

PRE-OWNED CLOTHING MARKET

Trends in the fashion business change often these days, and celebrities and influencers encourage others to dress in contemporary apparel. However, not everyone can afford to buy high-end goods from a retail store. This is one of the reasons why people choose to buy used apparel, which is projected to lessen the need for rapid fashion. Hence, the pre-owned clothing market is in demand among consumers around the world. This market includes a wide range of apparel, such as shirts, pants, dresses, shoes, accessories, and more, that have been previously owned and are being resold. Such a market can encompass various channels, including online platforms, thrift stores, consignment shops, flea markets, and clothing swap events. According to the statistics, the global market value of second-hand was estimated to be worth 211 billion U.S. dollars in 2023 [1]. So, it suggests that the topic of the pre-owned clothing market is really relevant to various spheres such as ecology, fashion and economy.

The aim of our current research is to define the recent trends of the global and Belarusian second-hand clothing markets.

In Belarus the first pre-owned clothing stores appeared in the early 1990s. Back then, they looked very different from today's stores. The cheapest goods were imported into the country, sometimes with severe abrasions and stains. But in the midst of the general shortage, even such skirts, pants and jackets were popular [2].

Now the situation has changed a lot. In such stores, things hang beautifully on hangers, there is a huge selection of clothes for every taste and of quite decent quality. For today in Belarus besides network second-hands and thrift shops there are point-based vintage shops, where one can find even pre-owned clothes that were customized specifically for sale. It makes such shops attractive for lovers of unique design. Among the leaders of second-hand stores in Belarus are the following: "Megahand", "ModaMax" and "Clothing from Europe".

Every year since 2017, ThredUp – the world's largest fashion resales marketplace – has put out the report underlining the breakneck growth of the market. The latest version of the report noted that by 2027, the value of the fashion resale market would double, to \$3.5bn (£2.76bn). As large as the opportunity is, however, there's a big problem. From local thrift shops to enormous online second-hand retailers, it's hard to find pre-owned clothing businesses that actually turn a profit [3].

As for the situation in the Republic of Belarus, second-hand clothing stores are very popular as well. The volume of imports of clothing and other used products, which, in addition to clothing, also includes shoes, hats, accessories, etc., is increasing every year.

According to the statistics, in 2021 our country imported 41447 tons of clothing and other used products, paying \$62.8 million for this. Belarus most actively imported pre-owned goods from Poland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Hungary and other countries. Likewise, statistics show that Belarus does not only import used

goods, but also supplies second-hand goods to foreign markets. For example, in 2021, 11,335 tons of clothing and other used products were exported, which allowed our country to earn \$15.7 million [4].

Pre-owned clothing stores are the main competitor of the Belarussian enterprises for the production and sale of light industry goods. There is the hypothetical opportunity to sell new products in them under the guise of used – as unfair competition. In this way the growth of second-hand stores in recent years is not in favour of the domestic light industry. Another challenge for the pre-owned clothing market is the ban on the import of used clothes from Lithuania. This ban will hit the development of the pre-owned clothing market quite hard.

In order to better understand the problems of the development of second-hand stores for Belarus, there was conducted a survey in the form of a questionnaire.

The results show that 33% of the interviewed people chose second-hand shopping for clothing items for the following reasons: environmental considerations, saving money, supporting charities, and the most wide-spread reason is interest in unique finds. The remaining 57% are not satisfied with second-hand stores due to the lack of confidence in the quality of goods as the main reason, negative attitude towards used goods, the inability to return goods, the lack of premium products and the external and internal design of stores. Also, based on our survey, only 7 out of 25 people aged 26 and above buy clothes in second-hands. This indicates that the main consumers of used clothing are young people, and since the majority of the population in Belarus is aged 46 and above, this is becoming one of the main problems of the pre-owned clothing market.

In conclusion, as the survey reveals, people prefer to buy clothes in local shopping malls and marketplaces such as Wildberries, Lamoda, etc. The most common reason of choosing second-hand clothing stores is interest in unique finds. At the same time in comparison with trading houses, which mainly feature Belarusian products, pre-owned clothing stores are in the lead. It proves the fact that the growth of second-hand stores is not in favour of the domestic light industry at the moment.

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