

**care for
clothes**

**read
check
care**

Clothes care

Survey report

February 2022



CENTRUM
KSZTAŁCENIA
PODYPLOMOWEGO



INSTYTUT
ZRÓWNOWAŻONEGO
ROZWOJU I ŚRODOWISKA



Introduction

Proper clothing care saves water, energy and CO2 emissions into the atmosphere. Our everyday decisions, our specific actions – these have a measurable impact on the environment in which we live. However, we do not always realise that our bad habits can have a long-term negative impact on our surroundings. Meanwhile, each of us leaves a carbon footprint every day. Proper care can prolong the life of your clothes and make them last longer.

How do Poles approach clothing care? Do they pay attention and do it properly? Do they read the labels on their clothes and follow the guidelines indicated there?

LPP, as a leader in the clothing industry, wants and feels an obligation to educate its consumers – to increase their knowledge of the principles of proper clothing care and how it affects the environment and household budgets. That is why the company decided to conduct a survey to find out how Poles take care of their clothes and what habits they have related to this. The conclusions of the survey showed that many people do not fully know how to properly wash, dry or iron particular items of clothing, and have a need to deepen this knowledge.

In response, LPP has prepared the educational campaign 'Take care of your clothes', which promotes the conscious use of clothes in such a way as to preserve their quality and durability, and thus reduce their negative impact on the environment. Its aim is to raise awareness that proper (and responsible) care of clothes is not only about washing. It is also about drying, ironing and storage. The campaign includes practical tips and tools which prove that changing habits benefits the household budget and also the environment in the long term.

See more at: www.dbajoubranie.pl



Clothes care survey

In cooperation with the ARC Rynek i Opinia research company, LPP conducted an opinion poll on a representative group of Poles. This provided up-to-date data on clothing use, as well as on Poles' awareness of clothing care. This report is a summary of the research, and is supplemented by analysis and recommendations of the Partners supporting the campaign.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

We have a general knowledge of environmentally friendly measures, but we still know little about what sustainable fashion is, for example.

We want to live greener, but at the same time many of us are not going to pay more for more environmentally friendly clothes.

There are still quite a few people throwing clothes that are no longer worn into the rubbish.

We declare that we know how much detergent we need, but to a large extent we apply them at a guess.

Some of us cut the tags off our clothes usually because they scratch.

We would love to use a QR code that, when scanned, would display more information about the garment.

Many of us do not sort our laundry before ironing, which causes clothes to deteriorate more quickly.



Caring about the environment

Environmental awareness among respondents is not high. The most common pro-environmental action is waste sorting, more than 2/3 are aware of the negative impact of running electrical appliances on the environment.

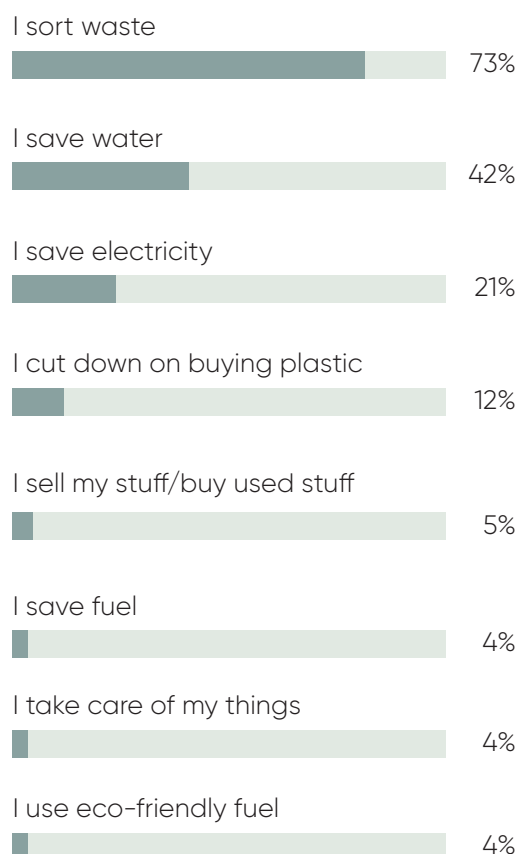
Half of the respondents state that if more environmentally friendly clothes were affordable, they would be more likely to buy them. The high price of clothes demotivates the youngest respondents aged 18-24 the most. The term sustainable fashion is not a familiar concept among respondents.



