

Interreg



Co-funded by
the European Union

Central Baltic Programme

BALTIC2HAND NUDGING REPORT

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These materials were created in the Baltic2Hand project which is an Interreg Central Baltic Programme 2021–2027 project that is co-funded by the European Union.

Introduction

The Baltic2Hand project aims to promote re-use of textiles and decrease textile waste by developing circular business models and services for consumers in the Central Baltic Region. To support this aim, the project promises to identify the most effective ways for consumer nudging.

This report concludes the process which started in Autumn 2023 with first defining nudging and how it could be used for our project's purposes. We then continued with setting a theoretical background based on which we started to collect data from our consumer survey results, after which we connected consumer personas, created in the project, with the most suitable nudges for each persona and then continued with suggesting nudging activities for each company's prototype idea. To finalise the nudging activity, we gathered the data formed during the prototyping period and found the most effective ways of nudging, based on the prototypes companies made during the prototyping period in Autumn 2024.

Nudging

Nudging is one way of influencing people and their choices through subtle modifications of their decision context. To nudge someone is to deliberately affect their surrounding choice architecture, meaning the way choices are presented, framed and structured.¹

In thinking, how do we get consumers choose used instead of new textile items, we decided to look into green nudging theory by Schubert (2017) and connect its suggestions with the previously made consumer research² by Gurova and Joro (2024). The green nudge theory divides nudges into three groups:

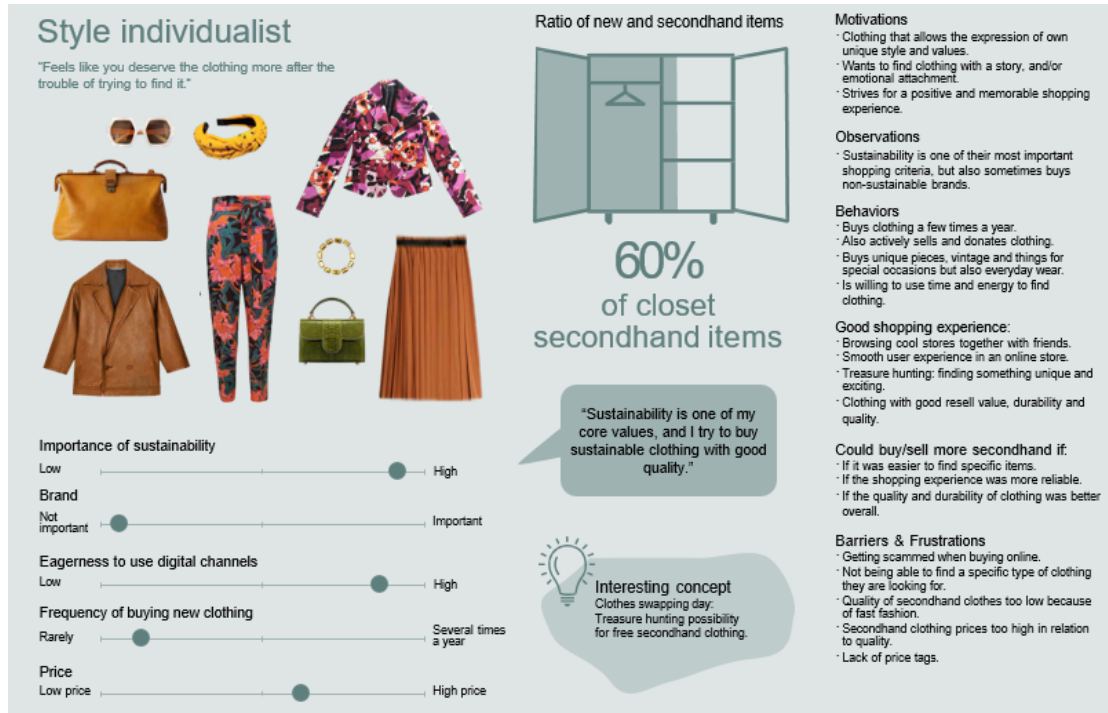
- 1) simplifying and headlining green information, e.g., through eco-labelling,
- 2) following the herd, e.g., imitating green behaviour of peers and conveying social norms,
- 3) and green nudges as default, e.g., exploiting the behavioural effects of purposefully set defaults. (Schubert, 2017.)

