one of a kind. Since rarity entails exclusivity and vintage clothing is believed to be non-conforming to the fashion norm, this research experimentally tests both the effects of rarity on preferences for vintage clothing and consumers' expression of identity through vintage. An online survey was led in which participants were exposed to two conditions of product type (vintage, new collection) paired to two conditions of availability cues (rare, abundant). In general terms, no preference for rarity over abundancy was found, but results indicated a significant interaction with product type. Vintage was preferred over new collection clothing when rarity cues were presented and was valued significantly more in the rare over abundant condition. Moreover, a main effect of rarity cues was found on levels of self-expression through the product shown; this effect was larger if it was vintage compared to new collection. Overall, findings suggests that only vintage benefits from rarity cues – while being damaged by abundancy cues – and that rarity and vintage together have the power of turning consumers in their authentic selves, as perceived self-expression is enhanced when wearing a rare vintage piece.

Keywords: vintage, rarity, fashion, resale market, preference, self-expression, consumer behaviour

Sumário

Título: O Princípio de Raridade em Vestuário Vintage: Preferências e autoexpressão dos consumidores

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A raridade é um tema amplamente discutido no comportamento dos consumidores, visto que a perceção de escassez tende a ser associada a um maior valor e preferência pelo produto ou serviço considerado. No domínio da moda, o princípio da raridade é frequentemente utilizado no luxo, para conceder exclusividade. A função da raridade também deve ser considerada na moda vintage, desde que este é geralmente vista como única e diferente. Considerando que a raridade implica exclusividade e visto que o vintage não está em conformidade com a norma da moda, este estudo testa experimentalmente ambos os efeitos da raridade nas preferências relativa ao vestuário vintage e a expressão da identidade dos consumidores através de vintage. Foi conduzido um questionário em que os participantes foram expostos a duas condições de produto (vintage, nova coleção) e duas condições de disponibilidade (raro, abundante). Relativamente à preferência, a raridade não se destacou da abundância, mas os resultados indicaram uma interação significativa com o tipo de produto. Vintage foi preferida ao vestuário novo da coleção quando foram apresentados sinais de raridade, e foi atribuído um valor monetário significativamente maior na condição de raridade, em comparação com a abundância. Foi também observado uma relação entre raridade e autoexpressão, especialmente reforçada no vestuário vintage. As conclusões sugerem que o vintage só pode beneficiar da perceção de raridade – mas é danificada por sinais de abundância – e que a raridade e a vintage em conjunto têm o poder de transformar os consumidores nos seus eus autênticos, fomentando a sua autoexpressão.

Palavras-chave: vintage, raridade, moda, mercado de revenda, preferência, autoexpressão, comportamento do consumidor

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1. Introduction

Fashion trends evolve year on year, season by season, not exclusively from the creativity of top designers, but also – and very importantly – following consumer values. The latter progress steadily, hand-in-hand with cultural shifts, societal movements, new needs and concerns. In the last years, the fashion consumer became ever more interested in following a responsible behaviour – both socially and environmentally – when shopping. Concepts such as materiality, conspicuousness and ostentation have been slowly fading out to be replaced by the quest for hedonic experiences: fast fashion concepts have been increasingly boycotted, but luxury brands as well have feared for their business models (McKinsey & Company, 2021). Indeed, until the beginning of 2020, the luxury industry seemed to be endangered by consumer anti-materialism and had already started to transform physical shops into museum-like stores and to expand into hospitality, in search for new paradigms of value creation (Deloitte, 2020, p. 6; McKinsey & Company, 2021, p. 31). However, with the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak, the shift took another turn as consumer values and habits drastically changed: e-commerce gained further relevance, mobility was reduced to a minimum, and the overall crisis obliged people to spend less in unnecessary items. At the same time, staying full days at home, people have started looking into their used garments and – to either make some extra money in a period of economic difficulty, or just to give away what they did not use anymore – they have increasingly decided to resell (ThredUp, 2020; McKinsey & Company, 2021). The resale market was already in a process of growth, and Covid-19 crisis seems to have further boosted it (Lieber, 2020): "resale is exploding" (Danziger, 2019).

The resale market was already booming prior to the pandemic outbreak and, among the various shopping behaviour, it is demonstrating to be one of the most chosen since the Covid-19 crisis has exploded. The value of *silent luxury* came back, with consumers preferring local handcrafted clothing that can symbolise sustainability and quality, without it needing to infer any particular status to the owner (Achille & Zipster, 2020). Similarly, the concept of status and reselling activity completely changed: the feeling of shame that was historically associated to who sells an owned garment and to who buys a pre-owned one, is now antiquated. Indeed, second-hand shopping is not only gaining notoriety and people's interest, but is becoming a fashionable habit, that is cool *per se* (Turunen, et al., 2020). The new consumers – which are mainly Generation Z and the younger segment of Millennials – follow new values for which second-hand does not result anymore in unhygienic and shameful, but in a socially and

environmentally conscious behaviour (McKinsey & Company, 2020). The resale market, in this sense, is able to confer a symbol of responsibility to its shoppers and sellers, by empowering them and making them feel proud and likely to engage in word of mouth (Turunen & Pöyry, 2018; Turunen et al., 2020).

In the last years, within the resale realm, vintage clothing has taken foot among younger generations, that feel the nostalgia of a time that they did not experience but would have wanted to. The concept of vintage has always had a certain popularity as it is strongly connected to brand's heritage and timelessness, especially when considering iconic products from fashion and luxury brands (Amatulli et al., 2018; Kessous & Valette-Florence, 2019). Vintage clothing, at the same time, holds the characteristics of second-hand items as, in most cases within the collective mindset, the two are synonyms. Instead, two different definitions exist to set them apart, however one does not exclude the other (Roux & Guiot, 2008; Cervellon et al., 2012).

What results to be very different from vintage to second-hand is that the former has always been perceived as more luxurious and high status, while the latter tends to be more accessible and thus, gaining a lower status. Many times, however, the two can coincide: vintage is not by default a second-hand garment, but it can be if it has been worn already by its previous owner. Often, clothes that could be categorised as vintage can be found in second-hand shops and, in general, second-hand stores aim at keeping a vintage and edgy aspect in order to propose clothes that cannot be easily found in common shops. Indeed, people are more inclined in buying risky – as in different and not trending – outfits when they are second-hand compared to first-hand (Cervellon et al., 2012; Turunen et al., 2020). Furthermore, resale venues are increasingly specialising in luxury pre-loved items in order to make good quality and branded clothing more accessible for a wider consumer segment, while attracting higher status consumers with the most luxurious and rare garments (Kessous & Valette-Florence, 2019).

The resale market can probably declare most of its recent success from the uniqueness of its pieces, that sometimes could even increase the value of an iconic vintage item, for instance if it were a limited edition or not produced anymore (Turunen et al., 2020). Previous research highlighted that the main motives for second-hand and vintage shopping are *sustainable choice, price attractiveness, feelings of nostalgia, risk investment* and consumers' *needs for uniqueness* (Turunen & Leipämaa-Leskinen, 2015; Amatulli et al., 2018; Kessous & Valette-Florence, 2019). However, most studies are correlational or qualitative, focusing on consumers' sentiments when purchasing vintage and second-hand in contrast to first-hand. The present

paper aims at bringing novelty to the field by conducting an experimental research through moderation analyses. This study analyses further what is hypothesised to be a core concept of the vintage market – namely the rarity principle – by manipulating the variables of rarity vs. abundance and vintage vs. new collection items. The relationship studied will be firstly relative to consumer preferences and, secondly, to the perception of generated self-expression through the clothing presented. The research questions that the paper addresses are: Do consumers prefer a clothing item when perceived as rare, and does a difference exists if the product is a vintage or new collection item? More specifically, do consumers choose vintage because they perceive it as rare and to what extent does perceived rarity impact vintage preference? Moreover, to what extent – if at all – is product rarity a means to boost self-expression when wearing a clothing item? Is the relationship between vintage and generated self-expression moderated by rarity, thus, do consumers feel to be expressing themselves through their clothing more if they wear a rare vintage garment compared to a widely available vintage piece?

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Resale Market

The resale market is undergoing a process of steady growth since a few years already; in 2019, it grew 25 times faster than retail, with the former growing by 49% and the latter by only 2% (ThredUp, 2020). It must be considered that retail is an already developed sector which is currently much wider than resale, however new trends are never to be underestimated as they could be the drivers of important shifts in the future of shopping consumption. The stability of the first-hand market in general, has been put under scrutiny already in 2019 by the yearly report "State of Fashion" conducted by McKinsey, in which the "end of ownership" appeared as a major theme. According to McKinsey's research (2019), consumers are shifting away from traditional concepts of ownership, in favour of pre-owned, repaired and rental business models. The latter is explained by the need for newness to coexist with the ever stronger sense of responsibility towards the environment, especially among younger generations. The resulting demand goes in the direction of accessing products in alternative ways, lengthening goods' lifecycles and guaranteeing constant newness at the same time (McKinsey & Company, 2019, p. 39).

Since Covid-19 crisis, the resale market has not been damaged as most sectors, instead, the expectations are of further and accelerated growth, with second-hand through online channels

being set to grow by 69% from the already impressive results of 2019, until the end of 2021. Retail, on the other hand, results to be more negatively touched by the pandemic, with projections of shrinking by 15% in the same year frame (ThredUp, 2020). In general, in periods of economic uncertainty people "shift to thrift", but in this historical period, there are the fundamentals to believe that it will not be a momentaneous trend; rather, it acts as accelerator to an already fast growing trend, that is here to stay (Lieber, 2020). The resale market is expected to grow further, by 5 times its current size in the timespan of 5 years – reaching the market value of $64 billion – and to grow almost twice the size of fast fashion by 2029 (ThredUp, 2020; Statista, 2021). As the future of resale seems to be gaining importance, while the retail industry has "slumped" (Danziger, September 2019), it is of uttermost importance to focus where consumers perceive value. Given its rising interest by consumers and the current trend that sees retailers entering the realm of resale and "vintage style" through partnerships and collaborations (Cassidy & Bennett, 2012; ThredUp, 2020, p.12), it is worth giving further attention to the matter.

2.1.1. Vintage and Second-hand

In a collective mindset, vintage and second-hand are perceived to be synonyms, although they have their own distinct definition. Both belonging to the realm of the resale sector, second-hand comprises all garments that are pre-owned and generally used, while vintage holds a more narrowing connotation (Roux & Guiot, 2008). The term "vintage" was coined to denote wine's harvests among connoisseurs and then adopted by the fashion industry as definition of a "rare an authentic piece that represents the style of a particular couturier or era" (Gerval, 2008; Cervellon et al., 2012, p. 957; Kessous & Valette-Florence, 2019, p. 314). Another recognised and accepted definition lays in its relation to the temporal dimension, thus vintage can be described as something that has been produced between the 1920s and the 1980s, while for items older than that, the correct term would be "antique" (Cervellon et al., 2012). Therefore, for a garment to be considered a second-hand product, it does not need to be old, and not all vintage items have been necessarily used (Turunen & Leipämaa-Leskinen, 2015). However, in many cases the two concepts in the resale market overlap: vintage can be second-hand and second-hand can be vintage.

Although it is important for the sake of clarity to mark the rightful distinction of vintage from second-hand, in the present paper vintage should not be perceived in such strict terms. For the purpose of this research, common perception is deemed more relevant than the proper definition

provided by literature reviews, since these two do not usually coincide. Since the study is conducted on people's perceptions of an item classified as "vintage" and the underlying connections that they would make in their daily lives, there is no interest in manipulating the concept of vintage itself: it could have an unwanted effect by distorting their actual viewpoints. Indeed, not only people tend to confuse vintage with second-hand but, as years pass by, fashion evolves and older clothes become increasingly unavailable, it is inevitable that the concept of vintage requires updates. Currently, within the fashion industry, an item that is 15 years old can be rightfully classified as vintage and, even a younger garment – in between 10 and 5 years old – is sellable as vintage (Kent, 2018). Furthermore, the locations of sale usually coincide: called interchangeably *vintage* or *second-hand shops* – regardless if they are local stores or online sites –, one can find both kind of products together (Cervellon et al., 2012). The latter contributes to merging the understanding of both into one indistinct concept: that of resale, that is both second-hand and vintage.

2.1.2. Overcoming Negative Associations: The Stigma and the New Consumer

Traditionally, the resale market was viewed as a shameful and unhygienic shopping practice, typical of lower-income groups that cannot afford a full-priced item (McColl et al., 2013). Although the concept of vintage has always held a better connotation – as it has been used by fashion brands in light of heritage and timelessness – it suffers from the concept contamination that merges second-hand and vintage into a unique concept in the collective mindset. However, more recently, most people are starting to abandon these old and antiquate preconceptions on the resale market. One of the reasons for such shift is given by the ever stronger positive association to resale developed from the increasing awareness of environmental threats that the fashion realm – and fast fashion in particular – poses (McColl et al., 2013; Turunen, et al., 2020). However, a further and even more interesting reason for this gradual change is provided by what could be seen as an increasing search for non-conformity to fashion trends (McColl et al., 2013).

