

Shifting Towards Quality: How Cost-per-Wear Signals Influence Consumer Choice of Clothing

Lisa Eckmann

University of Bath

Lucia Reisch

Cambridge Judge Business School

Cite as:

Eckmann Lisa, Reisch Lucia (2025), Shifting Towards Quality: How Cost-per-Wear Signals Influence Consumer Choice of Clothing. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 54th, (123427)

Paper from the 54th Annual EMAC Conference, Madrid, Spain, May 25-30, 2025



Shifting Towards Quality: How Cost-per-Wear Signals Influence Consumer Choice of Clothing

Abstract:

Consumers overconsume and underutilize clothing, resulting in substantial resource waste in the domain of fashion. As a potential remedy, fashion blogs and small businesses have suggested evaluating garments regarding their cost per wear, which divides a garment's purchase price by the number of wears it provides. This research examines providing cost-per-wear signals as a nudge to shift consumer purchases to more sustainable (i.e., higher-quality) clothing. Three experimental studies show that cost-per-wear signals influence consumers' perception of a garment's economic value and shift choice to garments with lower cost per wear (i.e., higher quality). Importantly, these effects depend on evaluation mode and purchase occasion such that they are mitigated when consumers cannot compare cost-per-wear signals or aim to purchase a special garment. The findings are relevant for marketers and policymakers aiming to promote purchases of high-quality clothing and curb fast-fashion consumption.

Keywords: usage frequency, durability, sustainable consumption

Track: Consumer behavior