

Psychological barriers to renting and buying second-hand consumer goods: A consumer's perspective from UAE and UK

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Abstract

Recent reports highlighting the need to address the impact of climate change have emphasised the role of individuals to be less resource intensive in their consumption. However psychological choice processes of buying second-hand or renting consumer goods can be complex. This paper examines the motivations and barriers to participate in the sharing economy, i.e. buying and renting of pre-used goods, in the UK and UAE. Furthermore, we examine affective motives and aim to understand to what extent self-perception and self-signalling encourage or hinder the use of pre-owned goods. An interpretivist approach is adopted for this study comprising a mixture of interviews and focus groups. Six consumer focus groups aided with projective techniques were held in the UK (n=39). In the UAE, 20 semi-structured interviews were conducted in the cities of Abu Dhabi and Dubai. The results show that contributing to sustainability remains stronger in Western countries as one of their motivations for purchase of second-hand goods. Meanwhile, culture and tradition are closely linked to self-perception of UAE consumers where status and social distance may hinder consumption of second-hand goods. Stigma still remains for both societies and are closely associated with negative contamination (i.e. hygiene issues).