Especially, the youngest consumers found in second-hand clothing and vintage-style, a mean of self-expression and differentiation from the mass fashion market. For instance, the interviews conducted by Woodward (2009), registered a growing differentiation in the perception of the "high street" new-collection-market from the combination of new collections garments with second-hand and vintage clothing. The former alone was described as "homogenized and inauthentic, leaving no space for individuality" (Woodward, 2009, p. 88), while the vintage

consumer is characterised as someone that ought to look different and authentic: "This difference comes not from wearing an outrageous or novel style, but through how the items are combined" (p. 91). Vintage can indeed be used as a means to define its consumers: who wears vintage clothing is being true to himself by fostering his authenticity as own personality (Palmer, 2005). McColl et al. (2013), by exploring the other side of the coin – namely, vintage retailers – came to similar conclusions: in describing their consumers, retailers highlighted again the importance of differentiation and personality, both of the store and of consumers, as means to foster their originality.

At the same time, even older generations are lately inclined to shop "pre-loved" items, as the luxury is increasingly entering the realm of the resale market. Currently, many stores are specialised on selling only a certain level of quality and branded second-hand clothing, which are always in perfect conditions, otherwise they would lose great part of their value. In that regard, the resale can happen at very high prices, and consumers are usually willing to buy: items are not perceived anymore as old and unhygienic but rather as timeless. However, the shift that has been happening in the consumer's mindset is even wider and more important: resale is viewed as a means of empowerment. As the study led by Turunen et al. (2020) on consumers' sentiments about selling and buying second-hand luxury highlighted, both sellers and buyers perceive to increase their social status and social role as responsible consumers. The latter radically changes the traditional conception of a second-hand seller that sells away its luxurious garments out of (economic) need, and a buyer that engages in social climbing without having the means to (Turunen et al., 2020). The new consumer thus results in being more savvy, non-conforming and investment-led, for that, the stigma associated is more than partly overcame. However, more traditional consumers do exist, and, at the same time, most people do not stop shopping new garments in favour of only pre-loved items. Neither it has been registered as a trend that people shop more vintage and second-hand compared to new goods, although the former is growing at a much higher rate than the latter. Therefore, although consumers are increasingly purchasing vintage clothing, there is no strong reason to hypothesize a preference for the latter over new collection items – and neither for its opposite.

2.2. The Rarity Principle

Rarity is a widely discussed topic in consumer behaviour, and it has proven to be particularly relevant in luxury consumption: a luxury item must be scarce and not easily accessible (Phau & Prendergast, 2000; Heine, 2010). Indeed, in the luxury market, a snob demand exists through

a willingness to pay premium prices for exclusivity and recognition of the latter (Amaldoss & Jain, 2005). Among the earliest publications on rarity and fashion, Marshall (1920) recognised a need for social distinction by obtaining what most people cannot buy. Uzgoren and Guney (2012) further describe a "snob effect" as the value perceived in buying a unique item, aiming at being the only consumer: avoiding over-popular brands, price and low availability becomes the only indicators of privilege and product value. These types of consumers, are more interested in the consumption experience when it is inner-directed, thus taking more pleasure from being unique than from showing to others the true value of their purchased product (Uzgoren & Guney, 2012). Rarity goods are, indeed, opposite to network goods as such, the value of ownership decreases as the owners of that same product increase (Koford & Tschoegl, 1998).

2.2.1. Heuristics of Scarcity

The principle of rarity has been proven to have an effect in other realms as well, even when rationality should be the only factor affecting the outcome. In 1985, Frank argued that people are influenced by rarity when looking for a new workplace: in his study, people seemed more likely to accept lower salaries for a high-status position within the company, while a premium was demanded to accept a low-status role. Similarly, people tend to purchase more impulsively when there is a scarcity cue as time limit or limited stock availability – this happens even when the stimulus is induced and artificial, also if consumers are aware of it (Aggarwal et al., 2011). Rarity could be caused by natural reasons just as it could be caused by marketing strategies, as with a particular model of a luxury watch. However, as Oruc (2015) argues, there is no real distinction in terms of rarity between the two conditions: whether a product is scarce by nature or made rare for marketing reasons, it constitutes a limited opportunity to purchase – suggesting an exclusive benefit. Moreover, the strategy could also take place in form of time scarcity through a deadline tactic: when a timing is placed on an offer, people tend to feel rushed in making the decision to buy the product (Cialdini, 1984). The literature on scarcity is mainly divided between product and resource scarcity. Product scarcity is defined as a "real or perceived lack of goods and services available to the consumer either in the short-term or long-term" and differs from resource scarcity as the second refers to "real or perceived forms of capital [or other consumer inputs]" (Hamilton et al., 2019, p. 533). Existing literature also highlights the two main tactics used in marketing that are quantity limits and time limits (Aggarwal et al., 2011). In the present paper, the focus will be on product scarcity and its connected limit on quantities, in other words, on rarity.

Perception of rarity suggests to consumers a higher value of the product or service, and thus influences them into choosing it over others (Cialdini, 1984, p. 230; Aggarwal et al., 2011; Hamilton et al., 2019). The latter happens because the human mind creates shortcuts for decision-making that, not even being aware of it, can spare us from making cognitive biases. As past studies further suggest, consumer tend to experience more arousal when they perceive products to be rare and, as Hamilton et al. (2019, p. 536) explain, "heightened arousal can reduce consumers' capacity to perform cognitive tasks, increasing reliance on automatic processing and peripheral cues". In particular, the scarcity heuristics is the process by which an individual attributes value to an item for the solely reason of the item's perceived – and not necessarily real – scarcity, and thus the relative difficulty to find and buy (Lee & Choi, 2014).

Product scarcity also acts like a reminder of potential loss of and, as the human brain is more negatively affected by the idea of loss than the positive rational content of gain, "people seem to be more motivated by the thought of losing something than by the thought of gaining something of equal value" (Cialdini, 1984, p. 179). Indeed, techniques to alert the costumer of potential loss are also used by service providers such as airline companies and hotel booking sites, with banners such as "only 2 more seats for this fare" and "other 3 people are looking at this solution". In these cases, the savvy consumer is aware of the manipulation intended but still experiences the stress of potential loss and is thus more inclined to buy. As Aggarwal et al. (2011, p. 19) argue, such scarcity cues create a sense of urgency that results in shorter searches to look for "a better deal", while accelerating the decision to buy the product or service that is perceived as rare. Aggarwal and Vaidyanathan (2003) experimented the concept of time scarcity and found out that by making a promotional offer shorter, purchases accelerated, intention to buy increased, and intention to look for alternative deals diminished. On product scarcity, similarly, Zhu and Ratner (2015) found a preference for gift cards when described as scarce compared to when no information about their availability was given. Analogous results were obtained in previous studies already, such as with the research conducted by Verhallen and Robben (1994) on cookbooks: those with limited availability were seen as more attractive, expensive, and more valuable.

In the present research, rarity will be manipulated among participants to test its effect on consumer behaviour, with the following hypothesis:

H1. Consumers prefer a clothing item that is presented with rarity cues compared to abundancy cues.

2.2.2. Rarity in Vintage and Rarity in New Collections

As previously discussed, the vintage consumer is often described as someone who ought to look authentic by being different (Palmer, 2005), thus it is interesting to analyse whether vintage clothing is separable from the concept of rarity – in other words, is vintage chosen especially because of its perceived rarity? However, as hypothesised in H1, rarity could positively affect consumers' preferences even outside the realm of vintage fashion; nevertheless, it is important to take into consideration that there might be differences in understanding the scale of values when purchasing a new collection's item. It is widely recognised that luxury brands also base their business models on a rarity principle, but with a significant difference being that awareness is as much important as controlled brand diffusion for granting exclusivity (Phau & Prendergast, 2000). Furthermore, first-hand consumers are ever more attracted by limited editions and difficult-to-find or easily sold-out products, without them being neither vintage nor luxury items (Gierl et al., 2008). Traditional shopping motives, instead, are to follow fashion trends, thus understandable as network goods: the more people following the trend, the more the trend can establish itself and gain relevance (Koford & Tschoegl, 1998). For that, trending products need to be widely available and low stocks would not benefit the brand as consumers would be disappointed and unsatisfied.

The same cannot be said about vintage products. If the interpretation of McColl et al. (2013) – that is, vintage as a search for non-conformity to fashion trends – is taken as assumption, it can be derived that a quest and need for uniqueness might exist. Thus, it is also hypothesised that the resale market would not benefit from a network's good philosophy and, it is instead analysed whether rarity is an essential feature of vintage. If it holds true that vintage consumers shop in a way that helps them differentiate from the mass and fashion homogeneity (Kent, 2018), vintage – unlike new collection clothing – will benefit greatly from a perceived scarcity, but not necessarily from abundancy.

Although rarity is understood as being favoured over abundancy in general terms (H1), this paper argues that availability cues can further moderate the relationship between product type and consumers' preferences. It is thus hypothesised that:

H2. The effect of rarity cues (compared to abundancy cues) on consumers' preferences is larger when the product is a vintage garment than when it is a new collection item.

2.3. Self-Expression Through Rarity

The increase in vintage consumption has been argued to have risen from a boycott of fast fashion principles and its underlying concept that "coolness" is found in trends – understood as worn by many people (Palmer & Clark, 2005). Through the attributes connected to a scarcely available piece of clothing, consumers are believed to be looking for augmenting the degree of their self-expression – that can be defined as the "assertion of one's individual traits" (Kim & Sherman, 2007, p. 1). Self-expression, as explained by Kim and Sherman (2007) is strongly valued in individualistic cultures through the concepts of freedom, individuality and what is denoted as *expressive individualism*. In particular, Kim and Drolet (2003) argue that people making choices in order to express individuality and to appear unique, are exerting their self-expression through their choices, if their choices affect only themselves (thus usually in individualistic rather than collectivistic cultural contexts). However, analogously to other research, the three experiments led by Kim and Drolet (2003) did not aim at analysing the direct relationship between rarity and self-expression. Instead, their studies showed that people tend to change opinion more often if they perceive uniqueness as a positive factor and if they view choice as manifestation of self-expression, and that eventual difference is mostly connected to cultural education (Kim & Drolet, 2003).

Because of the lack of clarification between the influence of rarity on perception of self-expression – in quantitative and experimental terms – this research further aims at understanding whether rarity can foster self-expression. It is thus hypothesised that:

H3. Consumers' perceived self-expression through clothing is larger when the product is presented with rarity cues compared to abundancy cues.

Moreover, it is interesting to considered that vintage consumers seem to be favouring rarity to be "one of a kind" and to create their individual identities (DeLong et al., 2005; Cassidy & Bennett, 2012). Indeed, the very characteristic of being uncommon and non-conforming, would seem to be what modern consumers look for when escaping the fashion homogeneity (Kent, 2018). In the interviews conducted among vintage retailers in the research by Cassidy and Bennett (2012, pp. 243-244), the core concepts of vintage fashion are defined by "originality, authenticity and quality", while they also point out that "all fashion trends are recycled [as] they come from vintage styles". As such, vintage lovers see vintage fashion as the incarnation of authenticity, while at the same time being distinguished from the modern reinterpretation of the

original (thus vintage) pieces in fashion trends. By choosing vintage clothing, the consumer is also choosing to be set aside from the mass: a search for individuality over widely spread fashion trends (Cassidy & Bennett, 2012).

Furthermore, from the interviews conducted by DeLong et al. (2005), it emerges that vintage shoppers are never trying to look like each other by forming a collective fashion statement, rather, their purpose is to have a distinct and individual look. Indeed, by "recycling" pre-owned clothes, vintage consumers can mix them with new collections' pieces, in the attempt of creating their own aesthetics. By doing so, a sense of creativity emerges, together with the perception of being one's own stylist that is independent from what is commonly recognised as trendy (DeLong et al., 2005; Cassidy & Bennett, 2012).

Following the line of thought, it appears appealing to further identify whether rarity could moderate the relationship between vintage clothing and self-expression. Since vintage clothing is viewed as a symbol of individuality and originality and perceived as a way to define personalities, it can be hypothesized that vintage fashion can act as a means to foster self-expression too (Cassidy & Bennett, 2012; Amatulli et al., 2018). Following Kim and Drolet's (2003) framework, when vintage fashion can be interpreted as a choice to appear unique, it is a choice of self-expression – that could eventually hold true only when the factor of uniqueness, namely rarity, is present. Testing through experimental methods this behavioural connection, it is hypothesised that:

H4. The effect of rarity cues on consumers' perceived self-expression through clothing is larger when the product is a vintage piece compared to when it is a new collection item.

2.4. Overview

The heuristic of scarcity is among the most studied cognitive bias, as it has been widely proven that people tend to perceive rare products as more valuable and attractive (Cialdini, 1984; Aggarwal et al., 2011). Therefore, it can be hypothesised that the empirical study investigating the preference of rarity over abundancy, will hold true (H1). However, it must be taken into account that when consuming vintage instead of new collection garments, the underlying purchasing reasons and searched values could differ. Indeed, consumers that shop fashion trends could be understood as taking part in a network goods' mentality, that is the interest in having a good portion of people following the same trend, for the latter to be established as an actual trend and thus gaining relevance and value (Koford & Tschoegl, 1998). Instead, previous

correlational studies and market analysis interviews registered a trend among vintage consumers that is to escape fashion homogeneity, being non-conforming to widespread trends (Kent, 2018). It thus appears relevant to further investigate the moderation effects of availability cues on vintage and new collection clothing for consumers' preferences (H2).

