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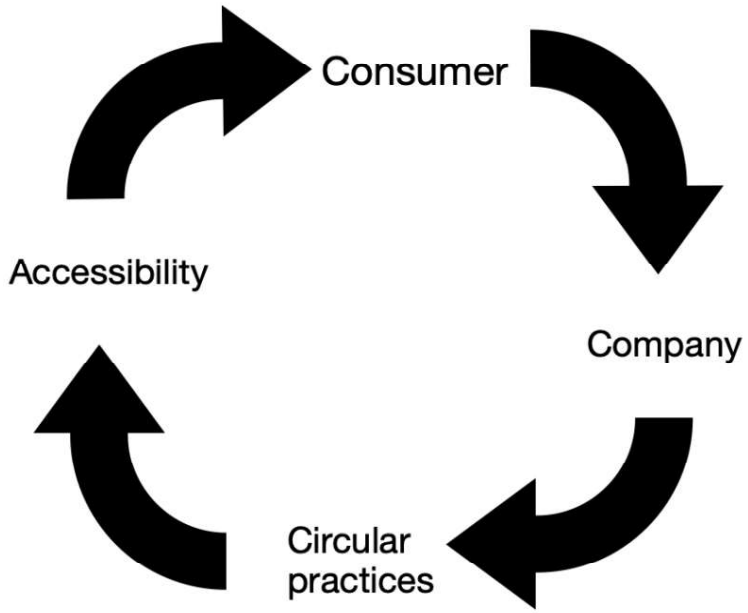

Accessibility as a pivotal influence for customer oriented circular practices

Observations in the adventure wear sector

Bachelor thesis for International Logistics Program

MOLTAS ENGSTRÖM
ANDREAS GUSTAFSSON EKBERG

DEPARTMENT OF TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMICS
DIVISION OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY

CHALMERS UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
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www.chalmers.se

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Department of Technology Management and Economics
Chalmers University of Technology
SE-412 96 Gothenburg
Sweden
Telephone + 46 (0)31-772 1000

Cover: A diagram highlighting the four important pillars for this bachelor thesis

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Abstract

The adventure wear clothing industry is a multinational business that fosters environmentally aware customers. Signifying for clothing companies within this segment is that they hold a greater incentive for circular practices that influence how the company conducts business. Existing research regarding circular practices, challenges, and enablers for each practice focuses on the company's perspective. However, research regarding the customer perspective on circular practices has been lacking. This report will explore customer involvement with circular practices. Through a literature review, a customer survey, and focus groups. This report has the following findings: Adventure wear customers who were subject to this report have a low degree of implementation of companies' circular practices in their daily lives. The main reason for this is the lack of information and knowledge regarding these, as well as the fact that customers have the opinion that the accessibility of engaging in circular practices is too low. Customers, however, flag that they are inclined to engage more in circular practices. Still, for this to happen, they need to be communicated better and be more accessible to implement in their daily lives. We argue that in the future, for the adventure wear clothing industry, addressing the accessibility of circular practices for customers is the most critical concern. Addressing this issue will allow for a higher degree of implementation of circular practices in the customer's lives.

Keywords: Circular economy, Circular business practices, Adventure wear, Customer perspective, Textiles, Accessibility

PREFACE

The authors, Andreas Gustafsson Ekberg and Moltas Engström have composed this bachelor thesis, which is the final assignment for the bachelor's degree in international Logistics at Chalmers University of Technology in Gothenburg, Sweden.

First and foremost, we want to thank our supervisor, Nicholas Surber, for guiding us throughout the process of this bachelor's thesis. With his expertise and help at our supervisory meetings, he has helped steer us in the right direction, which has resulted in a final product that we are proud to present. We also want to thank our examiner, Catharina Landström, for her help and feedback during the mid-seminar and for examining this report.

We also would like to thank all our previous professors during our three years at Chalmers for their involvement in our education and for providing us with the necessary skills and knowledge to enable us to complete this thesis.

Finally, we want to thank all our survey respondents and the 16 individuals who participated in the focus groups, which helped us gather information and insights from which the results are based.

Moltas Engström and Andreas Gustafsson Ekberg

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ACRONYMS AND TERMINOLOGY

AW – Adventure wear
AWC – Adventure wear customer
CE – Circular economy
CRAAP – Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, Purpose
CSR – Corporate social responsibility
EU – European Union
SDG – Sustainable Development Goal
UN – United Nations

1. INTRODUCTION

The introduction will open the discussion regarding circularity within the adventure wear industry. The different topics that will be mentioned are the history of the concept of circularity defining some key terms and general principles of the concept. Moreover, the introduction will briefly cover the outdoor clothing segment and the customer perspective on circularity and sustainable business practices. After that, the problem discussion, the purpose of the report and finally, the research questions for the report will be communicated.

1.1 Background

Beyond the excitement of adventure, the adventure wear (AW) clothing industry might be leading a turning point. Circular business is the key to Agenda 2030, which is a sustainable development agenda released by the United Nations (UN), which sheds light on actions that need to be made to ensure sustainable development for all future generations (*Circular Economy and the 2030 Agenda | UNSSC | United Nations System Staff College*, n.d.). Circular business is prominent because the traditional linear business model isn't working in today's society and contributes to environmental impacts and resource depletion (Jacometti, 2019). With today's high numbers of sales returns, managing these has become an essential entity of logistics management. In today's business climate, the rate of returns in Sweden is around 9% of retail store-bought goods and around 30% of orders in the e-commerce segment (Petisme et al., 2022). However, within the clothing industry, that same number is between 40-60% (Cullinane et al., 2021). For products returned in the U.S., approximately 95% of the returned items have a no-fault found (Sciarotta, n.d.). A lot of goods, especially in the clothing industry, do not get resold again and end up going to waste. This is because it is cheaper to throw away, rather than repairing the clothing or selling it at a lower price (Sciarotta, n.d.). The action of simply throwing away the returned items is a key example where the business is linear and not circular.

The concept of circularity stems from the 19th century (*The History of the Circular Economy | Arrive Platform*, n.d.). The concept was first explored in the clothing industry when a British textile manufacturer workforce protested against new machines that they thought would render their jobs useless. The employees, therefore, argued that the machines could instead be used to reintroduce waste materials from normal production, thus allowing the workers to keep their jobs. Since then, the concept of circularity has evolved rapidly and is widespread and implemented in many different businesses today, not just the clothing sector. Even if the idea of circularity has been around for a long time, the discussions have accelerated heavily in recent years due to greater environmental awareness and political debates regarding circularity.

China started in 2009 to debate circularity and made plans of action for implementation. This meant that circularity received much more recognition and it sparked international political debates on the subject (Fuchs & Hovemann, 2022b). Shortly after, in 2015, the European Union (EU) followed suit and introduced an action plan for a circular economy (CE) (Johansson & Henriksson, 2020). A circular economy is a business model concept that eliminates the standard resource-intensive linear supply chain model (Fuchs & Hovemann, 2022a). The linear supply chain model is based on the fundamentals of produce, consume, and discard (Saha et al., 2024). Since natural resources are limited in supply, this way of operating is not a sustainable practice to ensure sustainable development for all future generations (*Sustainable Development | KTH*, n.d.). Circular practices aim to include an overall minimization of the general emissions from

delivery, storage, handling, and production (Lüdeke-Freund et al., 2019). The name circularity comes from the goal of no new raw materials or excessive energy needing to be implemented into the supply chain, but rather that worn-out and broken products are remade or refurbished. The term circular economy relates to businesses worldwide implementing circular work methods and thus shifting to a CE compared to the traditional linear economy present in our society today (Lüdeke-Freund et al., 2019).

Customer involvement circular practices are practices that require some sort of action from the customer to enable the practice. For a circular economy to be functional and prosperous, everyone, meaning companies, customers, and associations, must be on board and provide their best available effort to provide a solution together. It is essentially a two-way street where the companies must do their part but also the customers. If customers are more engaged with the circular practices that the companies release it would increase the accuracy and efficiency of these practices. This would also create a positive spiral where customers are more engaged with circular practices, and companies would see a greater incentive to develop these further. The problematic nature in the past of getting customers onboard with circular practices have stemmed from many different reasons like informational structures, ease of implementation and the complex structure of circular practices (Fuchs & Hovemann, 2022b).