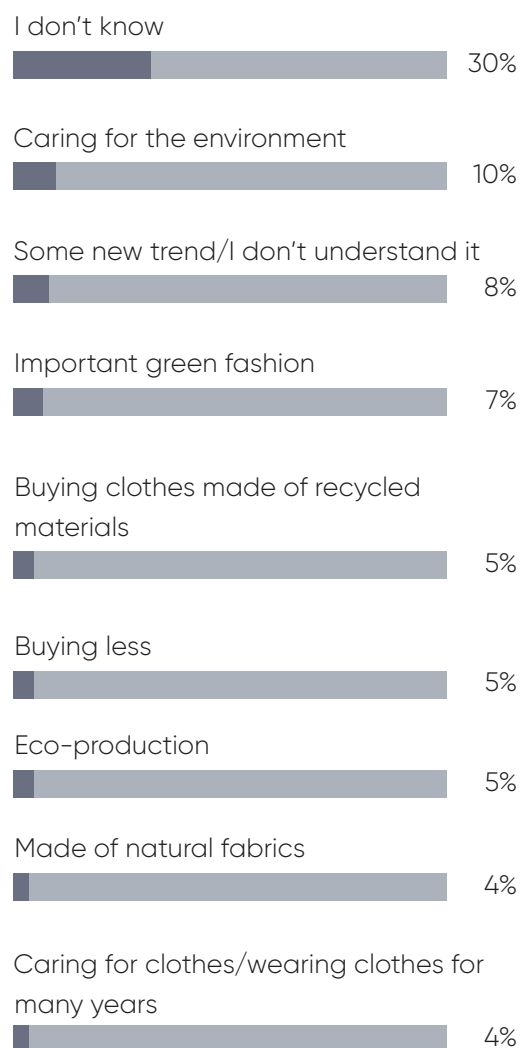
Pro-environmental behaviour

The most common action taken to protect the environment is sorting waste, with 73 per cent of respondents declaring this. The term sustainable fashion is not a well-known term among our respondents.

How do you care about the environment?



What does sustainable fashion mean to you?





Clothes and ecology

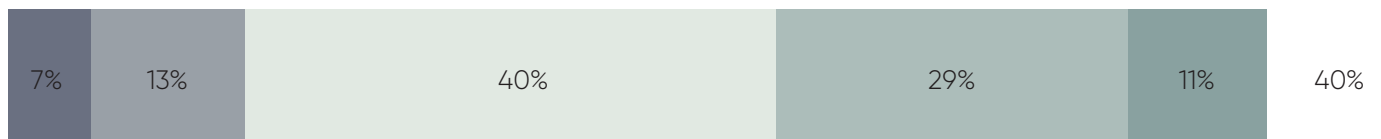
To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

T2B

It is better to pay more when you are sure that the garment has been made with care for the environment.



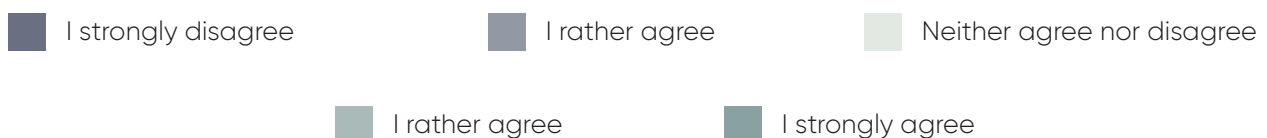
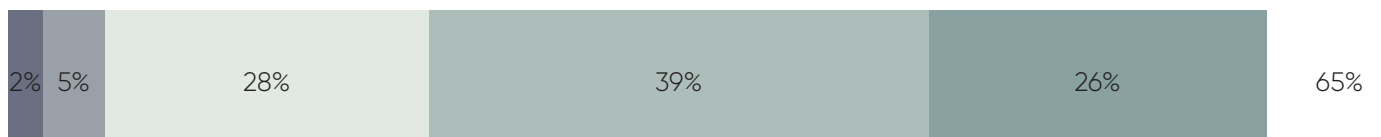
When I buy clothes, I choose those that do not have a negative impact on the environment.



When I wear and wash clothes, I try to act in such a way as to limit the negative impact on the environment.



Every time an electrical appliance starts up, it has an impact on CO2 emissions.

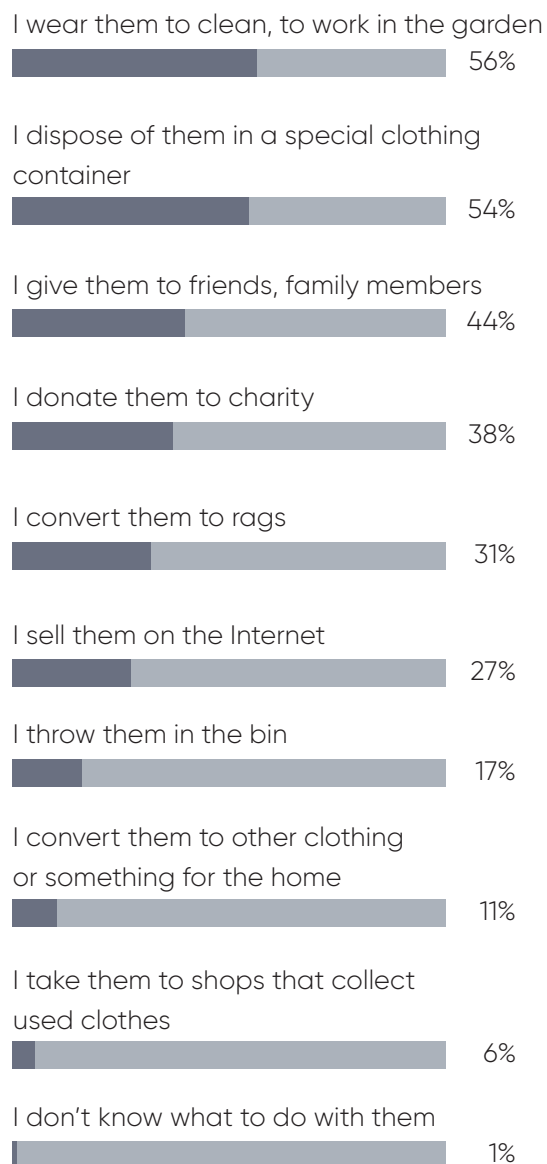


What's next for clothes?