The second part of the study will be directed towards the investigation of the relationship with a further variable, namely, self-expression. Rarity cues are believed to be connected to the search for individuality and self-expression (Kim & Sherman, 2007), however previous research did not investigate through experimental studies the existence and degree of this relation. Thus, this paper further aims at clarifying if and how rarity – against abundancy – cues can significantly increase the degree of self-expression that a consumer feels when thinking about wearing a certain product (H3). Finally, as vintage consumers are believed to be looking for authenticity and to be one of a kind, it is interesting to further put under test the moderation effect that rarity could have on the relationship between vintage clothing and self-expression (H4).

3. Methodology

The following chapter illustrates the methodology used to answer the hypotheses formulated in the current paper, to address the relative research questions. Firstly, the sample collected will be presented, then a description of the variables and measures will be provided. Lasty, further information about the procedure and study design will be given.

3.1. Participants

The data was collected through a survey sent on social networks, in particular WhatsApp messages and Facebook groups (Appendix A). The survey granted anonymity and was on a voluntary basis, with no rewards offered for its completion. The length of the survey was recorded to be around 5 to 10 minutes and, in order to check for truthful answers, an attention check was included, together with a final statement of honesty, in which participants were free to state that they did not pay enough attention for the answers to be valid. A total of 283 responses have been initially registered, to which, however, 12 were excluded: 8 failed the attention check and 4 gave a negative answer to the statement of honesty. Among the remaining 271 participants, only 232 reached until the end of the survey, however the other 39 incomplete responses have been included whenever the answer for the specific set of question was present. Out of the accounted participants, 145 were female, 85 were male, 2 categorised themselves as

"other", while the remaining did not answer. Registered participants were comprised in an age range between 18 and 67 years old, having most of the people being in their twenties – with around the 50% being around 22 and 24 years old. The 80% of the population addressed falls under the Generation Z category, which is the most appealing for the purpose of this study, not only as they consist in the new consumers and in the future biggest chunk of shoppers, but also as they are leading to a gradual change in consumers' values and product preferences (McKinsey & Company, 2021). Responses came from all over the world, thus generalising the study validity across nationalities and cultures.

3.2. Materials

3.2.1. Manipulation of Independent Variables

In addressing the hypotheses formulated, two independent variables have been manipulated, namely *product type* and *availability cues*. For the former, the two conditions that have been created are *vintage* and *new collection*, while for availability cues, the conditions are *rare* and *abundant*.

In the first page, participants were either presented with the vintage or new collection condition, without manipulating yet the products' availability. This was used to assert whether differences in likeability and perception of rarity already existed between a vintage and non-vintage piece. In the vintage condition, the text was the following: "The product shown is a vintage jacket on sale in a shop based in London called Alpha Vintage", while for new collection condition: "The product shown is a jacket from the new collection of a shop based in London called Alpha Boutique". In both cases, respondents were presented with the same picture of a brown suede jacket (see Figure 1). To eliminate the brand variable – which could have played a role in consumers' preferences – a jacket without any clear brand name was chosen, and fictious store names were created instead.

Figure 1. Brown suede jacket. Product shown for both vintage and new collection conditions.

The manipulation of the second independent variable aimed at adding information to the previously shown jacket and condition (vintage, new collection). In order to make the information salient for the participants to carefully read the text, a clothing tag was created and inserted as a picture. Four conditions were then created as a combination of product type (vintage, new collection) and availability cues (rarity, abundancy). Each created tag reminded what type of product the jacket in question was and added information about its availability (see Figure 2). The texts were created in such a way that the product in every condition seemed equally attractive, to prevent the conditioning of participants' preferences and personal opinions (see Appendix B for text clarity). Other information was also included in the description of the product, to make it less clear that there was a manipulation on the effect of availability, and the jacket was described as unisex for participants to believe it was a product they could wear, regardless of their gender identification.

A) Vintage and rarity condition

B) Vintage and abundancy condition

C) New collection and rarity condition

D) New collection and abundancy condition

Figure 2. Clothing tags of the four conditions: 2 product type (vintage, new collection) x 2 availability cues (rarity, abundancy).

3.2.2. Measurement of Dependent Variables

The dependent variables aimed at analysing consumer behaviour, preferences and opinions towards a vintage or new collection garment solely, on a first stage, and then paired with rarity or abundancy cues as well. In the following paragraphs, the main set of dependent variables analysed in the study will be discussed. The scale used throughout the entire study – with one

exception that will be later addressed – was kept constant, to facilitate the respondents' understanding and minimise confusion. The scale was built as a slider going from 0 being "not at all" to 100 being "extremely", thus replicating a probability measure. To make it more mobile friendly and to reduce randomness of assigned values, the numbers could only be selected every ten – thus 0, 10, 20 and so on until 100.

Perception of Rarity

The perception of the product's rarity was measured twice: once before the rarity manipulation and once again after the information about product availability were given. Four items were measured through the following questions: "to what extent is this jacket unique?", "how rare do you perceive this jacket to be?", "to what extent do you think this jacket is worn by many people?" and "how common do you think this jacket is?". For the questions to not suggest either option (rarity or abundancy), two of them asked for the uniqueness of the product and the other two on the jacket's diffusion instead. These questions were asked the first time to measure whether eventual differences exist between the perception of a clothing item just based on its belonging to either a new collection or the vintage realm. After the availability information, the same set of questions were assessed to control whether the manipulation was effective and to spot eventual differences compared to the previously obtained answers.

Attitudes Towards the Product and Store

Only after the manipulation of rarity, consumers' attitudes were checked in relation to the jacket shown and considering the relative information provided about availability. Two questions related to the product shown: "to what extent do you like this jacket?" and "how likely it is that you would wear this jacket?". A further question was then addressed to the store related to the product, that is "Alpha Vintage" if the clothing was targeted as vintage and "Alpha Boutique" if the jacket was presented as a new collection item. The question was: "how likely it is that you would purchase other clothing from [the same shop of the jacket shown]?". The latter was done as a control measure for the likeability of the jacket shown: eliminating the variable of the specific product, the aim is to further check whether there is a propensity to buy other vintage or new collection pieces, in general terms.

Purchase Likelihood and Willingness To Pay

A question on the purchase likelihood was asked twice: before and after the manipulation of rarity. Although there is a risk of participants aiming at keeping their answer consistent, it is interesting to discover if this is not the case and if, instead, a clear difference in preferences exists. The scale used to assess the latter was still the same as used before – between 0 ("not at all") and 100 ("extremely") – and the question was: "how likely are you to purchase this jacket?".

Another question on the participants' willingness to pay – "what would be your willingness to pay for the jacket shown?" – was asked in terms of numbers (with EUR as a currency). Participants were free to choose whichever value – by inserting it through a text entry – in order to avoid giving them a range in which they could feel constrained and that could suggest a real value of the jacket. This question was only asked once, after the manipulation on availability, since it was deemed less important to check for differences and the consistency threat was believed to be higher.

Although the *attitudes* scale was used as the principal measure for consumers' preferences, purchase likelihood and willingness to pay were used as a support to gain further insights in consumer behaviour and preferences.

Perception of Product Characteristics

The set of questions on the product's characteristics aimed at assessing how the jacket was perceived, after having taken all the information into account. The questions comprised: "to what extent is the jacket cool?", "to what extent is the jacket shown fashionable?", "to what extent is the jacket shown *alternative,* as in different from what you would normally find?" and "to what extent is the jacket shown *mainstream*, as in similar to what other people would normally wear?". These set of questions were thought as a way to inquire for differences in the perception of the jacket's connotations on the pure base of its product type and availability cues. For instance, is the jacket perceived more "alternative" on the basis of its definition as a vintage piece? Or is it perceived as more "mainstream" just because it is widely available? Or again, is it "cooler" because it is a rare vintage item?

Levels of Self-Expression Through Product

As a second study, the levels of self-expression perceived through imagining wearing the jacket shown were measured. The latter aims at analysing eventual differences among conditions, as it is hypothesised that rarity cues and the characteristics of being vintage can help foster perceived levels of self-expression in the consumers' minds. The questions addressed the main concepts related to self-expression, namely, originality, being "one of a kind", independence and authenticity (DeLong et al., 2005; Cassidy & Bennett, 2012). Thus, participants were asked: "to what extent would you feel original by wearing the jacket shown?", "do you feel like you would set yourself apart from the majority of the people by wearing the jacket shown?", "do you feel you would manifest your own fashion independence (from the mass market) by wearing the jacket shown?", "do you feel that the jacket shown would help you to manifest your true identity?" and "to what extent wearing the jacket would foster your self-expression?".

3.2.3. Controlling Independent Variables

Another set of questions were asked at the end of the study to control for the previously measured dependent variables. It was deemed important to control whether participants in general – thus not related to the present study or the proposed product – feel that they can express themselves through what they wear. If they do not, their answers to *self-expression through product* will also probably be insignificant. Another – unrelated but essential – independent variable that was included concerns respondents' demographics.

General Levels of Self-Expression Through Clothing

General levels of perceived self-expression through clothing are measured as it is probable that analysed levels of self-expression through the jacket shown will always be low if the participant in general does not believe that the attires he wears can contribute to the expression of his self. For the sake of the present study, it is deemed important to understand whether the levels of self-expression through a products' characteristics can be enhanced through the variables studied, considering that a connection between clothing and identity exists – as demonstrated by previous studies (Sivadas & Venkatesh, 1995; Cardoso et al, 2010).

To assess the latter, two scale were usen. The first – using the same scale from 0 ("not at all") to 100 ("extremely") – fitted the precise questions that this study aimed at investigating: "do you feel good when you follow a fashion trend?", "do you feel good when you wear different

clothing from the majority of the people?", "how much do you feel to be expressing yourself when following a fashion trend?", and "how important is it for you to express yourself through your clothing?". This set aimed at addressing the previous questions on the perceived levels of self-expression, but addressed to what they generally wear, instead of the jacket presented in the study. In this way, it can be assessed – if the previous questions did not result in high levels of self-expression – if it is due to the person's general sentiment that clothing are not to represent their identity.

A second scale was however chosen to further assess the validity of the previous scale. Indeed, a widely recognised and accepted measure exists to assess the extent of possession incorporation in the extended self (Sivadas & Venkatesh, 1995; Cardoso et al., 2010). The *general extended-self* scale was developed by Sivadas and Machleit in 1994 based on Belk's (1988) view of the extended self (Mirbabaie et al., 2021). This scale is the only one incorporated in the present study that has a different level of measurement, being a seven-point Likert scale going from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". This set is also the only one having statement instead of questions, which were preferred for the sake of this research as they leave more space for the participants' interpretation and opinions. However, it was incorporated as it presents a high reliability (α=.839) and can be useful as solid support to the other previously un-tested scale. The statements taken from the extended-self scale were: "the clothes I own help me achieve the identity I want to have", "the clothes I buy help me narrow the gap between what I am and what I try to be", "the clothes I own are central to my identity", "my clothes are part of who I am", "if my clothes were stolen from me I would feel as if my identity has been snatched from me", and "I derive some of my identity from my clothes".

Demographics

As a last step, questions about age, gender and country of origin were asked. The first was presented as an open-ended question, in which participants could numerically insert their relative age. For gender, a choice from three options was given: "male", "female", "other". Finally, nationality was asked as a wider encompassing term, as people might have multiple nationalities, a country of birth that differs from their whole-life-residence, or from what they would describe as their origin. To the question "what is your country of origin? (Please consider your first nationality or the country that you feel represents your origin the best)" a drop-down list was inserted containing all the countries of the world.

3.3. Procedure

Participants were sent a survey link with the access to the debrief page, in which they were asked for consent into participating in the study and their rights in revoking consent were explained. In the same page, they were granted anonymity and confidentiality, informed about the approximate duration of the study, and a contact with the researcher was provided. However, the description of the study itself remained deliberately vague, to avoid possible threats to the validity of the research. On the following page participants could find a link to be redirected to the beginning of the study. The latter made it possible to program a randomizer that would assign a different condition to every participant, while granting an even distribution among respondents. Respondents could either fall in the category of vintage clothing or that of a new collection item, both showing the same product, but with a different description. Each condition was paired with further two possibilities: either providing rarity or abundancy cues.

In the first part of the survey, participants were exposed only to the product type – vintage or new collection – condition. In both cases, they were presented with the same picture of a jacket and were either told that it was a vintage piece from a shop called "Alpha Vintage" or a new collection item from a shop called "Alpha Boutique". They were then asked to rate the levels of perceived rarity and commonality to the product as well as their likelihood to purchase. The latter was used to assess whether people perceive vintage products to be rarer and if a difference in preference exists just on the base of whether a product is vintage or not.

In the second part of the study, participants were shown the tag of the jacket previously shown, having either information about rarity – rare product – or abundancy – widely available product. The page presenting this information was given with a minimum time requirement – meaning that one could not go on with the study for 15 seconds – to grant that the salient information was not skipped. Then respondents were presented with the same questions about the perceived rarity and commonality of the product and their likelihood to purchase. Since they were asked to take into consideration the additional information provided, the risk that they tried to be consistent with their previous answers was minimised.