Circularity as a business model further has some challenges of implementation, there are challenges both customer and non-customer based. Circularity within the clothing industry is often based on making clothes from recycled products and recycling clothes in a way that enables re-manufacturing (Haq & Alam, 2023). When AW clothes are handed to third-party recyclers, they might have issues identifying the material mix of functional outdoor clothing. This is because these types of apparel usually consist of a multitude of materials and chemicals that further complicate the practices of re-manufacturing and recycling (Fuchs & Hovemann, 2022b). Another issue is the possibility to make predictions regarding the number of returns. If the production should rely entirely on creating new clothes with recycled materials, the manufacturer needs to be able to predict the amount of available material. When comparing the AW clothing industry to the fast fashion industry, there is a significant difference in the amount of returned and recycled clothes. Where the fast fashion industry manufactures more clothes, and theoretically, these clothes could go to recycling to make new clothes (Fuchs & Hovemann, 2022b).

1.1.1 Adventure wear clothing industry

AW clothing is designed to be used outdoors on hikes or other recreational outdoor activities. This form of activity puts a strain on the clothing used, leading to companies emphasizing durability for their clothing. Since the AW clothing sector serves a customer base that is active in the outdoors, their customers generally have a greater environmental mindset than fast fashion customers (Moazzem et al., 2022; Moon et al., 2017).

The reason for focusing on this segment of the clothing sector stems from the conclusion that brands within this market segment often have a higher awareness of the derived impact of unsustainable practices on the environment. The brand image of a company with a focus on adventure, nature, and the overall outdoors would be damaged if the company did not act with the environment in mind (Moon et al., 2017). To ensure that the clothes are made with the environment in mind, they should be produced with sustainable materials and engineered to be abrasion-resistant, which makes them durable and long-lasting (*Outdoor Clothing | Meaning,*

Definition, Origin, n.d.). On top of producing durable and sustainable clothes, if the companies want to maintain their sustainable image, they need to use recycled materials in their production and take care of the products during their life cycle by repairing and responsibly recycling them (Fjällräven, 2023).

1.1.2 Customer perspective on circularity

The customer perspective on circularity is an intricate road to navigate for companies. There are different influences that may alter the customer perspective on a brand's circular work methods. First and foremost, a trait that signifies an adventure wear customer (AWC) is that they hold a sentimental value for their adventure clothes due to the reason that these products are used in situations that create strong memories for the customer (Manqian & Eunyoung, 2022). The memory of that great adventure is then connected to the piece of clothing since they are reminded of those memories.

Another trait that signifies the AWC is that they generally have a higher environmental awareness. This means these customers typically put more pressure on the companies supplying adventure clothing. A way for companies to inform environmentally aware AWCs about their products or the company's sustainability properties is by using eco-labels. Eco-labels are an environmental performance indicator in the form of a stamp that informs that a company or a product complies with a set of ecological attributes or threshold values for environmental standards (*What Is Ecolabelling? - Global Ecolabelling Network*, n.d.). For the eco-label to significantly influence the customer decision, the trust in the eco-label is critical (Moon et al., 2017). If trust in the eco-label is lacking, the effect is the opposite of what it is intended to mediate. The reason for this opposite effect is because if the customer has no trust in the eco-label and a company utilizes these the mistrust is transferred to the company itself (Gorton et al., 2021). The historical reason for mistrust in eco-labels is related to the fact that companies in the past have communicated that they comply with many different eco-labels. However, the information on what this compliance means and the measures the company implements has been lacking (Moon et al., 2017). One of the eco-labels that a customer might have stumbled upon is ISO certification, which is a stamp of approval that the company complies with standards set up by the international organization for standardization. The most relevant here is the ISO 14001 (*ISO 14001:2015 - Environmental Management Systems — Requirements with Guidance for Use*, n.d.) which is a certification for compliance with the goals for reduction of environmental impact (*What Is ISO Certification & Other Frequently Asked Questions | ISO QSL*, n.d.).

Furthermore, the Higg Index is another eco-label frequently used within the AW clothing industry. It is a tool for companies that want to measure and help improve their environmental score for products but also for the company. Essentially, it is a benchmarking tool that gives each product a score; the lower the score, the better. Customers can then use the product score to benchmark products against each other to determine the more sustainable option. The Higg Index is developed by the Sustainable Apparel Coalition (*Higg Index | Kunskap | Naturkompaniet®*, n.d.). Another important topic to mention when discussing eco-labels is the UN 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), which are 17 goals that the United Nations compiled for companies to have a standard to work towards; the most relevant for the adventure wear segment is goal number 12 responsible consumption and production. The meaning of the SDGs is that they need to be fulfilled by 2030 for sustainable development as a part of the agenda 2030 (*THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development*, n.d.). SDG reporting in corporate

social responsibility (CSR) reports is common in many different industries nevertheless in the adventure wear clothing sector. The 17 SDGs are formulated to help companies understand what is essential to focus on. Many companies list a few that are important for the company, and this is all good and well. Still, the problematic nature here is that many companies are framing their incentive with the SDGs as a kind of eco-label, which introduces the problem of SDG washing (del Río et al., 2024). The SDG washing results in misinformation and makes the company seem better than it actually is. This, in turn, creates a negative spiral where more companies are inclined to do the same to stay competitive and attractive to the customers.

1.2 Problem discussion

The problem that this thesis addresses is the difficulty that is present in involving customers in circular business practices. Circular business practices are developed, heavily researched, and implemented within the companies, but achieving recognition and implementation from customers has proven rather difficult (Mostaghel & Chirumalla, 2021). The development of circular practices has been going on for some time, but the fact remains that they have been ineffective (Fuchs & Hovemann, 2022b). The problem of eco-labelling and SDG-washing may have resulted in customer mistrust, which may have further complicated the issue of engaging customers in circular practices due to the belief that it would have no effect (Gorton et al., 2021). Furthermore, the linear consumption model has long been accepted by companies and customers. The impact of pursuing the linear model is resource depletion, which means using an excessive number of renewable and non-renewable natural resources (Saha et al., 2024). Another pressing issue is the amount of waste created that finds its way to the planet's natural environments. When, in fact, the framework for delineation from unsustainable consumption model that would address this issue is there.

1.3 Purpose of the report

The purpose of this thesis is to understand the customer perspective on the circular practices released by AW clothing companies. By conducting research on the topic as well as conducting a survey combined with focus groups, a better understanding of the customer perspective on circular practices can be provided. This research will allow for a better understanding of what affects the customer's decision and what effects different strategies will have on influencing a customer's views and actions. Furthermore, the report is investigating what consequences a lack of information or disinformation on claimed circular practices might lead to regarding trust and cooperation by the customers.

1.4 Research questions

The goal of this report is to answer the questions below regarding customer involvement circularity practices.

Research questions:

1. What circular practices with customer involvement are present for customers and companies in the adventure wear clothing segment?
2. How do customers utilize information regarding circular practices to make decisions on implementing these in their daily lives?
3. What factors influences a customer to involving circular practices in their daily lives?

Going forward to answer the research questions the method for doing this will be explained. The method section will cover what has been done to enable for investigation into the customer perspective. Thereafter the theory for the thesis will be explained. The theory will cover concepts and theories regarding circular practices to better understand the discussion on customer oriented circular practices. After the theory section the empirical findings of the thesis through utilizing the method will be explained. The section after the empirical findings is the discussion. In the discussion section, the empirical findings together with the theoretical section of the thesis will be combined. The discussion is framed to inspect what the results present to create an understanding of the implications of implementation of circular practices from a customer perspective. Finally, the conclusion including points on what future research can be conducted that will wrap up this thesis.

2. METHODOLOGY

The following sections will include the choice of research method and why this method was chosen. Furthermore, the approach to the collection and analysis of relevant literature will be explained. Also, an explanation for the method for identifying circular practices will be made as research conducted through survey and focus groups. Also, an explanation for the method for the identification of circular practices will be made well as research conducted through survey and focus groups. Quality assurance problems and imitations of the methodology will end the framing of the method.

2.1 Motivation of research method

This report is framed as a qualitative study, where observations are made to understand the phenomenon of customer perspective on circular practices. The research method chosen for this report combines quantitative and qualitative data collection, resulting in a mixed-method design (Martyn Denscombe, 2017). The reasoning for this was that a survey that is a part of the empirical results collection introduces a quantitative element to the report where it is possible to quantify behavioural patterns and incentives. To reach further insights into the customer perspective on circular measures, focus groups were held, which contributed further insights into customer behaviour through the facilitation of group discussions, which allowed for insights into perspective, attitude, and individual experiences from the customer. The element of focus groups is the qualitative component of the research method. Finally, a comparative component was introduced where the identified circular practices were compared to the customer implementation and contribution to these circular practices. This was made to pinpoint if the customer's attention to circular practices is in line with or differs from the company's focus areas.