¹ Schubert. 2017. Green nudges: Do they work? Are they ethical? *Ecological Economics*, 132, 329-342.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2016.11.009>

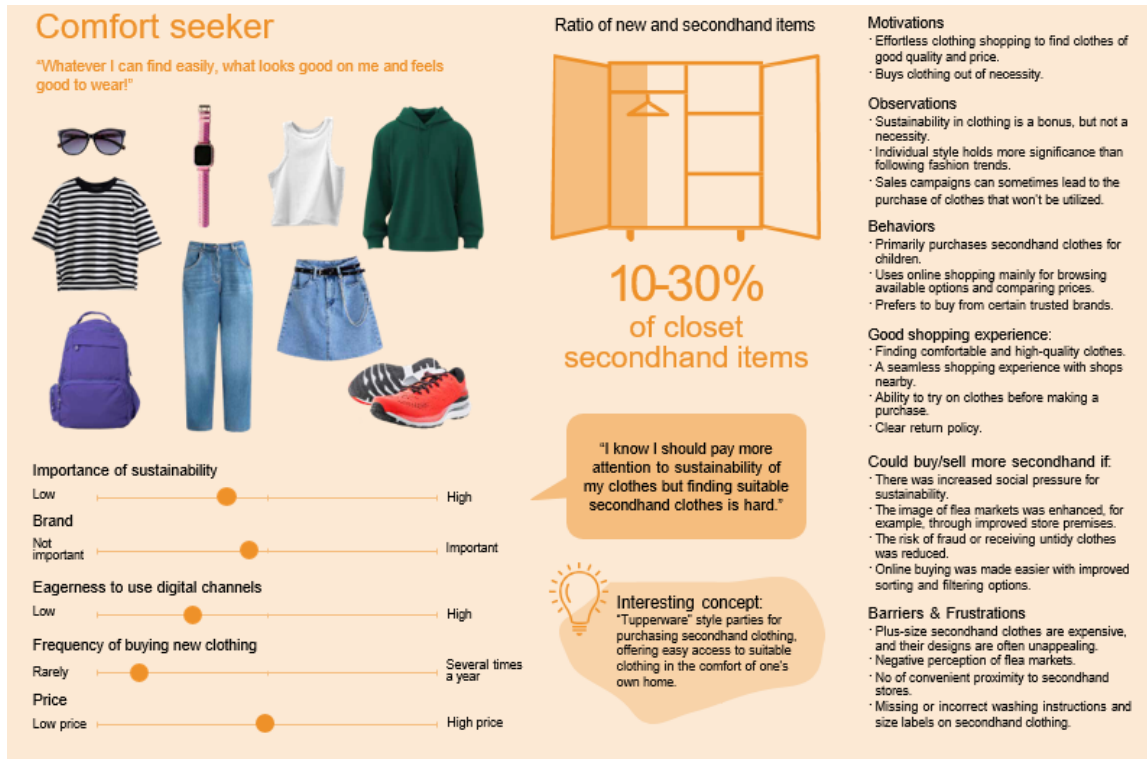
² Joro et.al. 2024. Baltic2Hand Results Report. Companies & Non-profits, Consumer Survey & Interviews, and Consumer Personas. Telaketju. https://telaketju.turkuamk.fi/uploads/7ab6bb47-baltic2hand_company-consumer-results_report_final-1.pdf

We used the three consumer personas (Pictures 1-3) made earlier during this project³ by Kuuluvainen and Anttonen (2024) and identified the data from the consumer interviews, that could be connected to each nudge. Later we combined each consumer persona with the most apparent nudges suitable for them. You can see the results in Table 1.