Other four set of questions were asked in the order that follows. Firstly, preferences were measured, concerning the extent to which respondents liked the product, would wear that or other clothes from the same store, their purchase likelihood and willingness to pay. Secondly, participants were asked questions on their perception on how fashionable, cool, alternative or

mainstream the product shown was. Thirdly, they were presented with a scale to measure the extent to which wearing the product shown would foster their self-expression. Then, to control whether the latter measures could only influence people who normally use their clothing as statement for self-expression, a scale measuring general levels of self-expression through fashion was present. To get a more reliable result and as a confirmation of this scale, a previously tested and widely accepted matrix – the general extended-self scale by Sivadas and Machleit (1994) – was included to further test inclination to express themselves through clothing.

Lastly, demographics such as age, gender and nationality were asked. Before ending the survey, respondents could state whether their answers had been attentive and truthful or whether they would recommend the researcher to not include their response in the dataset, if they did not pay enough attention when completing the study.

3.4. Experimental Design

The experiment was a 2 product type (vintage, new collection) x 2 availability cues (rarity, abundancy) between subjects' design.

4. Results

The following chapter presents the analysis of the quantitative data. Firstly, the sample analysed will be detailed, then the reliability test will be discussed and the rarity manipulation will be checked. Finally, the hypothesis will be tested, and the statistical results provided.

4.1. Sample

The study had a total of 283 participants, that was later reduced to 271, removing all invalidated answers, but keeping 39 partial responses. Out of the accounted participants, 53.5% were female, 31.4% male, 0.7% did not recognise in either classification ("other"), and the remaining 14.4% did not provide an answer. The age range was comprised between 18 and 67 years old, with most of the participants being from 22 to 24 (Mdn=23). Responses came from 38 countries all over the world, with the majority coming from Europe (70%); although a great presence of European influence is part of the study, a good heterogeneity could be guaranteed (even within Europe, participants belonged to 20 different nationalities) (Appendix B: Gender, Age, Country of Origin).

4.2. Reliability Analysis

A reliability analysis through a Cronbach's alpha test was conducted for all scales used in the present study. Perceptions of rarity – after rarity's manipulation – (α=.84), attitudes towards the product shown (α=.92), levels of self-expression through the product (α=.90), general levels of self-expression through clothing (α=.78), and the general extended-self (α=.81) were analysed in order to check for their reliability and accuracy. Since a result higher than 0.7 is generally recognised as good (Nunnally, 1978), the present study is accepted as internally valid and reliable (Appendix C: Reliability Statistics).

4.3. Availability Manipulation Check

To assess whether the manipulation of availability cues was effective, a manipulation check was done comparing responses on the item's perceived rarity before and after the manipulation. The difference in the rarity conditions appeared consistent as the perceived rarity before was lower (M=46.09, SD=18.03) than after the manipulation in the rarity condition (M=58.38, SD=21.17), for both vintage and new collection together. Analogously, in the abundancy conditions, a lower perceived rarity after the abundancy manipulation (M=39.52, SD=19.55) was found for both product types together – compared to before the manipulation (M=47.00, SD=17.41).

	Rare Condition		**Abundant Condition**	
	No Manipulation	Availability Manipulation	No Manipulation	Availability Manipulation
Mean	46.0846	58.3789	47.0000	39.5168
Std. Dev.	18.02956	21.17278	17.40861	19.55077

Table 1. Compared means on perceived rarity before and after manipulation in the rarity and abundancy conditions.

Two ANOVA analysis were further run to assess whether the effect of the manipulation was statistically significant: while before the availability manipulation no effect on availability cues was found ($F(1,267)=.08$, $p=.779$), a main effect resulted after the manipulation ($F(1,243)=57.15$, $p=.000$). Moreover, four independent t-test were run to analyse the effect of the manipulation on each condition and, as they all resulted significant ($p<.05$), it can be confidently concluded that the manipulation on availability cues was successful. (Appendix C: Availability Manipulation Check).

4.3.1. Perceived Rarity of Vintage

As it was supposed in the literature review, vintage (M=43.66, SD=24.32) is generally perceived as rarer than new collection clothing (M=38.41, SD=27.17) when no availability manipulation is exerted. Moreover, comparing perceived rarity after the manipulation on rarity or abundancy, vintage always presents higher values compared to new collection (see Table 2). This first exploratory results suggest that, as hypothesised by this paper, vintage and rarity might have an important relationship that is interesting investigating further through the following chapter of hypothesis testing.

	Vintage Condition			**New Collection Condition**		
	No manipulation	Rarity manipulation	Abundancy manipulation	No manipulation	Rarity manipulation	Abundancy manipulation
Mean	43.66	63.69	36.25	38.41	47.78	31.82
Std. Dev.	24.319	26.015	25.666	27.173	29.970	20.736

Table 2. Compared means on perceived rarity before and after availability manipulation in the vintage and new collection conditions.

4.4. Hypothesis Testing

4.4.1. Attitudes towards the Product and Store

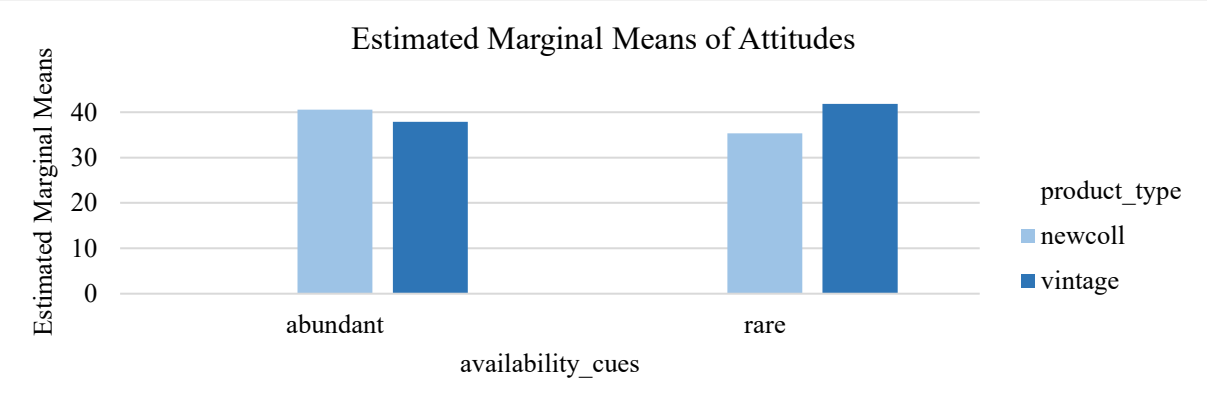
Participants in different conditions were asked a set of questions connected to their attitudes and engagement towards the product and the store presented (see paragraph 3.2.2.). A univariate ANOVA 2 product type x 2 availability cues was performed for the registered attitudes, indicating their preferences. No significant main effect was found on product type, nor on availability cues; upon this first analysis, the first hypothesis (H1) might be rejected. However, a marginal effect was found in the interaction between product type and availability cues, $F(1,240)=3.26$, $p=.072$. Further analysing the nature of this interaction through independent t-tests, it can be understood that the difference between the vintage and new collection conditions is larger when rarity cues are present, compared to when abundancy cues are present. The difference between vintage and new collection is marginally significant in the rarity condition ($M_{vintage}=44.48$, $SD_{vintage}=26.02$; $M_{new\ collection}=36.50$, $SD_{new\ collection}=24.52$; $t(123)=1.76$, $p=.081$), but it is non-significant for the abundancy condition ($M_{vintage}=39.64$, $SD_{vintage}=25.04$; $M_{new\ collection}=42.85$, $SD_{new\ collection}=20.06$; $t(117)=.63$, $p=.529$). Since

when rarity cues were assigned to the product, participants significantly preferred the vintage over the new collection item, the hypothesised H2 can be accepted. (Appendix C: Attitudes).

Attitudes

Availability_Cues	Product_Type	Mean	Std. Deviation
Abundant	New Collection	42.8485	20.05567
	Vintage	39.6354	25.04400
	Total	41.1204	22.83684
Rare	New Collection	36.5027	24.52079
	Vintage	44.4792	26.01871
	Total	40.5867	25.51289
Total	New Collection	39.5115	22.64302
	Vintage	42.0573	25.55121
	Total	40.8470	24.19650

Table 3. ANOVA descriptive statistics "Attitudes".



Graph 1. Interaction effect between availability cues and product type on attitudes towards the product.

4.4.2. Purchase Likelihood and Willingness to Pay

Participants were asked twice – before and after the manipulation on availability – their purchase likelihood, and only after the manipulation a further measure was introduced: their willingness to pay.

4.4.2.1. Purchase Likelihood Before Availability Cues Manipulation

Before exerting the availability manipulation, no effect was found on the influence of product type on purchase likelihood for the product shown, thus showing a consistency with what was discussed in the literature review and suggested by the present paper (paragraph 2.1.2.). (Appendix C: Purchase Likelihood Before Manipulation).

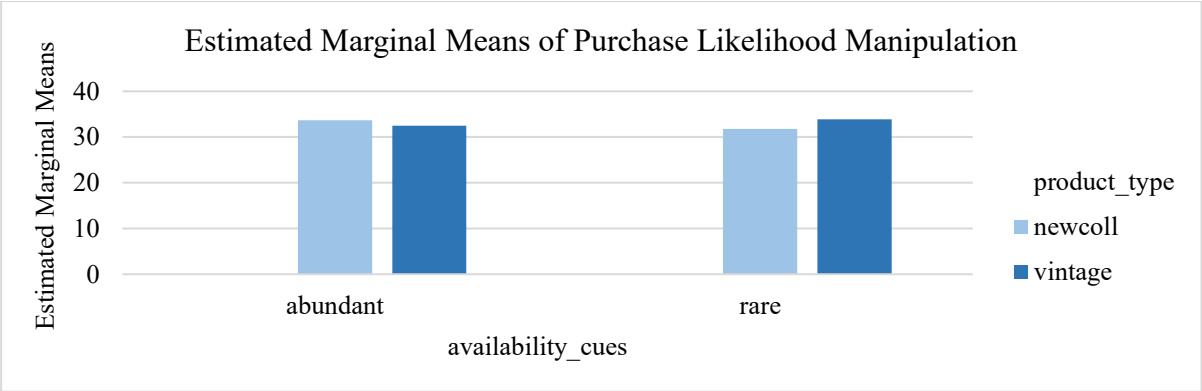
4.4.2.2. Purchase Likelihood After Availability Cues Manipulation

After the manipulation on availability cues, there is neither a main effect (for both product type and availability cues, F<1) nor a significant interaction between variables (F(1,240)=.22, p=.641). Nevertheless, there seems to be a purchase preference for the rare product when vintage (M=33.91, SD=28.54) compared to new collection (M=31.80, SD=27.42) and for the widely available product when new collection (M=33.64, SD=23.36) compared to vintage (M=32.50, SD=28.00). These results show a pattern similar to that found through the *attitudes* measure (see Graph 2) and in line to what hypothesised (H2), however, this measure in comparison, is slightly weaker. The latter could be due to the variable itself, indeed purchase likelihood – although it should be more reliable than purchase intentions scales – might not be the best measure to analyse consumer preferences (Wright & Murray, 2007). As the latter was taken into consideration before the analysis, purchase likelihood was kept as a separate measure and not included into the *attitudes* scale to assess preferences. Although not statistically relevant, these findings go in the direction of H2, while H1 further appears as false (Appendix C: Purchase Likelihood After Manipulation).

Purchase Likelihood Manipulation

Availability_Cues	Product_Type	Mean	Std. Deviation
Abundant	New Collection	33.64	23.362
	Vintage	32.50	28.002
	Total	33.03	25.860
Rare	New Collection	31.80	27.417
	Vintage	33.91	28.542
	Total	32.88	27.906
Total	New Collection	32.67	25.482
	Vintage	33.20	28.171
	Total	32.95	26.872

Table 4. ANOVA descriptive statistics “Purchase Likelihood After Manipulation”.



Graph 2. Interaction effect between availability cues and product type on purchase likelihood after availability cues manipulation.