2.2 Literature analysis

The first part of the literature analysis which is divided into two parts was of scientific articles on research that has been previously conducted in the field of circularity. The resources for this report were gathered by applying a snowball effect to find relevant literature on the topic. The snowball effect is a method used when gathering resources within a specific topic. It consists of identifying a few relevant articles through a set of keywords. To clarify this, a description will be made of how the snowball effect was applied. We searched for the keywords "circular practices", "outdoor sporting goods", "customer-based circular practices", "trust in companies", and "customer perspective". When three relevant articles were found, cited articles within the reports were looked at to find reports that introduced further angles on the fundamental concepts of circularity. Thus, a snowballing effect of finding a large amount of literature on a quite specific subject (Vizor, n.d.). This resulted in the identification of 23 different scientific articles that were applied to this thesis. Mainly, all the gathered literature stems from search engines that provide peer-reviewed academic reports. The reason for this was to add an extra layer of protection from disinformation that may arise from uncontrolled sources. Search engines that were used were Science Direct and Scopus. However, some sources have been gathered outside the academic sphere. The non-peer-reviewed articles stem mainly from trustworthy organizations like the UN and the Swedish governmental body, further increasing the validity of non-academic published information. Some sources however were used that are present outside these boundaries. The number of resources that were used outside the academic sphere to fill in the gaps of information was 18.

Each individual source was validated through the CRAAP test (Granström, n.d.), this is a framework that is used to validate sources were each letter in the acronym CRAAP covers a different dimension of the source. C, for currency, meaning if the source is relevant in terms of published date. R, for relevance, which measures how relevant the source is for the subject at hand. A, for authority, which determines the credibility of the author. The second A for accuracy, which determines the correctness of the information. The final letter, P, stands for purpose and investigates the report's purpose to determine if there is no bias or ulterior motive for the source. If a source passes all these tests, it is eligible to be used in this report and be determined not to be CRAAP.

A visualization of how the CRAAP test was conducted is displayed below.

Resource: The Circular Economy Concept in the Outdoor Sporting Goods Industry: Challenges and Enablers of Current Practices among Brands and Retailers

- **Currency**
  2022 - up to date
- **Relevance**
  Relevant for the topic? Certainly
- **Authority**
  Michael Fuchs, the author, is a PhD in sports economics and has released many articles on the concept of circularity. Gregor Hovemann is a doctorate and professor within business administration and sports management.
- **Accuracy**
  The source is very accurate and is in line with what many other authors have found.
- **Purpose**
  The purpose of this source is to inform and research and raises no issues of potential bias.

When all the resources were gathered, they were read and analysed to allow for an investigation into the concept of circularity. By conducting an analysis of the literature regarding circularity and circular business practices, critical concepts for the topic can be understood. This investigation of literature in the first part was made to create a better understanding of the topic itself. The empirics of this report are not based on literature collected and reviewed in the first part of the literature analysis phase, only the second part.

After compiling and understanding the debates in the literature regarding circularity, the second part of the literature analysis phase was introduced. It consisted of identifying companies that operate in the outdoor clothing segment on the global market. Firstly, 50 companies were selected, which is a good amount to get a spread of results. The companies were selected on the basis that they have their main business area as an AW manufacturer, the definition of an AW manufacturer is a company that is responsible for releasing textile outdoor clothing to the market (What Does Technical Outdoor Clothing Manufacturers Produce?, n.d.). The companies that were chosen had no specific attributes in terms of geographical location, size, or yearly turnover. The selection of companies was further limited to adventure companies that have their focus on clothes, companies that have their focus on equipment were therefore disregarded.

To identify the AW companies a combination of previous knowledge of those and searchers on wholesalers websites who have the intended purpose to sell products from a multitude of companies were used (WHOLESALER | English Meaning - Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). wholesalers that were used were Outnorth (Outnorth - The Best of Scandinavian Outdoor, n.d.), Naturkompaniet (Experter På Outdoorkläder & Utrustning | Naturkompaniet®, n.d.), Blue tomato (Blue Tomato - Your Board Shop since 1988 | Your Ride. Our Mission., n.d.), and The Outdoors Company (The Outdoors Company | Premium Outdoor Clothing, n.d.). When the companies were selected, gathering of information commenced. The information was gathered by scouting the companies' websites, the information we were interested in was usually found on the tabs for sustainability or corporate responsibility. The information that was stated on this part of their webpage and/or if they had CSR reports were read, and practices that were linked to the company were noted. The information that was collected needed to be readily available due to the fact the report is an investigation of the customer perspective. Therefore, the analysis had to be conducted in a way that a customer themselves would consume and interpret information from the websites, this means if it took too much effort to find the information, or you had to go through several external links to find the information, which was the case for some companies that were owned by a group, the information was deemed too hard to acquire or hard to pinpoint on the individual company and then these practices were discontinued from the report. Further, companies that proved to have no website of their own were disregarded since it was deemed that these companies wouldn´t provide any valuable information for the report. When this compilation was done, all the different companies and the different circularity practices were structured in an Excel document to allow for comparison and a clear analysis. The different companies were listed together with the identified practices to easily identify who does what and to create an understanding of what some of the most adopted customer involvement circularity practices are. In the compiling of the data on circular practices, the demographics of the different practices were also researched. The demographics of a circular practice signify what the practice is intended to do and are listed for the relevant practices in the findings (Fuchs & Hovemann, 2022b). Since this report is framed to inspect the circular practices and the customer perspective regarding these circular practices. The decision was made to focus solely on the practices that require customer involvement.

Table 1 List of analysed companies with their origin

Company	**Origin**
Fjällräven	Sweden
Haglöfs	Sweden
RVRC	Sweden
Houdini	Sweden
Pelle P	Sweden
Sail Racing	Sweden
Lundhags	Sweden
Didriksons	Sweden
Hestra	Sweden
Tierra	Sweden
Tenson	Sweden
Urberg	Sweden
Peak Performance	Sweden
Stelllar EQ	Sweden

8848 Altitude	Sweden
Helly Hansen	Norway
Grunden´s	Norway
Ulvang	Norway
Norrøna	Norway
Schöffel	Germany
Obermayr	Germany
Jack Wolfskin	Germany
Icebreaker	New Zeeland
Descente	Japan
Moncler	France
Patagonia	United States of America
The North Face	United States of America
Spyder	United States of America
Black Diamond	United States of America
O´neill	United States of America
Vissla	United States of America
Dakine	United States of America
Simms	United States of America
Gordini	United States of America
Marmot	United States of America
Woolrich	United States of America
Huski	United States of America
Columbia	United States of America
Regatta	United Kingdom
Berghaus	United Kingdom
Passenger Clothing	United Kingdom
Dolomite	Italy
Napapijri	Italy
Colmar	Italy
XTM	Australia
Quicksilver	Australia
Ripcurl	Australia
Canada Goose	Canada
Notice The Reckless	Canada
Arc´Teryx	Canada

2.3 Customer Perspective Survey

To gather results and insights into customer perspectives and preferences, a customer survey was carried out. The survey was structured in such a way that the questions related to the circular practice investigation conducted in the literature analysis phase. This was made by asking about the different practices and how widely implemented they are by the customers since observations were made on patterns emerging in the analysis of circular practices from companies. The reasoning was to compare and gain further insights into why the companies reported and pressed more on some identified practices. Another goal of the survey was to find out how big of a part sustainability and circularity play in a customer's decision when purchasing adventure wear. Before the survey was released to the respondents, a pilot test was

conducted to ensure that the structure, accuracy, and relevance were ensured. After the pilot test was conducted, feedback was considered, and necessary improvements were made.

To gather the population sample for respondents, a semi-structured clustering method was applied (*Cluster Sampling | A Simple Step-by-Step Guide with Examples*, n.d.). Which consists of selecting a group within the population that holds a specific set of attributes. In this case it was being an AW customer. After dividing into clusters people were picked at random to participate in the survey but since some were contacted directly it was semi structured. This was done by contacting people who, to the author's knowledge, are active in the outdoors. When reaching out to these people no regard was made to either age, sex, or ethnicity. However, the respondents were mainly in the age group of 25 to 35 since this is the age of the authors. To further increase the number of survey respondents and to further increase the validity of the results, different communities on social media were also contacted. The communities mainly consisted of outdoor clothing groups where people can sell and purchase second-hand adventure wear. These communities were found and reached out to via Facebook which holds a great number of different communities. These communities were found via personal knowledge and also searching for groups with the words outdoors and clothing. The communities that were selected were Outdoor gear buy/sell community and Chalmers alternative sports. These communities were selected since the conclusion was made that people who are active in these communities are also active in the outdoors. The questions for the survey are listed in the appendix, which includes a more in-depth description of how the questions are formulated and the reason for asking each of the specific questions.