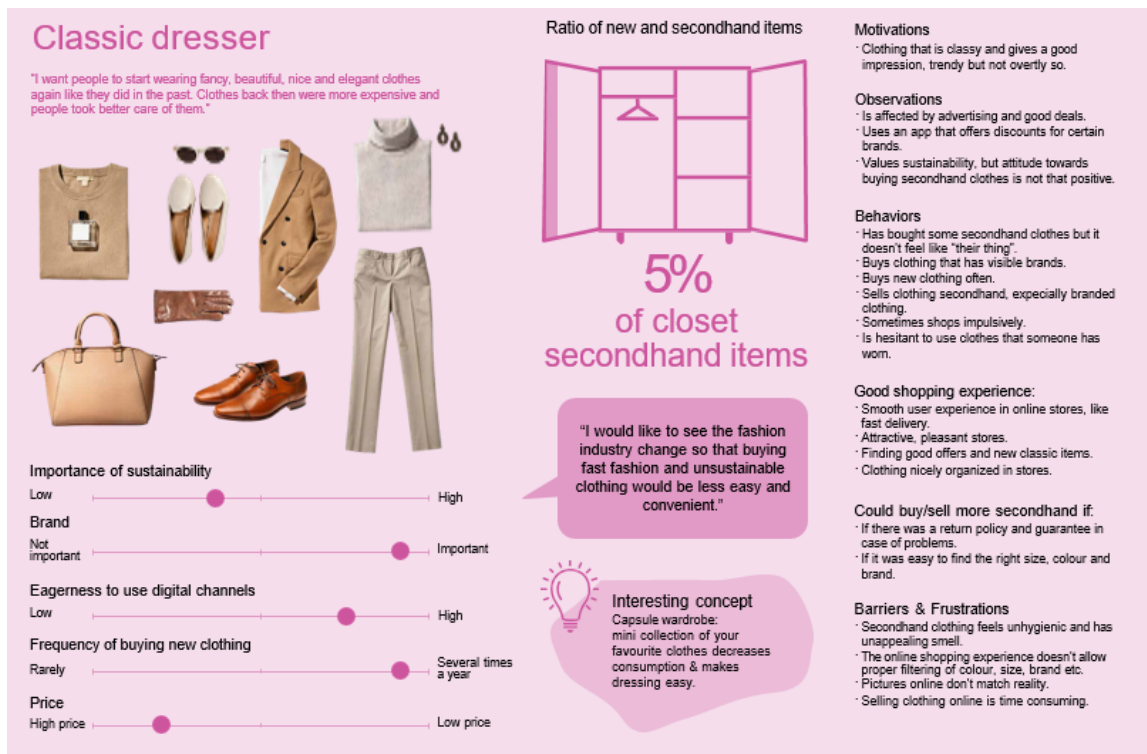


Pic. 1. Consumer persona – Style individualist.

³ Kuuluvainen, Antola & Gurova. 2024. Mitä asiakkaat haluavat tekstiiliteollisuudelta - secondhand-kuluttajapersoonat valottavat asiakkaiden tarpeita. In Anttonen, Jussila, Kurkela, Merimaa, Montonen & Rieppo (Eds.), *Kestävää tulevaisuutta luomassa – Laurea-ammattikorkeakoulun näkökulmia kestäväan kehitykseen* (pp. 161-169). Laurea Publications 226. <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-799-708-9>



Pic. 2. Consumer persona – Comfort seeker.



Pic. 3. Consumer persona – Classic dresser.

Consumer Persona	Nudges	
<p>Style individualist</p>	<p>Normalisation Normalising and encouraging reuse via social media</p> <p><i>"-- making it (reuse) more acceptable -- like if celebrities would talk about buying second-hand in social media."</i></p>	<p>Sustainability information Comfort, durability and traceability</p> <p><i>"Usually, I check if the material is -- thin like a fabric that would tear immediately."</i></p>
<p>Comfort seeker</p>	<p>Social encouragement Societal and social pressure</p> <p><i>"then a friend of mine linked to a 2nd hand store-- -- it was so convenient--."</i></p>	<p>Accessibility Accessibility of a store or product and price</p> <p><i>"--I often go when I'm on a run and then simultaneously go through the selection--."</i></p> <p><i>"-- annoying that if you find something nice, then it is not your own size."</i></p>
<p>Classic dresser</p>	<p>Familiarity Familiarity of the concept or brand</p> <p><i>"Sometimes yes, I've just gotten used to the idea that I might buy it new, even though I know it would be good."</i></p>	<p>Easy and attractive Reliable, appealing and organized</p> <p><i>"I feel that it (new) is certainly of a higher quality. I find it somehow more reliable."</i></p>

Table 1. Identified nudging activities for each consumer persona.