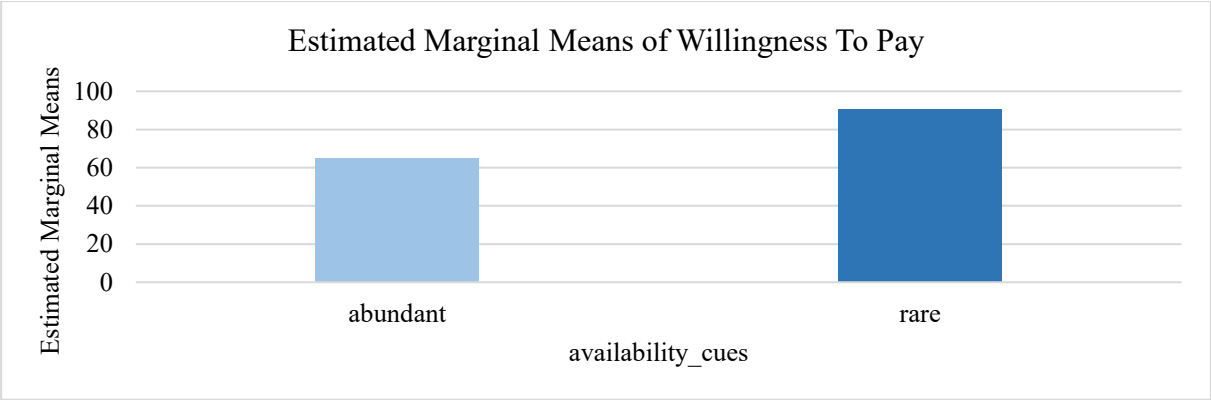
4.4.2.3. Willingness to Pay

Willingness to pay – similarly to purchase likelihood – was used to extract a further insight from the data, but keeping it separate from *attitudes* to assess preferences. Indeed, not only it might have resulted in a misleading variable, but also it was not following the same scale, as participants were free to insert any amount (in euros) that they would be willing to pay for the jacket shown. The results are nevertheless interesting as a main effect was found on the availability cues, $F(1,236)=8.18$, $p=.005$. Indeed, people are willing to pay more for a rare product ($M=92.89$, $SD=79.47$) compared to a widely available item ($M=66.97$, $SD=52.47$). Although the latter goes in the direction of the hypothesised H1, it cannot be accepted as previous results on preferences were discordant. While it cannot be hold true that rare products are preferred over abundant items, it can be sustained that consumers are willing to pay a higher price for rare garments.

Willingness To Pay

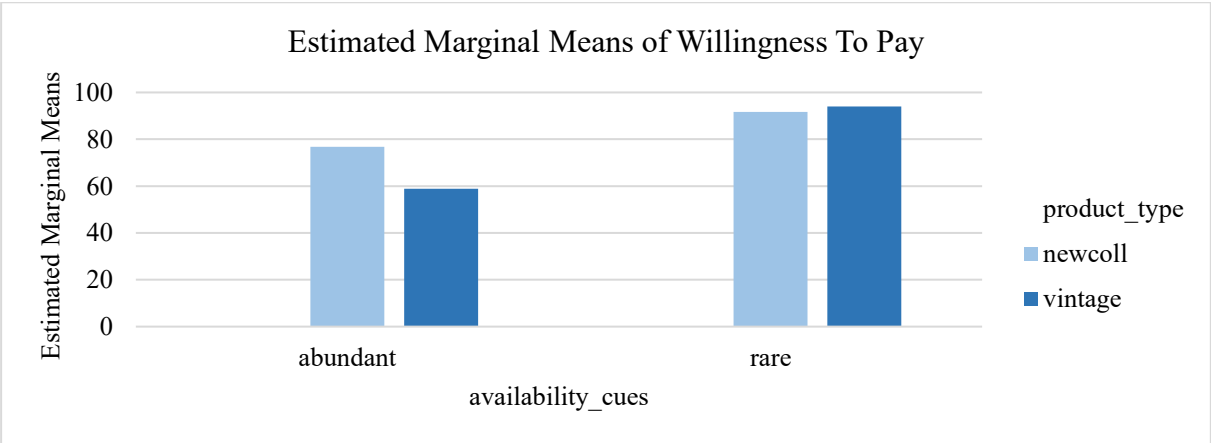
Product_Type	Availability_Cues	Mean	Std. Deviation
New Collection	Abundant	76.75	63.779
	Rare	91.67	75.153
	Total	84.67	70.141
Vintage	Abundant	58.86	39.543
	Rare	94.05	83.954
	Total	76.31	67.543
Total	Abundant	66.97	52.467
	Rare	92.89	79.465
	Total	80.25	68.761

Table 5. ANOVA descriptive statistics "Willingness To Pay".



Graph 3. Effect of availability cues on consumers' willingness to pay.

Although the interaction effect is non-significant (F(1,236) =1.34, p=.248), it is insightful to further compare means through independent t-tests. From this analysis, it can be noticed that the difference in willingness to pay between the rare and abundant condition is larger when the product is a vintage piece. Indeed, the difference between rarity and abundancy is statistically significant in the vintage condition (M_{rare}=94.05, SD_{rare}=83.95; $M_{abundant}$=58.86, $SD_{abundant}$=39.54; t(125)=3.03, p=.003), but it is non-significant in the new collection condition (M_{rare}=91.67, SD_{rare}=75.15; $M_{abundant}$=76.75, $SD_{abundant}$=63.78; t(111)=1.13, p=.261). Similarly, the difference between vintage and new collection is marginally significant in the abundancy condition ($M_{vintage}$=58.86, $SD_{vintage}$=39.54; $M_{new\ collection}$=76.75, $SD_{new\ collection}$=63.78; t(115)=1.86, p=.066), but it is non-significant in the rarity condition ($M_{vintage}$= 94.05, $SD_{vintage}$=83.95; $M_{new\ collection}$= 91.67, $SD_{new\ collection}$= 75.15; t(121)=.17, p=.869). These results further support the acceptance of the hypothesised H2; considering the patterns observed for *attitudes*, *purchase likelihood* and *willingness to pay* altogether, vintage products – unlike new collection pieces – appear to be enhanced if perceived as rare, while penalised if presented as widely available. (Appendix C: Willingness To Pay).



Graph 4. Interaction effect between availability cues and product type on consumers' willingness to pay.

4.4.3. Perception of Product Characteristics

As a first step into understanding how a products' characteristics such as product type and availability cues can be perceived, a short exploratory study was conducted. The results indicate that when the jacket was presented as a vintage piece (M=52.58, SD=26.03), it was perceived as more *alternative* than when presented as a new collection item (M=47.17, SD=25.23) (F(1,237)=2.68, p=.103), while as more *mainstream* when presented as a new collection item (M=51.06, SD=24.33) compared to vintage (M=44.38, SD=24.16), regardless of availability cues (F(1,237)=4.82, p=.029). Results further indicate that when the jacket was presented as new collection, the product was even more perceived as *cool* (M_{rare}=44.41, SD_{rare}=22.84; $M_{abundant}$=53.89, $SD_{abundant}$=21.58) but also as *mainstream* (M_{rare}=47.46, SD_{rare}=26.95; $M_{abundant}$=55.00, $SD_{abundant}$=20.627) when widely available, compared to when it was presented as a rare item. Similarly, in the abundancy condition the jacket was perceived as significantly more *mainstream* when it was a new collection piece ($M_{vintage}$=42.66, $SD_{vintage}$=24.19; $M_{new\ collection}$=55.00, $SD_{new\ collection}$=20.63). Instead, when the jacket was paired with rarity cues, it was further perceived as a *cool* item if it was vintage ($M_{vintage}$=53.91, $SD_{vintage}$=26.64; $M_{new\ collection}$=44.41, $SD_{new\ collection}$=22.84). (Appendix C: Product Characteristics).

4.4.4. Effects on Self-Expression

In the following section, levels of self-expression as fostered through the jacket presented in the survey will be analysed in relation to product type and availability cues. Firstly, the whole dataset will be considered, then the general self-expression and extended-self scales will be used to control for low levels of general self-expression through clothing.

4.4.4.1. Levels of Self-Expression Through Product

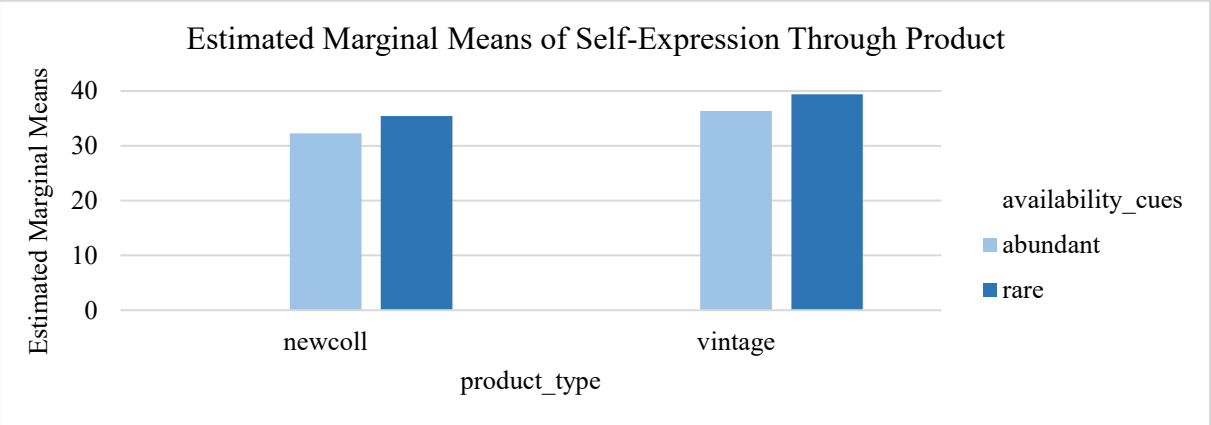
Analysing whether rarity cues induce perception of expressing one's own identity – and if the effect is larger in the vintage over new collection condition – question on whether the jacket shown in the survey would foster self-expression when worn, have been asked (paragraph 3.2.2.). Pursuing a univariate ANOVA 2 product type x 2 availability cues on levels of self-expression for the product shown (considering the whole dataset), no main effect – nor interaction – was found. Nevertheless, registered self-expression was higher within the rare condition (M=37.46, SD=22.86) compared to the abundant condition (M=34.48, SD=20.40), and for vintage (M=37.87, SD=21.49) against new collection (M=33.89, SD=21.80). Although

promising, based on these results no hypothesis can be accepted. However, the results will be analysed again taking into consideration whether in general participants do or do not feel to be expressing themselves through their clothing. (Appendix C: Self-Expression Through Product).

Self-Expression Through Product

Availability_Cues	Product_Type	Mean	Std. Deviation
Abundant	New Collection	32.2593	18.64483
	Vintage	36.3810	21.76667
	Total	34.4786	20.40394
Rare	New Collection	35.4138	24.44330
	Vintage	39.4098	21.27078
	Total	37.4622	22.86244
Total	New Collection	33.8929	21.80146
	Vintage	37.8710	21.49039
	Total	35.9831	21.68399

Table 6. ANOVA descriptive statistics "Self-Expression Through Product".



Graph 5. Interaction effect between product type and availability cues on levels of self-expression fostered through the product.

4.4.4.2. Adjusted Levels of Self-Expression Through Product

To control for eventual differences in the previously found results, it was decided to exclude the responses that scored a particularly low level in the control scales for self-expression. The latter was done as it is assumed that whenever people do not aim at expressing themselves through what they wear, other variables – such as rarity and vintage – cannot influence the (inexistant) relationship. Indeed, if an effect exists, it could be possible that it is only found within that spectrum of the population that expresses their identity also through their clothing (see paragraph 3.2.3.).

For the extended-self scale, a score of 4 was held as a cutting point for positive levels of general self-expression through clothing; dividing the scale in two, the answers from "strongly disagree" to "somewhat disagree" were excluded, while from "neither agree nor disagree" to "strongly agree" included. In the *general self-expression* scale, the answers belonging to the first quartile (25th percentile) were instead excluded (all answers underneath 47.5), as the distribution was not particularly skewed (Appendix C: Descriptive Self-Expression and Extended-Self). Then, an ANOVA 2 product type x 2 availability cues on levels of self-expression through the product was done twice, each time excluding the cases mentioned for the two control scales. The latter was done to control whether the results modified by each scale were similar, or if one resulted to be more effective than the other. (Appendix C: Adjusted Self-Expression Through Product).

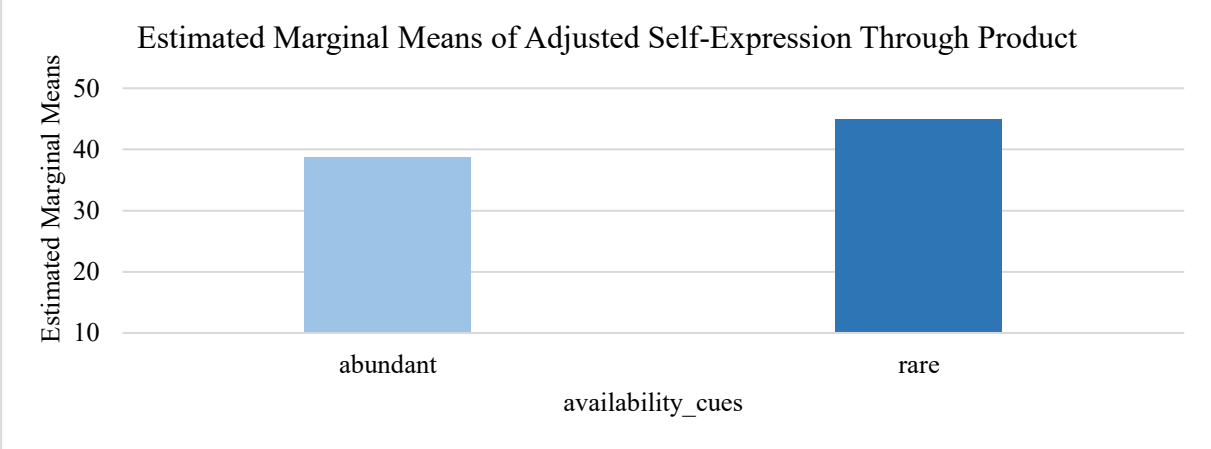
From both analyses, a similar pattern emerged, that is a main effect of availability cues on self-expression. Considering both results, the one provided by excluding the low scoring participants to the general extended-self scale, appears to be more significant. Furthermore, the latter is a widely accepted and used scale, and for the present study it resulted in a higher Cronbach's Alpha (α=.81) compared to the general self-expression scale (α=.78). Moreover, a further analysis confirmed the correlation between the two control scales, $r(230)=.21$, $p=.001$. For all these reasons, the extended-self results will be used to adjust for self-expression levels. (Appendix C: Correlation General Self-Expression and General Extended-Self).