2.4 Customer perspective focus group

Focus groups were conducted as a final step in collecting and understanding the customer perspective on sustainability and circularity. This was to get a snapshot of how an AWC acts and thinks in society today. Imaging this snapshot will facilitate the ability to conclude how the general public may act as the focus groups give a more in depth understanding of key characteristics of the AW customer as opposed to the survey. A total of four focus groups were conducted, each including four participants, which equals a total of 16 participants. The focus groups were structured in the way of a panel discussion where a few questions were asked, and the participants discussed and expressed their feelings around the questions. This allowed for the collection of insights, thoughts and feelings expressed by the participants in the panel discussion.

Furthermore, information regarding circular incentives from three individual companies were displayed, the companies were Fjällräven, Peak Performance and Sail Racing. These companies were selected since they all have different levels of information and approaches to implementing circular practices in their business model that emerge from the information stated on their websites or in their CSR reports. By displaying and opening the discussion regarding the companies' different approaches to circular business practices, conclusions could be made on best practices of informing and involving customers in the company´s circular practices. The reason for this step was to create an understanding of how customers collect and analyse information that is released by the company and how it will affect them. All the focus groups were conducted in a controlled environment to ensure that the answers received were relevant to the report. The people who took part in the focus groups were in the age group 25-35, mainly students, and the distribution of sex was equal. In the table listed below, all the focus group participants' ages, sexes and occupations are listed.

Table 2 List of participants in focus groups

Participant	Age	Sex	Occupation
1	24	M	Student
2	26	F	Student
3	24	M	Student
4	23	M	Student
5	28	F	Student
6	31	F	Employed
7	28	M	Student
8	24	F	Student
9	32	M	Employed
10	29	M	Employed
11	26	F	Student
12	25	M	Student
13	27	F	Student
14	27	F	Employed
15	25	M	Student
16	33	F	Employed

2.5 Limitations of method

It cannot be for certain that the selected actors, which are defined as participants in the survey, the focus groups or the companies researched, contributed equally to this analysis since limited information or involvement may be the case, or a lack of information on circular practices may be present in the company. However, the companies that were selected are companies that have a high focus on sustainability and circularity, and therefore, there should be some data available. Due to this consideration, all actors do not need to benefit 100% equally since it will be an investigation of overlap between the companies' incentives to the customers actions. The selected companies will not be compared in terms of whether one is better or worse than the other, that is not the purpose of this study.

To limit the data analysed, the report will be subject to the latest possible published data. The meaning of this is to gain insight into how companies operate today. The data that will be

used has the latest possible published date as of April 2024. Furthermore, when looking into practices of circularity the focus were on practices that the company states that they are doing through their sustainability reports or information that is publicly available on their website. The eco-labels that are communicated through their websites will also be taken into consideration without a deep dive into the companies. The reason for this is that the report analyses the companies from a customer perspective, which means that the data should be readily and publicly available.

3.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section of the report will dive deeper into the different theories of customer behaviour that are important to understand the message of the report. The main theory that will be covered in this section are theory planned behaviour. Some founding theories that enable and help the context of circularity are also explained and consists of the theory of the product life cycle and the maintenance theory.

3.1 The role of eco-labels influencing customer perspective.

Eco-labels are a tool that companies use to inform adherence to different environmental guidelines. For a company to have the right to use an eco-label, it must meet the guidelines set by the various labels (Ziyeh & Cinelli, 2023). It is supposed to be used as a tool to inform the customer about the product or the company's compliance with environmental standards. The tool of eco-labels is used to affect the customers theory planned behaviour. Theory-planned behaviour is the concept of placing the decision in the hands of the customer (Nyremo & Widerberg, 2020). This means that the customer is aware and able to decide on the information at hand. The concept of the theory is that the company assumes that the customer's planned behaviour is to choose the product with an eco-label since it is deemed to be more sustainable. This is especially important in the case of the AWC, as previously mentioned, which is more sustainable-minded.

Theory planned behaviour is a wide theory that contains three main factors. These are attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (Conner, 2001). The reason for the importance of this theory for this report is that it highlights how a customer acts in relation to different pressures, both internal and external. The attitude aspect of theory planned behaviour is connected to the individual beliefs. This means that if a customer has a positive inclination towards something, they are more likely to pursue and be involved in this action. For example, customers with strong environmental awareness beliefs are more likely to engage in actions that foster environmental protection (Conner, 2001). This is especially important for customer-oriented circular practices because it will lead to customers engaging in circular practices more frequently if they have a greater positive attitude towards the environment. The downfall of this theory that this thesis is discussing, however, is mistrust from customers. If mistrust towards the company from the customers are present, their attitude will introduce the opposite effect. This is because they will have negative thoughts against the circular practices, which means they most likely will not engage in them. The consequence of this can be negative word of mouth, which further complicates the issue.

The second aspect of theory planned behaviour is subjective norms. These are norms that are present in society between family, friends, and communities. Norms are like soft rules; it is not spoken loudly, but they are what is expected to be followed in the context of the situation. For example, if your friends and family are much into charity it may be a norm in the context for the individual to also engage in charity. Subjective norms are true for so many different aspects in society, no less in the outdoor segment (*Norms | Informationsverige.Se*, n.d.). In the outdoors segment, norms relating to impact on environment, like leave no trace behind or being mindful of and not impacting natural environments (*Outdoor Etiquette from A to Z*, n.d.). Subjective norms in the segment that this thesis is researching shall be an enabler for customer oriented circular practices.

The final aspect of theory planned behaviour is perceived behavioural control. This is the most important aspect of the theory of application for this report. It relates to an individual and in this case the customers belief of ease or difficulty to perform a specific behaviour and to control this behaviour. To put this in an example, if a customer perceives that repairing a piece of AW clothing is easy and they have the necessary resources needed for the repair, the customer will be more likely to engage in the activity of repairing their clothing. This example can also be turned around to if a customer perceives it as easy and accessible to send their AW clothing in for repairs, they are more likely to engage in this behaviour.

3.2 Different theories of product life

The following are a few different theories that work toward prolonging the usage of materials. The first one is the theory of the product life cycle. There are ways of measuring this, and one of them is to perform a life cycle assessment (*Life Cycle Assessment — European Environment Agency*, n.d.). This is a tool that can evaluate the environmental impacts of a product associated throughout the entire life cycle. The lower the impact a product has, the better it is for the environment, and the companies look better if they have good numbers. One way to have a lower environmental impact is to implement some of the circular practices mentioned in this report.

Another theory is the maintenance theory (Daniel, 2023). When applied to circularity, it becomes a key when moving from a linear to a circular business practice. The main goal of this theory and its application is to prolong the life of the products, which can be done in several ways. The ones focused on in this report are repairs and customer education to make sure the products last as long as possible. A theory that does not take these practices into consideration is the theory of remanufacture and refurbishment. Instead, These ones are focused on the products at the end of their life cycle to ensure they do not end up as waste and get new life instead. If the product has degraded and is not usable for the intended purpose, then it can be recycled, and the materials can become something new and valuable (Haq & Alam, 2023). If it, however, has some life left in it, refurbishing might be beneficial, which provides new life to an otherwise broken or worn product.

4.0 RESULTS

In this section of the thesis the results will be covered. The main results that are brought forward are that accessibility is the number one concern for customer involvement in circular practices. Furthermore, the results indicate that customers do have a will to act more sustainably through adhering to circular practices, but this is hard in terms on clearness of the information that will guide the customers decisions.

4.1 Practices with the challenges and enablers of implementation

When looking into the different practices that the analysed companies utilise to achieve circularity, there are some companies that have successfully implemented these methods. Still, there are some challenges that make implementation on a larger scale difficult. These following practices are all based on the involvement and mindset of the customer to be an efficient concept. If the customer is not interested in using the practice, it does not matter if the company offers it because it will be unused and inefficient. According to (Hoang & Nguyen, 2020), there is a clear correlation between the trust of the customer and the loyalty they provide for sustainability works. It is stated that this correlation is essential for the companies to implement the customer-oriented practices. We found that the different companies publish different amounts of information about their practices. A few companies claim that they do a lot of work towards circularity, but only a few do a good job promoting them.