Each headline in Table 1. equals to one of the three green nudges presented earlier: informational, following the herd and default, but they are titled differently to better represent the idea behind the nudge. So here we have some quotes from our consumer interviews, titled with the consumer persona we connected them with, and divided under different nudge examples. These nudges were chosen as “the most effective ones”, because the most data (i.e. mentions) was found on these themes.

For the ‘style individualist’, which is the most active second-hand user of the consumer personas, the most effective nudges identified are informational nudges promoting green behaviour, so stating clear green information of products and services, and following the herd nudge, i.e. normalising and promoting reuse through for example social media.

For the ‘comfort seeker’, whose wardrobe is 10-30% second-hand, the most effective nudges include following the herd, i.e. social encouragement from peers, and nudge by default, i.e. accessibility of the product, service, or price.

Lastly, for the ‘classic dresser’, whose wardrobe was the least dominated by second-hand, the most effective nudges were informational, so making the experience as fluent and attractive as possible, and nudge by default, i.e. familiarity of the service/product/brand or presenting them in a way that is familiar to the user.

In addition to identifying nudging activities to fit each one of the consumer personas, there were also some nudging activities that could be connected to each one of the personas. These included offering a simple and good shopping experience and introducing clear savings. Offering fluent and easy services especially online was seen very attractive for consumers, as was a clean, organised, clearly categorised and specified collection also. Only the most eager treasure hunters were more likely to shop in places where the collection can vary, and the presentation is more chaotic than organised. Clear savings, however, were valued by almost everyone. Even if the price were high, it should be in line with the looks and quality of the item. Bargains and campaigns were valued in second-hand clothing, as the price of the used is common to be less than that of the new item. In this way consumers saw the potential of clear savings in buying second-hand instead of new.

Ideas and results of nudging in the prototyping phase

As stated before, nudges can be a useful tool in persuading people to choose a certain service or product. Therefore, these nudges were presented to the companies participating in prototyping during Autumn 2024. Each of the 11 concepts presented at the beginning of the prototyping phase, were linked to a potential nudge for them to use in prototyping. We first identified their possible customer group(s) and then offered some insights on what kind of nudges could be effective in supporting the aim of the prototype. The concepts matched with nudging ideas are next briefly described.

For promoting reuse in a shopping mall, whose consumers we identified as ‘comfort seekers’, we suggested nudging based on accessibility and social encouragement, because these consumers value easy and effortless services and prefer regular shops before online. The nudging activities could include placing second-hand products near the consumer, alongside the new products, or even having second-hand as default when entering the shopping mall. Based on a survey made during the prototyping phase, bringing second-hand in the same space with new textile items, i.e. making acquiring second-hand as easy as possible, would in the best-case scenario increase the consumption of used textile items – 24% of respondents stated that their consumption of used items would increase if there were a second-hand shopping possibility in the shopping mall.

For launching a repair service for consumer textile brands, the target consumer group was identified as ‘classic dressers’, who value familiarity and easiness. Therefore, the nudging activities suggested here were based on making the service as reliable, attractive, and easy to use as possible. Based on the survey made during the prototyping phase, designing the experience of the repair service as easy as possible would increase the attractiveness of the service, hence nudge the consumers towards using their textiles longer. The respondents also suggested that the reliability of the service could be even further improved through increased transparency of the service, e.g. by stating the repairer.

For developing a sustainable fashion show, the target group can vary from 'style individualists' to small textile companies. Therefore, the nudging activities suggested here varied between these groups. For small textile companies the motivation could lie on promoting communality and belonging. On the other hand, to motivate 'style individualists' one could rely on promoting sustainability and green values through the services and products presented at the fashion show, as these consumer value sustainability and individuality. The two prototypes tested suggest that awareness of sustainability could be increased through this type of fashion show, and that bringing various brands and consumers with similar interests to the same space can promote communality and belonging.

To market a second-hand service to increase the reuse of textiles, the targeted consumers, in this case 'comfort seekers' and 'classic dressers', could be nudged by promoting accessibility and familiarity of the concept. In other words, making the service geographically and otherwise accessible and designing a marketing campaign which sparks feelings of familiarity and trust. The prototype suggests that familiarity can be promoted by designing a second-hand marketing campaign which resembles a traditional fashion marketing campaign, and this could potentially empower consumers to choose a more sustainable alternative, in this case second-hand.