In measuring self-expression, it appears again that rarity fosters self-expression (M=44.84, SD=19.15) compared to abundancy (M=38.65, SD=17.55). Although marginal, a main effect is found: rarity cues foster self-expression, $F(1,120)=3.48$, $p=.065$. It can thus be concluded that H3 can be accepted, taking into consideration that it can only be extended to the portion of the population giving importance to their clothing as element of their identity and method of personal expression.

Adjusted Self-Expression Through Product

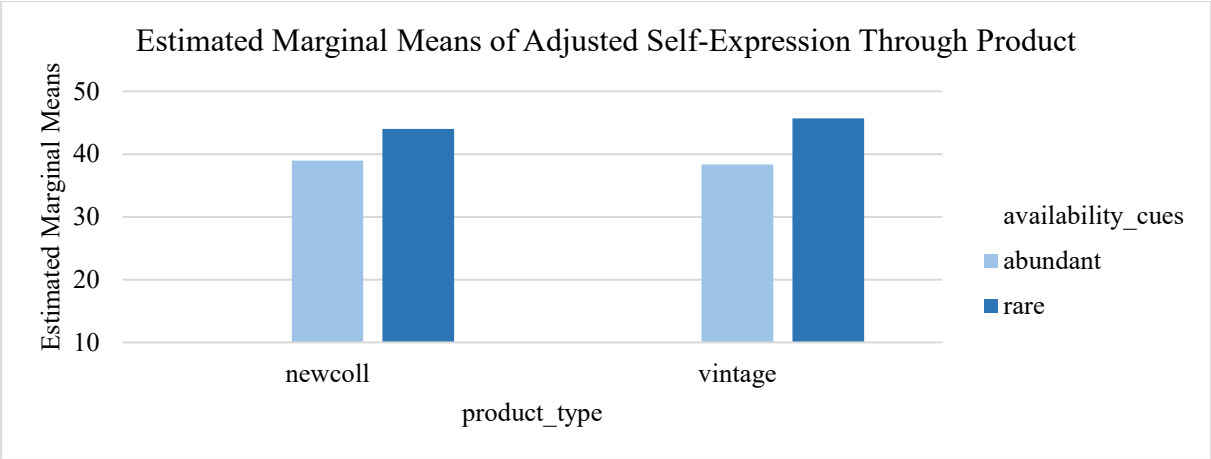
Availability_Cues	Product_Type	Mean	Std. Deviation
New Collection	Abundant	38.9375	19.18322
	Rare	44.0000	22.36664
	Total	41.4286	20.79835
Vintage	Abundant	38.3333	15.94026
	Rare	45.6774	15.62986
	Total	42.0656	16.08298
Total	Abundant	38.6452	17.54722
	Rare	44.8387	19.15441
	Total	41.7419	18.55595

Table 7. ANOVA descriptive statistics "Adjusted Self-Expression Through Product".



Graph 6. Effect of availability cues on adjusted levels of self-expression fostered through the product.

Although the interaction effect is non-significant ($F<1$), further independent t-tests were run to compare the conditions' means. It appeared that the difference in the adjusted levels of self-expression between the rare and abundant condition were larger when the product was vintage. The difference between rarity and abundancy is marginally significant in the vintage condition (M_{rare}=45.68, SD_{rare}=15.63; $M_{abundant}$=38.33, $SD_{abundant}$=15.94; t(59)=1.82, p=.074), but it is non-significant in the new collection condition (M_{rare}=44.00, SD_{rare}=22.37; $M_{abundant}$=38.94, $SD_{abundant}$=19.18; t(61)=.97, p=.338). This proves that vintage depends more upon availability cues than new collection clothing in fostering self-expression, showing an increased arousal of self-expression in the rarity condition; the hypothesised H4 can be thus accepted. (Appendix C: Adjusted Self-Expression Through Product).



Graph 7. Interaction effect between product type and availability cues on levels of adjusted self-expression fostered through the product.

5. Conclusion & Further Research

5.1. Discussion of Main Findings

The present study aimed at assessing whether availability cues could affect consumers' preferences towards a product, this being vintage or new collection. Specifically, if perception of scarcity – namely, rarity – could increase the preference for vintage clothing, against new collection clothing. Although no preference was found for rarity over abundancy cues in general terms, the interactions between availability cues and product type resulted to be particularly interesting. As hypothesised by the current research, rarity cues proved to moderate the relationship between product type and preferences: consumers showed an increased preference towards the vintage product and its relative vintage store, when paired with rarity cues. Results further pointed out that when considering consumers' preferences, vintage products – compared to new collection items – were more negatively affected if presented as widely available. Overall, it was discovered that the fashion realm considered as a whole, does not follow the same principle of rarity that applies to other previously tested categories (see paragraph 2.2.1), but that vintage and new collection present significant differences in their relation to availability. Indeed, when participants were presented with a vintage product, their preference and willingness to pay significantly increased if the product was rare instead of widely available. Contrarily, for new collection clothing, widely available products were preferred over rare, and within the abundancy condition, higher monetary value was assigned to new collection compared to vintage. Against the resale stigma that vintage clothing is valued less, a significant difference in willingness to pay between vintage and new collection was not found, instead it

was present for availability cues, which increase the clothing's value when rare – especially when also vintage.

On the other hand, this study did not find significant effects – although the trends were consistent – through the measure of purchase likelihood. Even if statistically non-significant, the pattern found was that preferences in purchase were higher when the vintage product was rare and, at the same time, when the new collection item was widely available. Purchase likelihood was chosen over purchase intentions as it was deemed to be more reliable, however, it was acknowledged that it could have resulted to be a complicated measure (Wright & Murray, 2007). Considering that the attitudes scale included in the analysis – indicating consumers' preferences – showed significant results, it can be assumed that purchase likelihood was not the best variable to assess for the psychological processes analysed in this study. Other factors could influence purchase likelihood – unlike preferences – such as product need, income, careful consideration and many more.

Another main intention of the research was to inquire whether rarity could affect the perceived level of consumers' self-expressions in (thinking about) wearing a product. Furthermore, it was the intention of the present study to further put under question the ability of a vintage piece to transform who wears it into a "one of a kind", as discussed in previous qualitative studies. The results highlighted two important findings, namely, that rarity influences levels of self-expression, and that, if the product is both vintage and rare, consumers believe that their identity is further expressed. As hypothesised, the latter shows that, not only a main effect of availability cues on personal self-expression through clothing exists, but that the effect of rarity on self-expression is larger when the product is vintage. Indeed, the potential for self-expression through vintage clothing depends more on perceived rarity than new collection clothing does.

However, the latter findings appeared to be valid only for the portion of the population that generally believes to be expressing through what they wear; less than a half of the people included in the study declared that what they generally wear is not to be considered at all part of who they are, their identity, or used as a means of self-expression. For the sake of the second part of this research, it was deemed more important to inquire if an effect existed in the portion of the population that generally believe to be expressing themselves through what they wear, as it was confirmed by previous studies that these people exist and they represent a good portion of the population (Sivadas & Machleit, 1994; Sivadas & Venkatesh, 1995; Cardoso et al., 2010). Precisely, only the participants that disagreed to the statements proposed in the general

extended-self Likert scale by Sivadas and Machleit (1994) were excluded. All those that provided answers from neutral to high agreement were included, as they were deemed as an interesting and reliable sample to put under question the hypothesised relationships.

In addition, an exploratory analysis was run to better understand consumers' perceptions of a product on the pure basis of its presentation as rare vs. abundant and vintage vs. new collection. The latter showed interesting results that are conciliable to the previous findings. Firstly, perceptions related to the product being alternative – as in different from what one would normally find – or mainstream – as similar to what other people would normally wear – showed to be dependent upon product type more than availability cues. Indeed, when a product was presented as vintage, respondents perceived it as alternative, whether when it was given as a new collection item, they significantly perceived it as mainstream. Furthermore, when the product was shown as a new collection item, it was perceived as even more mainstream if it was presented with abundancy cues. Similarly, when the product was presented as widely available, it was further perceived as mainstream if the garment was a new collection item. Moreover, in these same conditions, the product was also perceived to be cooler; instead, if the product was presented as rare, it was further perceived as cool when vintage. These results appear to be in line to what was found in the self-expression study, and it is insightful as it provides a key to understand how vintage – being perceived as alternative – when rare, was able to further foster self-expression.

Overall, it appears that, accordingly to the hypotheses formulated, vintage is preferred when it is presented with rarity cues, while its perceived value is decreased when it is given as a widely available product. As expected, the vintage piece was perceived as rarer than the new collection item before any manipulation on availability cues was affected, however, the rarity manipulation successfully increased the perceived rarity in both conditions. This shows that the uniqueness of a vintage product can be highlighted to induce consumers' into choosing the product. On the other hand, a new collection item is not negatively affected by its large availability; as suggested by the present paper, it would instead seem that new collection items follow a network goods logic, "the more the merrier". Moreover, the product being vintage increases the strength of the relationship between rarity and expression of the self through clothing owned and worn. These findings suggest that consumers would indeed choose vintage clothing because they perceive it as rare, as they would not assign it the same value if they perceived it as widely available. Consumers would seem to be seeking uniqueness within vintage clothing especially, as they value wider availability only when the product is a new

collection item. A further insight is found in the explanation that rare vintage items make feel the consumers that they are expressing their true self: through them, most consumers feel that they are one of a kind, that is, their true and unique selves.

5.2. Managerial and Academic Implications

The present study contributes to the understanding of consumer behaviour in relation to the principle of rarity within the vintage fashion realm, highlighting the differences in preferences and expression of the self for different availability cues in vintage and new collection clothing. By adding to the previous correlational, qualitative, and exploratory studies, this experimental research aims at bringing value to the field of vintage fashion, both in academic and managerial terms.

Academically, the research provides a reliable confirmation on vintage's necessary attributes and insights into consumers' psychological behaviour. The study highlights the human brain's cognitive bias: the same product when presented with a slightly different description can be perceived completely differently, preferred or disregarder, viewed as cool and alternative or as mainstream, assigned a higher or lower monetary value. Moreover, these attributes appeared to be interacting differently, depending on whether the product was vintage or new collection, rare or abundant. Indeed, as a vintage product was preferred when rare, new collection items were to a much greater extent positively rated than vintage pieces, when widely available. Furthermore, the analyses conducted showed that no general preference exists for rare over widely available clothing – as it is only the case when the product is vintage –, although rarity in comparison to abundancy significantly increased consumers' willingness to pay. However, rarity proved to be important to give people the impression of being expressing themselves through the clothing showed. This suggests that people feel represented as their true unique selves when their clothing are also unique – not in their designs but when perceived as rare, and even more when vintage as well.

On a managerial side, the findings would suggest addressing marketing techniques. For vintage clothing to be valued more in terms of money and preferences, products should be marketed as rare, unique finds. Although results showed that people are generally not willing to pay higher amounts of money for vintage over the exact same new collection clothing, the latter is the case by adding the rarity variable. As the rare vintage product was valued more than the rare new collection product – while also increasing significantly the total willingness to pay compared to the widely available vintage piece –, it is advised to always highlight the uniqueness of the

vintage product being sold. On the other hand, considering new collection items – although it is recognised that limited editions and exclusivity work perfectly for certain brands – for an unknown brand, results suggest that preferences go in the direction of widely available collections. Excluding brands that have a clientele especially for limited collection releases and particularly strong brand or ambassadors – or if there are other reasons to expect a different outcome –, it is suggested that new collection items are sold as widely available items. When available to many, a product can, indeed, become a trend and a fashion statement.

In conclusion, what is particularly interesting, both on academic and managerial terms, is that consumers preferences were affected by product type and availability cues, independently of their usual shopping patterns. This implies that – unlike most previous qualitative studies done specifically on vintage consumers – the findings of the present study on preferences are generalisable to all consumers, regardless of whether they usually buy vintage or not. Similarly, the same can be said about the levels of self-expression, with the exception of a small portion of the population that does not dress to express their identity.

5.3. Limitations and Future Research

It is important to acknowledge that the current study presents several limitations, that could be further elaborated in future research. Firstly, diverse effects found were only marginally significant and, in other cases, patterns through the data appeared while not resulting in statistically significant results. This could be a signal of an underpowered study, which might be due to the scales used, mostly built for the purpose of this study – as no analogous experimental research were conducted before. However, the reason could be another, which is relevant to mention as a second limitation of the study: sample size. Although the sample size was deemed large enough to conduct a reliable and significant study, its power could have been potentialized if more participants were included. About the sample characterisation, a prevalence of females was reported; although the survey was filled on a voluntary basis, it could have been more representative if the gender was balanced. As a last but essential limitation, for feasibility reason, the experiment was held through a survey online and not on-site. Although the present findings indicate certain results, the real situation in a store environment could be different and other variables could influence the consumer.