4.1.1 Repair programs

One of the practices that a few of the different companies perform is some kind of repair program. The two most prominent approaches in this analysis are either repair kits or repairs at a company location. There are some challenges and enablers with both. The repair kits are a quick fix, usually when there are tears or other relatively easily repairable damages. The process of using repair kits starts when a customer notices damage to their clothing and notifies the company. The company then consults the customer to find out the nature of the damage and sends out a repair kit that fits the nature of the damage and can fix the issue. A kit can include a wide variety of items, a few of these can be needle and thread, adhesive patches, fabric scraps, or zippers and buttons. Another found process is that companies send out a kit with every newly sold product, the enabler of this approach is the elimination of the step of notifying the company. This, in turn, has the challenge of extra materials frequently being shipped without usage, and it limits the possibility for companies to analyse what product might need to be redesigned into something more durable. The general practice of using repair kits is enabled because sending out kits is a relatively cheap and straightforward solution. Another enabler is that even if it is a simple fix, it might prolong the product's life and save it from being sent to waste or recycling. Some of the challenges with this action are that it usually is a substandard repair, it takes the product back to working condition. Still, it is usually not as good as new and is often dependent on the repair skills of the customer.

When it comes to implementing repair programs at a company location, it starts similarly to the kits. The customer reports damage to the product, and the company investigates the nature of the issue. Then, there might be a shipping label sent to the customer for the product to be shipped to a repair facility, or the customer is asked to bring the product to a physical store where repairs will be carried out (*Repair Process - Patagonia Help Center*, n.d.). There are challenges and enablers to the approach where repairs are made by the selling company. The

most significant enabler is that, most likely, it does not matter how broken the product is; it can, in most cases, be fixed anyway. Even if the damage is of a smaller scale, the repair is carried out the way it was meant to by experts of the specific products, and there might be guarantees in place for such repairs.

4.1.2 Rental programs

When companies have rental programs, there are some challenges that prevent them from working perfectly. But on the other hand, it also has some arguments claiming that this is a good practice. One of the bigger challenges that was found through our focus groups are the willingness to rent clothes for their adventures instead of owning them. It is easily argued that it is convenient to buy clothes for a specific type of adventure, like skiing or hiking to have it ready when it's time to perform the same kind of activity the next time. Even though it might be convenient, most of the clothes is bought and used maybe one week a year while spending the rest of the time unused. Buying clothes and storing them unused is one of the main reasons why rental programs are a solution since the products gets a higher grade of usage before they are outdated or insufficient on functions.

The willingness from the customer found through the focus groups to rent clothes is not only from the angle of wanting to own their own products but also from convenience. The act of collecting the gear from a box on top of a shelf might be considered a smaller task than getting to a store to try the clothes and then bringing them home or going online to order rental clothes and collecting them from the post office with the risk of it being the wrong size. The convenience of renting is easily overcome when it comes to some areas of the adventure segment. When it comes to ski clothes and wetsuits there are a few convenient standards established. If you rent ski gear or surfing equipment, they might offer the specific clothing as an additional service, which eliminates the hassle of going somewhere special to rent clothes. The rental of clothes when renting other equipment is often performed through a third party rather than the company itself. One of the prerequisites for rental programs to be considered as a viable alternative is the price to rent. If the price to rent is close to the price of purchase it is hard to convince the customers of the advantages of rental. Another enabler of rental programs is the fact that if the product is worn out or broken it is easier for them to repair them inhouse before the next rental or to recycle them in the way they were intended instead of placing that responsibility on the customers.

An alternative to traditional rental is subscriptions. The brand Houdini have tried to implement a subscription model (*Circular Business Models | Shop at Houdini Sportswear*, n.d.). In the subscription model, the customer has a profile with personal information and pays a monthly fee. When they need clothes for a specific type of adventure, they notify the company what they need, then they get to pick up clothes from a store or get them sent home ready for adventure. This eliminates the step of trying on different types of brands every time it's time for a new adventure. It also enables the customer to always have the newest type of clothes available instead of having clothes that are many seasons old. It also hinders the problem of cost, where instead of paying a higher fee for one single rental it is spread out making it more viable for people that are more active in the outdoors.

4.1.3 Second-hand and takeback programs

The practice of manufacturer-organized second-hand programs is a great way for the customer to renew their wardrobe. If you are the one handing in your clothes for second-hand or if you

are the one buying you can save some money. The one that hand in the used clothing can gain vouchers or discounts from takeback systems to purchase new clothing depending on what kind of clothes that are handed in and what state they are in. These takeback systems are an incentive to give new life to clothes that a customer grew tired of or to get them recycled in a correct way. One of the obstacles that the second-hand program faces is the fact that a lot of the clothes of the AW sector can be connected to memories from great accomplishments or trips filled with many memories. If the product is connected to some emotional value, it might be hard to abandon it at a second-hand project, but the incentive of discounts or vouchers for new products might persuade the customer that this act is worth it.

One enabler of this practice is the fact that the one purchasing second-hand clothing through these programs are buying them for a lower price than a new product and it is quality-checked by the company. Because of this, there might be some guarantees offered depending on the state of the product and if the company may have improved the state of the product.

4.1.4 Education of customers

A few companies try to educate the customers in different areas regarding sustainability. This practice does not have direct correlation to circularity but if it's successful it might prolong the life of the products through a changed mindset and actions. A few companies practice simple education in the form of instructions of care, these might tell the customer how the garment is best treated and cared for or the best way to impregnate it to lower the environmental impact. Another way some companies educate their customer is that they inform their customer on how small repairs can be made without using the aforementioned repair programs. These acts are enabled through the fact that this information is easy to send with the product when it is purchased or even attached to the product itself. It is simple to post this type of information on the companies' different websites or social media making it another enabler. One of the challenges this type of practice face is the willingness from the customer to read the information. If the information is easily accessible, it might be easy to follow, and this small act can prolong the life of the product leading to less waste.

4.2 The usage of different practices

The different practices found from the companies were recorded and are show in the following figure. The focus is only on practices that need customer engagement to become a possibility. It is clear to state that there are two practices that are used more than others. According to answers from the focus groups, these practices are oftentimes the ones that the customer are most inclined to adopt making them a relatively easy way for the companies to start of their circular journey toward sustainable and lasting clothing.

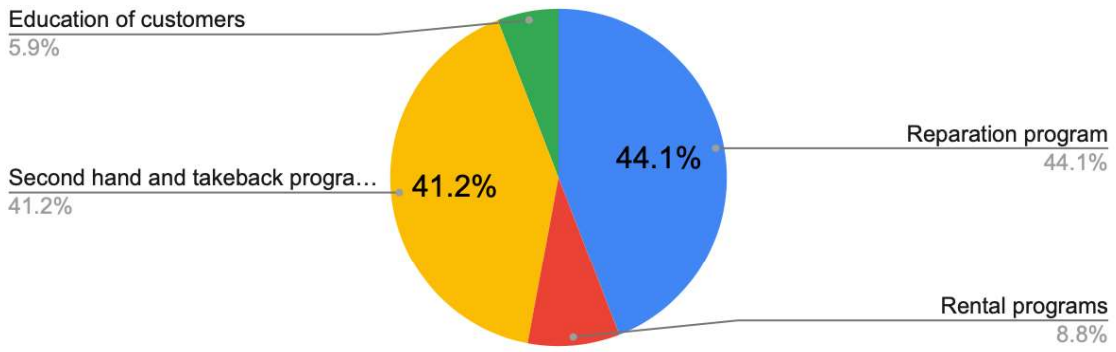

Figure 1 Diagram showing the most used practices in adventure wear companies.

4.3 Challenges faced from mistrust in eco-labels and sustainability efforts

According to the UN there is a lot of greenwashing made by companies. This is partly done by claiming vague expressions like "eco-friendly" and "green" that doesn't have any standards and definitions (Nations, n.d.). This is one of the reasons that makes the customer generally distrusting towards eco-labels and general sustainability claims made by companies. There are a few different reasons that the customer doesn't trust this type of claims, this is because, according to the (European Commission, n.d.) about 53% of claims of green is based on misleading or unfounded information, about 40% have no supporting evidence at all and about half of the green labels offer no type of verification or if they do, a weak one. This type of statistics fosters the mistrust from the customer, and it isn't amended by the fact that there are over 230 sustainability labels and 100 green energy labels in the EU alone (European Commission, n.d.).

4.4 Findings from customer investigation

In the following section of the results, the empirical findings from the customer perspective survey and the focus groups are presented. The section will include graphs, tables and statements that have been gathered during this phase to create a clear picture of what the findings are. Some of the findings that the customer investigation resulted in are that repair programs and second-hand programs are the most adopted circular practices by the customers whereas rental programs is the least used circularity practice and the reason for this was accessibility. It was also discovered that customers are generally inclined to pay more for a sustainable piece of clothing however the information relating to this must be clear. It was also apparent that eco-labels as an informational system is not working.

4.4.1 Customer prioritization on circular practices

A question that was formulated in the customer perspective survey aimed to look at the customer willingness to pay roughly 10-15% more for an identical product only on the fact that it was more sustainable and environmentally friendly. Out of the 52 survey respondents, 80,4% percent of the sample group through the survey stated that they were in fact willing to pay more for a piece of AW solely on the fact of its impact on the environment. This is a clear result that sustainable properties of clothing are important for the respondents in our customer investigation.