For slow fashion district's marketing, the target groups involved could vary from 'comfort seekers' to 'style individualists'. To get 'comfort seekers' interested in this campaign, the easiness and convenience of the district should be promoted. For 'style individualists' on the other hand, promotion of stories behind the brands and garments and the collectiveness of the district could nudge them to get to know it more closely. The prototype proposed a map for the district as a way to market it. This would make the district seem more accessible, as the shops are all on display, but also could promote the area for more sceptical consumers by offering a traditional visualisation of information.

To get consumers to use more upcycled items, normalisation of upcycling and promotion of sustainability is key. The consumer group to target is the 'style individualists'. The company could share examples of upcycling via their socials and promote the uniqueness of their products. Based on the survey made during prototyping, the most value from upcycling could come from interior design items, like lampshades, instead of more traditional textile items.

A repairing service for (leather) fashion accessories would be, based on our analysis, at interest for 'classic dressers' and 'style individualists'. 'Classic dressers' want easy repair and longer lifecycles for their favourite items. 'Style individualist' in turn seek for sustainable alternatives that can enhance the story of their garments. The prototype offered examples of repairs to visualise how the value of these items could increase, and the lifecycle lengthen as a consequence of the repair.

To market second-hand online store of a well-known brand, the key is to target the familiar, current customers. This can be done by enhancing the brand loyalty and offering an easy way to buy more second-hand. Offering the used items side by side the new ones, makes the step to buying second-hand seem even lower. The marketing concept for an online second-hand store was prototyped and

customers could tell their views on the campaigns. Also, for the brick-and-mortar store, various concepts were tested with real customers. Based on those results, customers thought that offering an online shopping alternative in addition to a traditional shopping experience would increase the consumption of used items.

Most effective ways for nudging

A study, made by two master students in the Baltic2Hand project, stated that around 80% of first-time customers return to shop in second-hand shop.⁴ Therefore, the key to increasing reuse of textiles and consequently decreasing textile waste is to attract the first timers.

In our prototyping phase, we connected each prototype idea with one or two consumer personas. The consumer personas were 'classic dresser', 'style individualist' and 'comfort seeker'. Out of these, the 'classic dresser' was the one who consumed the least amount of used textile items. Therefore, the 'classic dressers' is the group with the most potential in terms of increasing the total amount of second-hand consumption. The prototypes that targeted this group were the repair service for consumer textiles, the marketing campaign to promote second-hand and a second-hand service for brand items, repair service for fashion accessories, and shop-in-shop for second-hand.

The most effective ways of nudging are therefore the nudges proposed for these prototypes, hence nudging by promoting the familiarity or familiar feel of the product or service and designing easy and attractive services and products that feel reliable, appealing and are well organised in a traditional or online store environment. As this consumer group needs the most persuasion to shop second-hand and are most familiar with buying new items, the closer the shopping experience is of that of buying new the better. This can be supported for example by designing the stores to resemble the traditional ones, offering used items side by side the new ones, and demonstrating the quality of the used items and the good price-quality ratio.

⁴ Virtanen & Noras. 2024. Second-hand – A New, Growing Industry or a Disruptor of the Textile Industry? Telaketju. <https://telaketju.turkuamk.fi/en/yleinen-en/second-hand-a-new-growing-industry-or-a-disruptor/>

Conclusion

This report summarises how nudging theory has been used to support the aims of the Baltic2Hand project. It offers insights on how companies involved in the project and its prototyping phase can, has and could use nudging to promote the ideas of new business models on e.g. textile reuse and repair.

The green nudging theory was used to support the project's aims to increase textile reuse and decrease the amount of textile waste. Each prototype idea was linked with an identified nudging activity that could make the idea more attractive for consumers to try. The report states that the biggest positive impact that nudging can make, is when the people, who previously have not been introduced to second-hand clothing and circular alternatives, are reached for the first time. Therefore, it should be kept in mind that to attract this consumer group, the companies need to design and produce services and products that resemble the experience of buying traditional, new items, and that these services and product should have a good price-quality ratio.

This report offers some insight on how nudging can be utilised in promoting a certain target. The results are based on 11 prototypes that were tested during Autumn 2024. These results should not therefore be generalised into a wider context, they only perform as examples. Further research should be done to actualise and measure the real effectiveness of nudging. In this case the assumptions were concluded based on workshops with the idea owners and consumer surveys.