For future research, it would be insightful to organise a similar experimental study in a real-life environment, to control whether results differ from the online-led survey. It would also be interesting to lead another online survey with different clothing items, to assess whether the

same findings hold true; this could be also extended to different product categories, such as jewellery, watches, furniture and designer objects. Differently from the present study, within these categories, stronger results are expected for luxury brands and renowned artists, while no positive effects are expected for unknown brands, which could be associated to low quality and perceived as worthless old items. The research could, indeed, also be extended into popular clothing brands to better understand their specific market; it is expected that results could differ as consumers have different expectations from brands, according to their proposed value creation. It would be important to investigate the luxury realm in particular, for instance through new collection of luxury brands vs. vintage luxury items. As previously discussed, it would be interesting to understand whether vintage luxury products are preferred or valued higher in monetary terms when presented as vintage or through other terms, such as heritage or iconic pieces from the past – to mark a stronger distancing from second-hand. Analogously, it would be relevant to inquire whether self-expression can be fostered when highlighting brand's heritage and history through vintage pieces, if this would lead consumers into choosing luxury vintage and, eventually, into paying more to feel authentic and unique.

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APPENDIX A. ***Survey.***

Introduction:

Dear Participant,

I am a master student and I am conducting a survey for my dissertation in the fashion industry. In this survey you will be presented with a picture of a product and asked to answer questions about it. Please, always remind that there are no right or wrong answers, but the entire survey is based on your personal opinions.

All answers given will be treated anonymously and confidentially, and you can withdraw from the study at any time, without any consequence.

If you do wish to help me in gaining responses for my research, please click on the arrow at the bottom of this page to get started! Be aware that by doing so, you are giving your consent in the collection of your answer for the purpose of my thesis research.

Answering this survey will take you approximately 7 minutes.

If you wish to contact me, you can do so at the following email:

152119009@alunos.lisboa.ucp.pt

Thank you for your participation!

Camilla Busso

Perception of Rarity Before Availability Manipulation:

The product shown is a jacket from the vintage/new collection of a shop based in London called "Alpha Vintage" / "Alpha Boutique".

Please rate the following questions (from 0 being "Not at all" to 100 being "Extremely") about the jacket shown, based on your personal evaluation.

- To what extent is this jacket unique?
- How rare do you perceive this jacket to be?
- To what extent do you think this jacket is worn by many people?
- How common do you think this jacket is?

Purchase Likelihood Before Availability Manipulation:

Please rate on a scale (from 0 being "Not at all" to 100 being "Extremely"), how likely are you to buy the jacket shown.

- How likely are you to purchase this jacket?

Attention Calling and Availability Manipulation:

You will be presented with additional information about the jacket previously shown. Please take your time to carefully read the content of the image you will be shown.

Click on the arrow at the bottom of this page to be introduced to the new piece of information.

This is the jacket's tag. Please read its content.

*each condition was presented with a different clothing tag, as shown in paragraph 3.2.1.

**for tags' content, see Appendix B.

Perception of Rarity After Availability Manipulation:

Please rate the following questions (from 0 being "Not at all" to 100 being "Extremely") about the jacket shown, based on your personal evaluation.

- To what extent is this jacket unique?
- How rare do you perceive this jacket to be?
- To what extent do you think this jacket is worn by many people?
- How common do you think this jacket is?

Measuring Attitudes and Purchase Likelihood After Availability Manipulation:

- How likely are you to purchase this jacket?
- To what extent do you like this jacket?
- How likely it is that you would wear this jacket?
- How likely it is that you would purchase other clothing from "Alpha Vintage" / "Alpha Boutique" (the same shop of the jacket shown)?

Willingness To Pay:

What would be your willingness to pay for the jacket shown (in EUR)? Please provide an amount in numbers (no need to specify the currency / currency symbol)

[text entry]

Perceptions on Product's Characteristics:

Please rate the following questions on a scale (going from 0 being "Not at all" to 100 being "Extremely") about the jacket shown, based on your personal evaluation.

- To what extent is the jacket shown cool?
- To what extent is the jacket shown fashionable?
- To what extent is the jacket shown "alternative", as in different from what you would normally find?
- To what extent is the jacket shown "mainstream", as in similar to what other people would normally wear?

Measuring Levels of Self-Expression Through Product:

Please answer the following questions about yourself, on a scale going from 0 being "Not at all" to 100 being "Extremely".

- To what extent would you feel original by wearing the jacket shown?
- Do you feel like you would set yourself apart from the majority of people by wearing the jacket shown?
- Do you feel you would manifest your own fashion independence (from the mass market) by wearing the jacket shown?
- [attention check] This is an attention check. Please select the value "50".
- Do you feel that wearing the jacket shown would help you to manifest your true identity?
- To what extent wearing the jacket shown would foster your self-expression?

Measuring General Levels of Self-Expression:

Please answer the following questions about yourself, on a scale going from 0 being "Not at all" to 100 being "Extremely".

- Do you feel good when you follow a fashion trend?
- Do you feel good when you wear different clothing from the majority of the people?
- How much do you feel to be expressing yourself when following a fashion trend?
- How important is it for you to express yourself through your clothing?

General Extended-Self Scale:

Please rate the following statements about yourself, on a 7-point Likert scale going from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree".

- The clothes I own help me achieve the identity I want to have.
- The clothes I buy help me narrow the gap between what I am and what I try to be.
- The clothes I own are central to my identity.
- My clothes are part of who I am.
- If my clothes were stolen from me I would feel as if my identity has been snatched from me.
- I derive some of my identity from my clothes.

Demographics:

As a last step, please answer the following questions about your demographics.

What is your gender?

- ◯ Male
- ◯ Female
- ◯ Other

What is your age?

[text entry]

What is your country of origin? (Please consider your first nationality or the country that you feel represents your origin the best).

[drop down list of countries]

Statement of Honesty:

Please, let me honestly know if you have carefully read questions and truthfully answered to this questionnaire. In both cases, I wish to thank you for having reached until the end of my study!

- ◯ Yes, you can count on my answers for the validity of your research!
- ◯ No, I am sorry but I did not pay enough attention and it is better for you to not include my responses in your study.

APPENDIX B. *Full-text contained in the clothing tags for the four conditions.*

Condition of Vintage and Rarity:

This piece is a unique vintage item from the iconic 1960s collection "Jackets for all". This jacket is a particularly rare find, as very few are available on the market! It is a unisex garment that perfectly fits all body types and that can be easily adapted to your own style!

Condition of Vintage and Abundancy:

This is an iconic piece from the 1960s. As a tribute to the vintage collection "Jackets for all", this jacket has been made widely available in our many stores around the world, so you cannot miss it! It is a unisex garment that perfectly fits all body types and that can be easily adapted to your own style!

Condition of New Collection and Rarity:

This piece from our new collection is a particularly rare find! This jacket is part of a limited edition, and only very few are available on the market! It is a unisex garment that perfectly fits all body types and that can be easily adapted to your own style!

Condition of New Collection and Abundancy:

This piece from our new collection is widely available in our many stores around the world, so you cannot miss it! It is a unisex garment that perfectly fits all body types and that can be easily adapted to your own style!

APPENDIX C. *Results*

Sample Description:

Conditions

	Frequency (units)	Percent (%)
Vintage, Rare	70	25.830%
Vintage, Abundant	74	27.306%
New Collection, Rare	65	23.985%
New Collection, Abundant	62	22.878%
Total	271	100%

Table 8. Attributed conditions.

Gender

	Frequency (units)	Percent (%)
Male	85	31.4
Female	145	53.5
Other	2	.7
Not provided	39	14.4
Total	271	100.0

Table 9. Gender

Age

Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Median
18	67	27.15	10.756	23

	Frequency (units)	Percent (%)
18 - 27	184	79.7%
28 - 37	16	6.9%
38 - 47	6	2.6%
48 - 57	19	8.2%
58 +	6	2.6%
Total	231	100%
Not Provided	40	
Adjusted Total	271	

Table 10. Age

Country of Origin

	Frequency	Percent
Albania	1	.4
Brazil	2	.7
China	2	.7
Colombia	2	.7
Democratic Republic of the Congo	1	.4
Denmark	2	.7
Finland	1	.4
France	11	4.1
Germany	14	5.2
Greece	2	.7
Hong Kong (S.A.R.)	1	.4
India	5	1.8
Ireland	2	.7
Israel	2	.7
Italy	86	31.7
Kenya	1	.4
Lithuania	1	.4
Luxembourg	10	3.7
Malaysia	2	.7
Malta	1	.4
Mexico	1	.4
Morocco	1	.4
Netherlands	11	4.1
Norway	1	.4
Poland	1	.4
Portugal	12	4.4
Romania	1	.4
Russian Federation	2	.7
South Korea	1	.4
Spain	3	1.1
Suriname	1	.4
Sweden	4	1.5
Switzerland	3	1.1
United Arab Emirates	1	.4
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	24	8.9
United States of America	14	5.2
Venezuela	1	.4
Viet Nam	1	.4
Not provided	39	14.4
Total	271	100.0

Table 11. Country of origin

Reliability Statistics:

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
rarity_manipulation	.842	4
attitudes	.921	4
selfexpression_product	.899	5
selfexpression_general	.778	4
extended_self	.813	6

Table 12. Cronbach's alpha.

Availability Manipulation Check:

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: rarity_no_manipulation

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power[b]
Corrected Model	3596.075[a]	3	1198.692	3.953	.009	.043	11.860	.830
Intercept	576939.849	1	576939.849	1902.834	.000	.877	1902.834	1.000
Product_Type	3292.279	1	3292.279	10.858	.001	.039	10.858	.907
Availability_Cues	23.850	1	23.850	.079	.779	.000	.079	.059
Product_Type * Availability_Cues	260.485	1	260.485	.859	.355	.003	.859	.152
Error	80954.478	267	303.200					
Total	671543.750	271						
Corrected Total	84550.554	270						

a. R Squared = .043 (Adjusted R Squared = .032)

b. Computed using alpha = .05

Table 13. ANOVA "Perception of rarity before manipulation".

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: rarity_manipulation

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power[b]
Corrected Model	29123.825[a]	3	9707.942	24.871	.000	.235	74.612	1.000
Intercept	584478.613	1	584478.613	1497.365	.000	.860	1497.365	1.000
Product_Type	6585.271	1	6585.271	16.871	.000	.065	16.871	.983
Availability_Cues	22307.715	1	22307.715	57.150	.000	.190	57.150	1.000
Product_Type * Availability_Cues	452.143	1	452.143	1.158	.283	.005	1.158	.188
Error	94852.187	243	390.338					
Total	724100.000	247						
Corrected Total	123976.012	246						

a. R Squared = .235 (Adjusted R Squared = .225)

b. Computed using alpha = .05

Table 14. ANOVA "Perception of rarity after manipulation".

Independent Samples Test (for product type = new collection)

		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval	
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
rarity_manipulation	Eq Var	8.240	.005	4.641	116	.000	16.33694	3.52000	9.36514	23.30874
	No Eq Var			4.727	113.879	.000	16.33694	3.45580	9.49094	23.18294

Table 15. Independent T-Test "Perceived rarity after manipulation" in new collection condition.

Independent Samples Test (for product type = vintage)

		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
rarity_manipulation	Eq Var	1.986	.161	6.069	127	.000	21.76082	3.58537	14.66602	28.85562
	No Eq Var			6.064	124.706	.000	21.76082	3.58874	14.65810	28.86354

Table 16. Independent T-Test "Perceived rarity after manipulation" in vintage condition.

Independent Samples Test (for availability cues = abundant)

		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
rarity_manipulation	Eq var	7.884	.006	2.157	117	.033	7.63778	3.54033	.62635	14.64922
	No Eq Var			2.204	114.968	.030	7.63778	3.46534	.77359	14.50198

Table 17. Independent T-Test "Perceived rarity after manipulation" in abundant condition.

Independent Samples Test (for availability cues = rare)

		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
rarity_manipulation	Eq Var	2.045	.155	3.655	126	.000	13.06166	3.57345	5.98990	20.13342
	No Eq Var			3.649	123.607	.000	13.06166	3.57953	5.97656	20.14677

Table 18. Independent T-Test "Perceived rarity after manipulation" in rare condition.

Attitudes:

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: attitudes

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power[b]
Corrected Model	2309.836[a]	3	769.945	1.320	.268	.016	3.961	.350
Intercept	405939.416	1	405939.416	696.097	.000	.744	696.097	1.000
Availability_Cues	34.273	1	34.273	.059	.809	.000	.059	.057
Product_Type	344.695	1	344.695	.591	.443	.002	.591	.119
Availability_Cues * Product_Type	1902.081	1	1902.081	3.262	.072	.013	3.262	.436
Error	139959.563	240	583.165					
Total	549377.778	244						
Corrected Total	142269.399	243						

a. R Squared = .016 (Adjusted R Squared = .004)

b. Computed using alpha = .05

Table 19. ANOVA "Attitudes".

Independent Samples Test (for availability cues = rare)

		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
attitudes_product	Eq Var	1.923	.168	1.762	123	.081	7.97643	4.52694	-.98437	16.93724
	No Eq Var			1.765	122.985	.080	7.97643	4.52046	-.97155	16.92442

Table 20. Independent T-Test "Attitudes" in rare condition.