It is also indicated in our result that customers are willing to engage more with a product solely on the fact of environmentally friendliness if the information is clear and available for the product. Which enables the customer to make their own comparison and decision on the more sustainable alternative.

In figure 2 the result for which customer oriented circular practice is more dominated is presented. The most frequently used customer involvement circular practice with a slight advantage is buying and/or handing in unwanted clothes for second-hand. Relating this to the findings of the most dominated customer involvement circular practices implemented by the 50 companies of which the study is based on shows that second-hand programs is the second most implemented circular practice across the spectrum of companies.

The identified second most common customer oriented circular practice through the survey show the result that 33 out of the 52 respondents have either repaired their clothing or sent the clothing for repair to the producing company which translates to 63% of the surveyed individuals. This shows that repair programs are the most adopted circular practice from the company perspective but the second most adopted by the respondents of this thesis with a slight margin. This indicates that the focus from customers on second-hand programs and repair programs differs from the company's focus on these circular practices. They are essentially reversed in order of prioritization from the customer compared to the company. The least utilized circular practices by customers were rental programs, with only 5 out of 52 respondents which correlates to 9,6% of the respondents. When this data is cross-referenced with implemented circular practices by the 50 companies it becomes apparent that this number is very similar were only 8,8% of the companies implement rental programs.

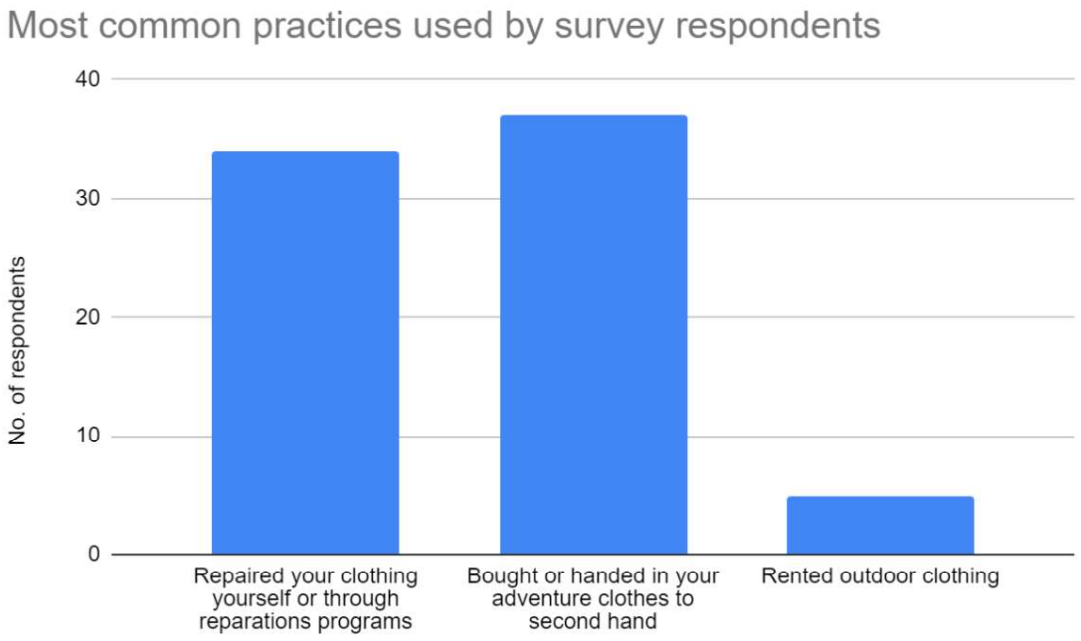

Figure 2 Diagram showing the most used practices from the survey responses.

4.4.2 Customer perspective on information from companies

In the focus group result section, the different questions asked will be presented together with a summary of what the most important aspects was, according to the participants. These

answers are related to the customer perspective on information and on the impact of eco-labels. One of the most important takeaways from the focus groups are that the most important deciding factor when purchasing AW which is the price and accessibility, and the most important sector of improvements is to provide more and clearer information.

Question 1: What sustainability factors are important for you?

In the table listed below the results to which sustainability practices that are most important for the company to employ to the participants in the focus groups are listed. It is shown here that none of the practices that are most important for the participants are customer oriented.

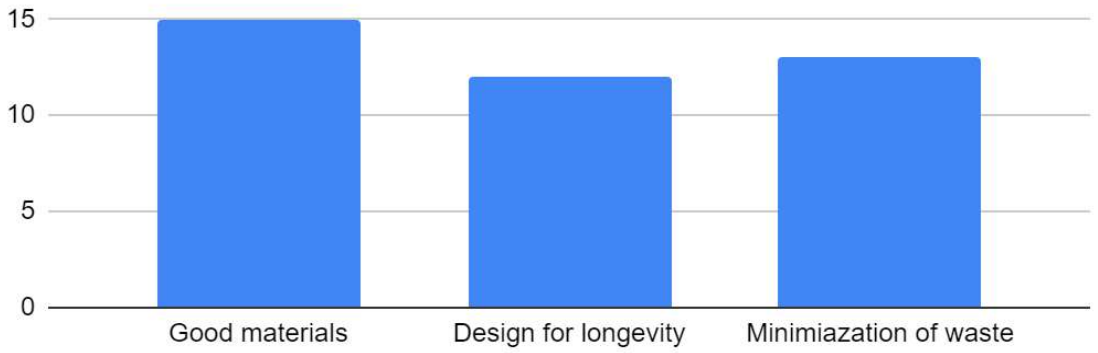

Figure 3 Displaying the practices that the customer think is important for companies to implement.

Question 2: What do you prioritize when you are purchasing your adventure wear, i.e. price, durability, or sustainability?

Most common order of prioritization on deciding factors when choosing outdoor clothing. Pricing is according to the respondents in the focus groups the most important factor when deciding on outdoor clothing where 100% listed price as the most important attribute when deciding. However, it is a mix where a few respondents said it was important to weigh price towards quality i.e. the customer is willing to pay more if the quality is better. Other than the price and quality, the durability and sustainability also played a role in the decisions but not as much.

Question 3: Evaluation of information about sustainability efforts from the three companies Fjällräven, Sail Racing and Peak Performance and how these three companies and the rest of industry can improve when sharing sustainability information.

For the customers to have a higher level of trust in companies involvement with circular practices it is clear from the focus groups that more and clearer information about the work is needed. The general conception is that more information is needed. For companies that already have a lot of information published this can be achieved through clearer information, the use of social media or flyers at physical stores. This is because it does not matter how much information you publish if the customers have a hard time understanding or finding it. Two other points that was mentioned was catalogues and advertisements, this is also examples of ways to spread information and gain trust from the customers.

Question 4: Customer trust in eco-labels?

When investigating the customer perspective on eco-labels in the focus groups, a majority said that this is a system that is insufficient and that they have no to little trust in it. The reasoning for this was that they have seen so many different eco-labels without any quality assurance. Some participants also mentioned that it can be a good system, if the eco-labels are known and trusted by the public which also the finding in the literature analysis indicates.

Question 5: Which circular methods have been applied by the customers in their daily life?

For the results in question five a frequency diagram is displayed on the three different practices to pinpoint how common it is to take part in each individual practice. For the repair programs there was 25% that have in some point in their life participated in this circular practice, 12,5% that have used rental programs, 25% that used second-hand programs and 37,5% that have not used any of these practices.

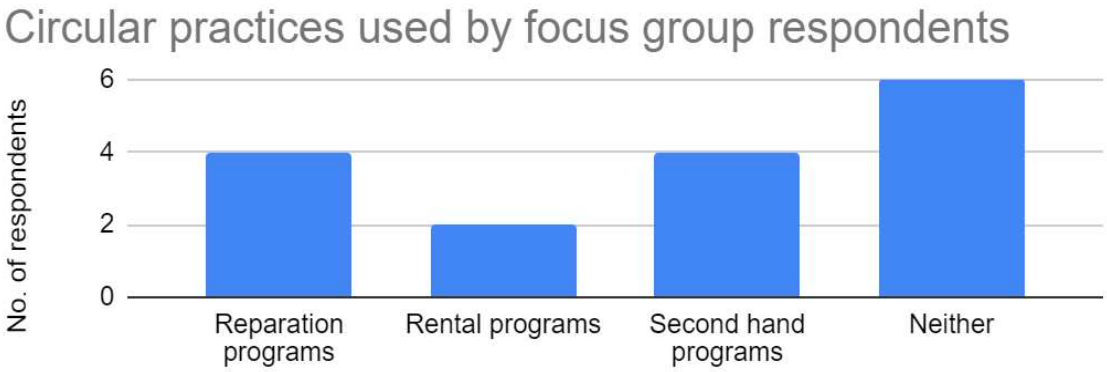

Figure 4 Showing the customer oriented practices that the participants are most prone to engage in.

Question 6: If the customer is willing to pay 10 - 15 % more for an identical piece of clothing based on its sustainability properties to compare with the survey?

When facing the participants in the focus groups with the same question as the last one in the survey. 68,8% percent of the participants listed that they are willing to pay 10 - 15 % more just based on the fact of the sustainability properties of the product. This is a quite similar result when comparing to the same question from the survey. Which further confirms that this pattern is to be applied to the public.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

In the discussion we will discuss the answers to the research questions that were investigated in this thesis. The answer to research question one was that second-hand programs and repair programs are the most adopted circular practices by the customer and the companies with a slight variation. The answer to research question two was that the more easily accessible and straightforward the information was, the more it would influence the customer's decision. The answer to question three was that accessibility is the primary concern when getting customers to engage in circular practices.

Research question one: What circular practices with customer involvement are present for customers and companies in the adventure wear clothing segment?

In the literary findings of the companies, it was established that the most widely implemented circular practice was repair programs, which were closely followed by second-hand programs. The reasoning for this might be that it is essentially easier and cheaper to implement these practices as compared to other circular practices. Comparing this to our findings in both the survey and the focus groups, we see that these are the two circular practices the customer most often uses. However, there is ought to be a bit of a misconception regarding second-hand programs, this is due to the reason that almost all the participants in the focus groups had engaged with second-hand at some point in their life but not with the second-hand program of the individual company. The engagement with second-hand was mainly through third-party providers like Sellpy or second-hand stores. The actual question was if participants had participated in a company run second-hand, where the result was a fair amount lower. The reason for this was that the availability and knowledge that these second-hand incentives even existed were insufficient. Generally, the division of how many companies implemented second-hand and repair programs was quite similar to that of the respondents of both the survey and the focus groups, which shows that both sides are in an equilibrium of implementation.

Repair programs are a circular practice with many different approaches, where either the customer repairs the product or the selling company repairs the product for the customer. This is a great way to help take responsibility for a product not just during manufacturing but also during its lifecycle. Some challenges that repair programs may encounter are the lack of accessibility. Many respondents in the focus groups mentioned that the biggest reason why they haven't taken part in any circular practices was due to the accessibility. The customer must contact the company and ship the product, which costs both time and money. It can then be argued that the customer has a greater incentive to refresh and buy a new product instead of repairing an old piece of clothing that they might have grown tired of. The reasoning behind this stems from the that style is always changing, and technological improvements are constantly evolving, which leads to customers losing their interest in their old product and looking for a new alternative. However, as mentioned in the background, sentimental value in clothing is a fact, and this was also further confirmed in the focus groups, and this ought to be the biggest enabler for repair programs.

Repair programs are one of the most used practices today. This method faces some other challenges than the ones mentioned above, and one of them is the environmental impact. The product that needs repairing must in most cases be packaged in some sort of packing material and sent to the location it will be repaired. There are different environmental impacts depending on the choice of packing material and from the emissions produced from the transport. However, this environmental impact is often less than the impact of producing and

shipping new clothes. When it comes to price, the company must see a benefit of the repair approach because it is in many cases more expensive to repair than produce a new product. Because the majority of clothing is produced in southeast Asia where wages and costs are generally lower than in Europe and most of the repairs is carried out in Europe where the cost of labour is significantly higher repairs might even cost more than producing a new product (Fuchs & Hovemann, 2022b).

As for rental programs it is clearly shown in the both the identification of practices, results from the survey and the answers from the focus groups, that this circular practice receives the least attention. According to the focus groups, the biggest concern for rental programs is accessibility. Renting is not seldom perceived as an intricate task, and clothing is no exception. The reason for this could be that the renter must go somewhere to pick up clothing and drop it off after the rental period. Renting also costs money, and if the price point is too high when compared to the purchase price of the product, the economic incentive of renting becomes obsolete. There is also the fright of damaging the rented product and thus might lead to fees for replacement or repairs of the product.

According to (Lazarevic & Valve, 2017) the mindset of the customer has long been to be a consumer. This means, in practice, that customers see themselves as a simple part of the linear business model that was previously mentioned to be designed like "produce, consume, discard". The customer needs to change their mindset to become a user, which is better suited for a rental program. If the consumer would start to picture themselves as users instead, it would simply be "their turn" to use the product. If this were to happen, used products would be better incorporated into the second-hand scene instead of ending up as waste (Lazarevic & Valve, 2017).

Research question two: How do customers utilize information regarding circular practices to make decisions on implementing these in their daily lives?

The lack and quality of information published from the companies is one of the key reasons why the customers do not have trust in the circular claims made. If the customer does not trust the claims, they have a harder time finding motivation to help the companies perform circular practices. It is stated that more information from the companies equals to more trust by the customers (Shevchenko et al., 2023).

In many cases, it does not matter how much information or practices the companies perform if the clothes are sold through a wholesaler. If the company provide repairs, second-hand and rental programs but none of it reaches the customer, they are irrelevant. It is unfortunately not that much information that makes it to the customer when purchase is made through wholesalers.

By researching the effect of eco-labels which is a tool companies use to inform customers of either the company or the products sustainability properties. It became clear to see from question four in the focus groups that eco-labels have a quite low trust value by the customers, where many customers think it is generally bad. The reasoning for this comes from the sheer number of eco-labels and lacking information of what they mean. And that there are a lot of eco-labels on the market which are not trustworthy and/or can be bought. From the focus groups it was also shown that one trusted eco-label is better than five unknown eco-labels.

One question that was investigated both in the survey and the focus groups, were if the customer was willing to pay 10 - 15% more for an identical piece of clothing. It was identified in a survey that 80,4% per cent were, in fact, willing to pay more for a sustainably produced piece of clothing. The number for the same question in the focus groups was 68,8%. This can seem contradictory to the result that the most important deciding factor is price vs quality and not price vs sustainability. However, it shows that the environmental aspect is still somewhat important to customers. When the customers are buying a piece of clothing the information about the products sustainability properties must therefore be readily available to play a part in the customer decision rather than just the price of the product.

Research question three: What factors influences a customer to involving circular practices in their daily lives?

The main problem of involving and affecting the customer's decision to take part in circular practices is the accessibility of the practices. When faced with repair programs, it is either the willingness to contact the company to get a kit and then fix the product themselves or contacting the company to figure out how to send the item to the company for a proper repair. According to (Roskladka et al., 2023), the customer has several ways to act if they want to repair their products. Many of them are connected to the customer's trust in the company. There are concerns regarding whether the repair will be good enough so the product does not break again. However, if the rest of the product is in a good enough shape, spending the time and energy as well as money to get it repaired might be worth it (Roskladka et al., 2023). These are all actions that take time and energy from the customers daily lives. This hinders the accessibility of accessing the circular practice, and the customer oftentimes land on the conclusion that it is more feasible to pay for a new piece of clothing than to go through the hassle of repairing a worn-out piece.

When the customer is faced with second-hand programs, the problem is yet again the accessibility. When the customer needs to buy a piece of AW clothing, they are generally looking for a specific type of clothing with a particular set of functions. Second-hand works in the way that customers hand in their clothing to the company which they want to sell. The likelihood that the product in the second-hand store has the specific set of functions and the specific size the customer is looking for at the correct location is improbable and therefore it is more accessible for the customer to buy a new piece of clothing. Additionally, AW clothing is oftentimes resistant to water with the help of different techniques, that consists of membranes or different types of hydrophobic coatings. These membranes and hydrophobic coatings can wear down over time. This might result in the customer seeing more value in buying a new product with improved coatings. If waterproof systems could be remade or reapplied on clothes to restore them to when they were new, this aspect would become less relevant.

Finally, accessibility was yet again the main concern for rental programs. The reason for this was that the customer must pick up the product at some warehouse location, and after the usage of the product, they must return the product again. This complicates getting customers onboard with rental programs since the effort of renting the product outweighs the cost of paying more to own the product. This is further enhanced due to those rental costs. If the customer would do the activity more than once a year the cost benefit of rental programs would quickly diminish. As shown in the results for the focus groups, price is still the most important attribute connected to the customer decision.

To end the discussion part of this report we would like to say that there are many different influencing factors that make the topic of circularity and the customer perspective on circularity is extensive and quite complex. But it is a topic that is on top of mind for both the customers and for the companies, where both must act in symbiosis to allow for a circular business model to assure a sustainable future.