Independent Samples Test (for availability cues = abundant)

		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
attitudes	Eq Var	5.282	.023	-.631	117	.529	-2.69389	4.27147	-11.15331	5.76552
	No Eq Var			-.641	116.491	.523	-2.69389	4.20163	-11.01538	5.62759

Table 21. Independent T-Test "Attitudes" in abundant condition.

Purchase Likelihood Before Manipulation:

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: purchase_likelihood_no_manipulation

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power[b]
Corrected Model	340.658[a]	1	340.658	.463	.497	.002	.463	.104
Intercept	262836.538	1	262836.538	356.951	.000	.574	356.951	1.000
Product_Type	340.658	1	340.658	.463	.497	.002	.463	.104
Error	195129.754	265	736.339					
Total	461000.000	267						
Corrected Total	195470.412	266						

a. R Squared = .002 (Adjusted R Squared = -.002)

b. Computed using alpha = .05

Table 22. ANOVA "Purchase likelihood before manipulation".

Purchase Likelihood After Manipulation:

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: purchase_likelihood_manipulation

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power[b]
Corrected Model	177.606[a]	3	59.202	.081	.970	.001	.243	.064
Intercept	264083.106	1	264083.106	361.556	.000	.601	361.556	1.000
Product_Type	14.194	1	14.194	.019	.889	.000	.019	.052
Availability_Cues	2.768	1	2.768	.004	.951	.000	.004	.050
Product_Type * Availability_Cues	159.411	1	159.411	.218	.641	.001	.218	.075
Error	175297.804	240	730.408					
Total	440400.000	244						
Corrected Total	175475.410	243						

a. R Squared = .001 (Adjusted R Squared = -.011)

b. Computed using alpha = .05

Table 23. ANOVA "Purchase likelihood after manipulation".

Willingness To Pay:

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: willingness_to_pay

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power[b]
Corrected Model	49745.264[a]	3	16581.755	3.623	.014	.044	10.868	.791
Intercept	1540323.894	1	1540323.894	336.507	.000	.588	336.507	1.000
product_type	3590.734	1	3590.734	.784	.377	.003	.784	.143
availability_cues	37444.902	1	37444.902	8.180	.005	.034	8.180	.813
product_type * availability_cues	6133.256	1	6133.256	1.340	.248	.006	1.340	.211
Error	1080263.736	236	4577.389					
Total	2675624.000	240						
Corrected Total	1130009.000	239						

a. R Squared = .044 (Adjusted R Squared = .032)

b. Computed using alpha = .05

Table 24. ANOVA “Willingness to pay”.

Independent Samples Test (for product type = vintage)

		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval	
									Lower	Upper
willingness_to_pay	Eq Var	16.312	.000	3.029	125	.003	35.188	11.616	12.198	58.178
	No Eq Var			3.014	87.911	.003	35.188	11.675	11.986	58.391

Table 25. Independent T-Test “Willingness to pay” in vintage condition.

Independent Samples Test (for product type = new collection)

		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval	
									Lower	Upper
willingness_to_pay	Eq Var	3.207	.076	1.129	111	.261	14.912	13.206	-11.256	41.080
	No Eq Var			1.141	110.834	.256	14.912	13.072	-10.992	40.816

Table 26. Independent T-Test “Willingness to pay” in new collection condition.

Independent Samples Test (for availability cues = abundant)

		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
willingness_to_pay	Eq Var	1.416	.236	-1.856	115	.066	-17.895	9.643	-36.997	1.206
	No Eq Var			-1.779	83.400	.079	-17.895	10.059	-37.901	2.110

Table 27. Independent T-Test "Willingness to pay" in abundancy condition.

Independent Samples Test (for availability_cues = rare)

		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
willingness_to_pay	Eq Var	.367	.546	.165	121	.869	2.381	14.392	-26.112	30.874
	No Eq Var			.166	120.546	.869	2.381	14.353	-26.036	30.798

Table 28. Independent T-Test "Willingness to pay" in rarity condition.

Product Characteristics:

Mainstream

Product_Type	Availability_Cues	Mean	Std. Deviation
Newcoll	Abundant	55.00	20.627
	Rare	47.46	26.948
	Total	51.06	24.325
Vintage	Abundant	42.66	24.185
	Rare	46.09	24.209
	Total	44.38	24.163
Total	Abundant	48.31	23.363
	Rare	46.75	25.463
	Total	47.51	24.419

Table 29. ANOVA descriptive statistics "Mainstream".

Alternative

Product_Type	Availability_Cues	Mean	Std. Deviation
Newcoll	Abundant	46.30	22.174
	Rare	47.97	27.903
	Total	47.17	25.230
Vintage	Abundant	53.13	25.000
	Rare	52.03	27.208
	Total	52.58	26.030
Total	Abundant	50.00	23.894
	Rare	50.08	27.505
	Total	50.04	25.747

Table 30. ANOVA descriptive statistics “Alternative”.

Cool

Product_Type	Availability_Cues	Mean	Std. Deviation
Newcoll	Abundant	53.89	21.581
	Rare	44.41	22.839
	Total	48.94	22.653
Vintage	Abundant	52.97	27.237
	Rare	53.91	26.644
	Total	53.44	26.840
Total	Abundant	53.39	24.711
	Rare	49.35	25.244
	Total	51.33	25.015

Table 31. ANOVA descriptive statistics “Cool”.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: alternative

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power[b]
Corrected Model	1873.456[a]	3	624.485	.941	.421	.012	2.824	.256
Intercept	596060.932	1	596060.932	898.492	.000	.791	898.492	1.000
Availability_Cues	4.974	1	4.974	.007	.931	.000	.007	.051
Product_Type	1778.779	1	1778.779	2.681	.103	.011	2.681	.371
Availability_Cues * Product_Type	114.471	1	114.471	.173	.678	.001	.173	.070
Error	157226.129	237	663.401					
Total	762600.000	241						
Corrected Total	159099.585	240						

a. R Squared = .012 (Adjusted R Squared = -.001)

b. Computed using alpha = .05

Table 32. ANOVA “Alternative”.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: mainstream

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power[b]
Corrected Model	4665.705[a]	3	1555.235	2.662	.049	.033	7.987	.645
Intercept	547986.105	1	547986.105	938.112	.000	.798	938.112	1.000
Availability_Cues	252.556	1	252.556	.432	.511	.002	.432	.100
Product_Type	2816.331	1	2816.331	4.821	.029	.020	4.821	.590
Availability_Cues * Product_Type	1806.982	1	1806.982	3.093	.080	.013	3.093	.418
Error	138440.519	237	584.137					
Total	687100.000	241						
Corrected Total	143106.224	240						

a. R Squared = .033 (Adjusted R Squared = .020)

b. Computed using alpha = .05

Table 33. ANOVA "Mainstream"

Independent Samples Test (for product type = new collection)

		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
cool	Eq Var	.067	.796	-2.263	111	.026	-9.482	4.190	-17.784	-1.180
	No Eq Var			-2.269	110.882	.025	-9.482	4.179	-17.764	-1.201
Fashionable	Eq Var	5.446	.021	-1.241	111	.217	-5.389	4.342	-13.993	3.215
	No Eq Var			-1.256	107.736	.212	-5.389	4.292	-13.896	3.118
alternative	Eq Var	4.657	.033	.350	111	.727	1.670	4.770	-7.783	11.122
	No Eq Var			.354	108.910	.724	1.670	4.722	-7.690	11.030
mainstream	Eq Var	3.713	.057	-1.659	111	.100	-7.542	4.546	-16.550	1.465
	No Eq Var			-1.679	107.719	.096	-7.542	4.493	-16.449	1.364

Table 34. Independent T-Test "Product Characteristics" in new collection condition.

Independent Samples Test (for availability cues = abundant)

		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
cool	Eq Var	3.800	.054	-.201	116	.841	-.920	4.585	-10.001	8.161
	No Eq Var			-.205	115.573	.838	-.920	4.496	-9.826	7.985
fashionable	Eq Var	5.049	.027	-.275	116	.784	-1.186	4.315	-9.733	7.360
	No Eq Var			-.281	114.737	.779	-1.186	4.216	-9.538	7.165
alternative	Eq Var	.878	.351	1.556	116	.122	6.829	4.389	-1.864	15.521
	No Eq Var			1.572	115.694	.119	6.829	4.344	-1.776	15.433
mainstream	Eq Var	2.609	.109	-2.952	116	.004	-12.344	4.181	-20.625	-4.062
	No Eq Var			-2.992	115.983	.003	-12.344	4.125	-20.514	-4.173

Table 35. Independent T-Test “Product Characteristics” in abundant condition.

Independent Samples Test (for availability cues = rare)

		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
cool	Eq Var	2.356	.127	2.114	121	.037	9.499	4.493	.605	18.394
	No Eq Var			2.128	120.382	.035	9.499	4.465	.660	18.339
fashionable	Eq Var	.172	.679	.780	121	.437	3.734	4.788	-5.745	13.213
	No Eq Var			.782	120.923	.436	3.734	4.777	-5.723	13.191
alternative	Eq Var	.163	.687	.818	121	.415	4.065	4.971	-5.776	13.907
	No Eq Var			.817	119.625	.416	4.065	4.976	-5.788	13.918
mainstream	Eq Var	1.012	.316	-.296	121	.768	-1.364	4.613	-10.496	7.769
	No Eq Var			-.294	116.858	.769	-1.364	4.633	-10.540	7.812

Table 36. Independent T-Test “Product Characteristics” in rare condition.

Self-Expression Through Product:

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: selfexpression_product

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power[b]
Corrected Model	1493.882[a]	3	497.961	1.060	.367	.014	3.180	.285
Intercept	302557.343	1	302557.343	643.963	.000	.735	643.963	1.000
Product_Type	968.707	1	968.707	2.062	.152	.009	2.062	.298
Availability_Cues	562.056	1	562.056	1.196	.275	.005	1.196	.193
Product_Type * Availability_Cues	.232	1	.232	.000	.982	.000	.000	.050
Error	109002.051	232	469.836					
Total	416064.000	236						
Corrected Total	110495.932	235						

a. R Squared = .014 (Adjusted R Squared = .001)

b. Computed using alpha = .05

Table 37. ANOVA "Self-expression trough product".

Correlation General Self-Expression and General Extended-Self:

Correlations

		extended_self	selfexpression_general
extended_self	Pearson Correlation	1	.209**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	232	232
selfexpression_general	Pearson Correlation	.209**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	232	232

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 38. Pearson Correlation between General Self-Expression and General Extended-Self Scales.

Descriptive Self-Expression and Extended-Self:

		Selfexpression_General	Extended_Self
Mean		56.9073	4.3539
Median		55.0000	4.4333
Percentiles	25	47.5000	3.5000
	50	55.0000	4.4333
	75	62.5000	5.3083

Table 39. Compared general levels of self-expression and general extended-self scale.

Adjusted Self-Expression Through Product (for general self-expression scale > 47.5):

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: selfexpression_product

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power[b]
Corrected Model	1356.381[a]	3	452.127	1.281	.283	.026	3.844	.337
Intercept	230767.106	1	230767.106	653.939	.000	.821	653.939	1.000
product_type	249.925	1	249.925	.708	.401	.005	.708	.133
availability_cues	1157.958	1	1157.958	3.281	.072	.022	3.281	.436
product_type * availability_cues	4.936	1	4.936	.014	.906	.000	.014	.052
Error	50462.938	143	352.888					
Total	286220.000	147						
Corrected Total	51819.320	146						

a. R Squared = .026 (Adjusted R Squared = .006)

b. Computed using alpha = .05

Table 40. ANOVA "Adjusted self-expression trough product", for general self-expression scale.

Adjusted Self-Expression Through Product (for general extended-self scale ≥ 4):

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: selfexpression_product

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power[b]
Corrected Model	1238.426[a]	3	412.809	1.205	.311	.029	3.615	.317
Intercept	215893.378	1	215893.378	630.141	.000	.840	630.141	1.000
product_type	8.922	1	8.922	.026	.872	.000	.026	.053
availability_cues	1192.285	1	1192.285	3.480	.065	.028	3.480	.457
product_type * availability_cues	40.323	1	40.323	.118	.732	.001	.118	.063
Error	41113.316	120	342.611					
Total	258408.000	124						
Corrected Total	42351.742	123						

a. R Squared = .029 (Adjusted R Squared = .005)

b. Computed using alpha = .05

Table 41. ANOVA "Adjusted self-expression trough product", for general extended-self scale.

Independent Samples Test (for product type = vintage)

		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
selfexpression_product	Eq Var	.181	.672	1.817	59	.074	7.34409	4.04220	-.74435	15.43252
	No Eq Var			1.816	58.835	.074	7.34409	4.04353	-.74747	15.43565

Table 42. Independent T-Test “Adjusted self-expression trough product” in vintage condition.

Independent Samples Test (for product type = new collection)

		Levene's Test								
									95% Confidence Interval	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
selfexpression_product	Eq Var	1.134	.291	.965	61	.338	5.06250	5.24423	-5.42399	15.54899
	No Eq Var			.96358	.998	.339	5.06250	5.25714	-5.45702	15.58202

Table 43. Independent T-Test “Adjusted self-expression trough product” in new collection condition.