6.0 CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This thesis report concludes that the main concern for getting customers onboard with circular practices is accessibility. Furthermore, we see a big information gap from the company that further complicates in getting customers onboard with circular practices.

There are many different ways to practice circularity, some with and some without customer involvement. The practices with customer involvement collected in this report show that within the AW segment, some are more successful than others. The results show that even though some companies utilise the practices, many people in the focus groups and the surveys don't do their part in the circularity. This is based on answers from the focus groups, often connected with a lack of information from the companies. Customers are willing to do the right thing, but without any clear directions on how they can do it, it oftentimes fails. There was some feedback from the focus groups that could help the companies to get the information to get all the way to the customer. Some of these were a higher presence on social media where they inform about the practices. There are also cases where the clothes are sold through wholesalers, in these cases it is especially important to get the information to come through on the clothes themselves in form of flyers, pamphlets or tags. From the results gathered, it is clear that when companies adopt circular practices, they need to do a better job at informing the customers on how they can be done and streamline it into a simple practice that doesn't take too much effort to perform. According to both the focus groups, the survey, and the frequency from the companies, one of the least used practices is the rental programs. This might be because of both the price, accessibility, and liability. If these three would be amended, this could be a good system. If it were easy to rent the correct type of clothing for the specific type of adventure and the price of rent were low, it would be a stronger incentive than buying expensive clothes for use just a few times a year. There is also the issue of the liability of broken clothes. Adventures are generally more straining in the clothes than everyday wear, this leads to the fact that the clothes might break, and the customer doesn´t want to pay if this happens. The ones that are utilised the most are repair programs and second-hand. The repairs are great in that repair kits do not require a prolonged interaction between the customer and the company; they are simply cheap and effective ways to prolong the life of the clothing. The part of repair programs where the clothes are handed into the company for repair needs some work in accessibility to become a fully functional practice. The same can be said for the second-hand programs. The customer is generally interested in second-hand but oftentimes don't know that the companies themselves perform this practice but lean on third-party actors and access second-hand for product categories that are less affected by the age and wear of the products.

From the results of our focus groups, it can be concluded that even though there are interest in performing circular practices, in some cases the price is a more substantial point. This is especially true when it comes to the economics of a student, many claim that with the wallet of a student it's not possible to choose sustainability over price but when they graduate and get a job with a higher wage, the priorities will change.

What can be concluded from the focus groups is that if the company has established a good reputation from a strong social media presence and general advertisement showing sustainability in a clear and open way, the customer might be bias to buying that brand and cooperating in the practices. This type of bragging is oftentimes much more impactful than simply presenting eco-labels. This is especially true since there is a lot of mistrust toward these types of labels, the labels might work if they have a good reputation but many of the used ones is useless in regards of brand reputation. The focus groups displayed that there is a higher trust

in Fjällräven than Peak Performance since Fjällräven shows a website where sustainability, practices and materials used are displayed in an interesting and colourful way with pictures and the important parts highlighted important to mention are that the respondents were aware that Fjällräven is conceived more sustainable in the public light. Peak Performance on the other hand claim that they do some practices and sustainability measures but without really being interested in searching for the information it is not at easy to find and not as fun to read where each group had roughly 10 minutes to scan their website. The final company displayed was Sail Racing and there was next to no information on their website but some of the participants from the groups still had trust in this company due to reputation.

When analysing the most used practices from the companies and the practices the customer is using most frequently there is an overlap and there can be a conclusion drawn. This conclusion is that the companies that use practices often use the ones that the customer are inclined to do. This means that there is not a lot of effort to get these to become successful. More impressing is the ones that utilise both the low hanging fruit and try to establish a deeper collaboration with the customer. From the research made in this report there are reasons to think that repairs and second-hand is both cheapest and easiest to implement. Practices like rental needs some more logistical solutions because the key concern here is the availability of both price and location.

From the research made in this thesis, we see some areas that are possible for future research. One of them is to research how to increase the accessibility of the three customer-oriented circular practices looked at in this thesis. This is to make them more available for the everyday customer. Furthermore, future research can evaluate what type of actions on information can be improved to make the customer more involved in circular business practices. Future research can also be done regarding customer involvement circular practices in other business sectors since only three main ones could be identified in the adventure wear segment for this thesis.

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APPENDIX 1

In the appendix additional relevant information for the report will be listed. This will include the questions from the survey, the questions of the focus groups. A complete list of the 50 companies that are a part of this report will be listed with the webpage source from where the information was collected.

The questions were formulated in such a way to find patterns in the consumer behaviour and to pinpoint which of the circular practices are the most adopted by the consumers.

Survey questions:

1. Your age?
2. Gender?
3. Are you active in some of these following sports?
4. Have you ever conducted some of the following efforts regarding your clothing?
5. If you have not performed any of the above efforts, please shortly describe why.
6. Are you willing to pay roughly 10-15% more for an identical product based on how environmentally friendly said product is?

Focus groups:

1. What is sustainability for you?
2. What factors are most important when you choose adventure wear? For example, price, quality, or environmental impact.
3. How relevant do you think the information is for the consumer to get a good insight into the three companies sustainability work?
4. What are your thoughts about eco-labels?
5. Are you aware about any eco-labels that you deem have a good reputation?
6. Do you trust one trusted eco-label more than five unknowns?
7. How important to you is it that your adventure wear is sustainably produced?
8. Which of the following consumer involvement circular practices have you at some point integrated in your daily life? (Second-hand programs, repair programs or rental programs)
9. How can companies engage inform you as consumers about their sustainable initiatives in a correct and effective way?
10. Are you willing to pay roughly 10-15% more for an identical product based on how environmentally friendly said product is?

Below is a compilation of all the companies that were subject to this thesis. The references to where the information is also showcased in the column reference.

Company	Origin	Reference
Fjällräven	SWE	https://www.fjallraven.com/se/sv-se
Haglöfs	SWE	https://www.haglofs.com/sv
RVRC	SWE	https://www.revolutionrace.se/
Houdini	SWE	https://houdinisportswear.com
PelleP	SWE	https://www.pellepetterson.com/sv-se/
Sail Racing	SWE	https://sailracing.com/
Lundhags	SWE	https://www.lundhags.com/se/
Didriksons	SWE	https://www.didriksons.com/se
Hestra	SWE	https://www.hestragloves.se/
Tierra	SWE	https://www.tierra.com/se/sv-se
Tenson	SWE	https://tenson.com/
Urberg	SWE	https://urbergskandinavien.com/se/
Peak Performance	SWE	https://www.peakperformance.com/se/sv
Stellar EQ	SWE	https://www.stellarequipment.com/
8848 Altitude	SWE	https://www.8848altitude.com/se
Helly Hansen	NOR	https://www.hellyhansen.com/
Grunden´s	NOR	https://eu.grundens.com/
Ulvang	NOR	https://ulvang.com/se
Norrøna	NOR	https://www.norrona.com/sv-SE/
Schöffel	GER	https://www.schoffelcountry.com/
Obermayr	GER	https://obermeyer.com/en-eu
Jack Wolfskin	GER	https://www.jack-wolfskin.com/
Icebreaker	NZ	https://www.icebreaker.com/
Descente	JAP	https://www.descente.com/en/
Moncler	FRA	https://www.moncler.com/en-se/
Patagonia	US	https://eu.patagonia.com/gb/en/home/
The North Face	US	https://www.thenorthface.se/
Spyder	US	https://www.spyder.com
Black Diamond	US	https://www.blackdiamondequipment.com/en_US/
O´neill	US	https://eu.oneill.com
Vissla	US	https://www.vissla.com

Dakine	US	https://dakine-europe.com
Simms	US	https://www.simmsfishing.com
Gordini	US	https://gordini.com/
Marmot	US	https://www.marmot.eu
Woolrich	US	https://www.woolrich.com/se/en/
Huski	US	https://www.huskiwear.se
Columbia	US	https://www.columbia.com
Regatta	ENG	https://www.regatta.com
Berghaus	ENG	https://www.berghaus.com
Passenger Clothing	ENG	https://se.passenger-clothing.com
Dolomite	ITA	https://www.dolomite.it/global/en/
Napapijri	ITA	https://www.napapijri.co.uk
Colmar	ITA	https://www.colmar.com/se/
XTM	AUS	https://xtm.com.au/
Quicksilver	AUS	https://www.quiksilver.com
Ripcurl	AUS	https://www.ripcurl.com/us/
Canada Goose	CAN	https://www.canadagoose.com/se/en/home-page
Notice the Reckless	CAN	https://noticethereckless.com
Arc´Teryx	CAN	https://arcteryx.com/se/en

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DIVISION OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY
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