Poles generally make good use of their wardrobe. They wear clothes as long as they look good or fit well. Clothes in worse condition are used at home or for gardening. Unfortunately, there are still a lot of people who throw clothes that are no longer worn into the waste bin.



What do you do with the clothes you don't wear?



Tags

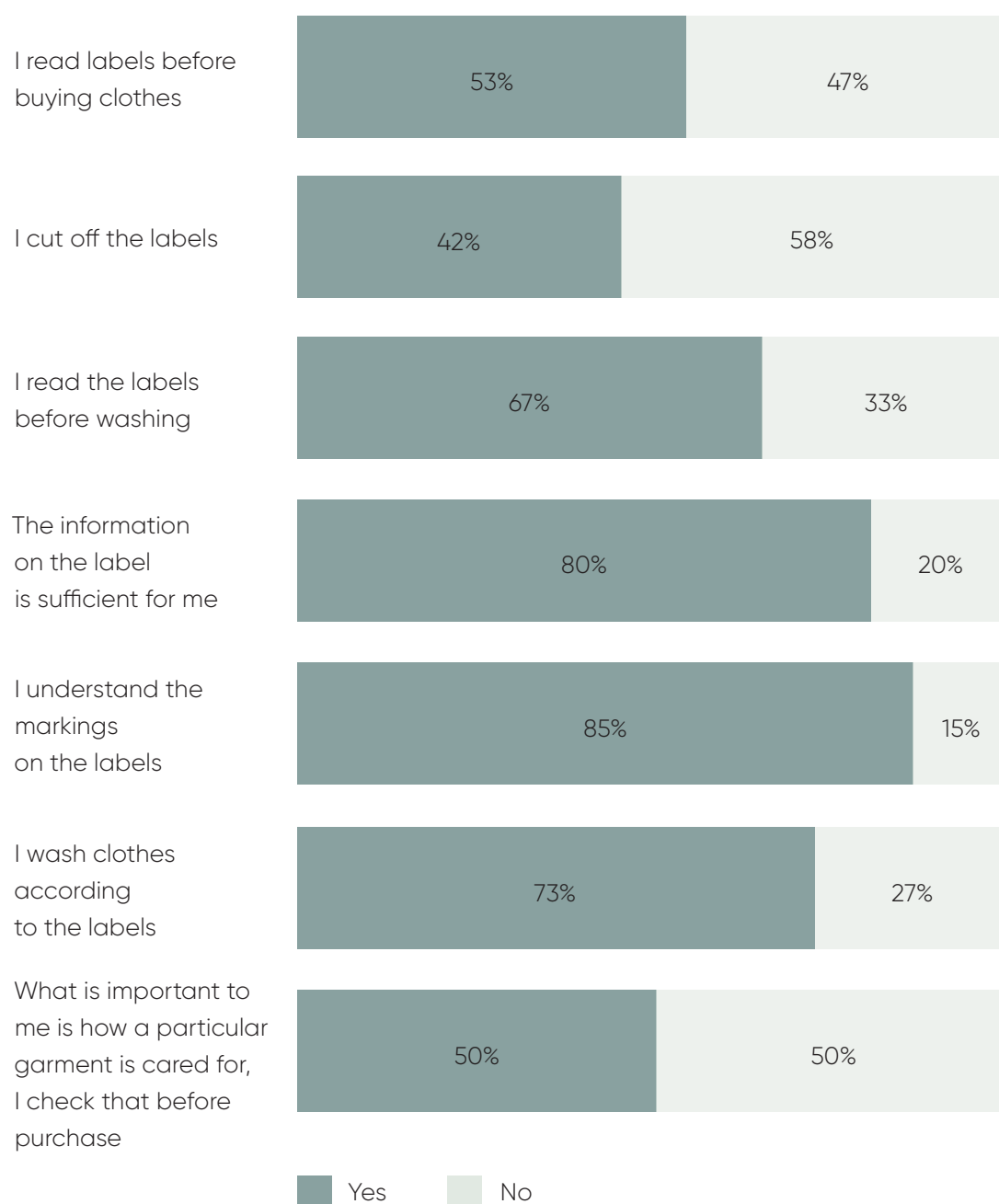
The labels provide basic information about the care of the garment, the labelling on them is easy for consumers to understand. At the same time, almost 3/4 of respondents declare that they would be happy to use a QR code that, when scanned, would display more information about the garment.

Interestingly, men are much more likely than women to wash clothes according to the guidelines on the labels. Women, on the other hand, are significantly more likely to cut them off. 89 per cent of consumers aged 18-24 (significantly more than other age groups) would like to see a QR code on the tag, which will refer them to detailed information about the garment.



Getting information from tags

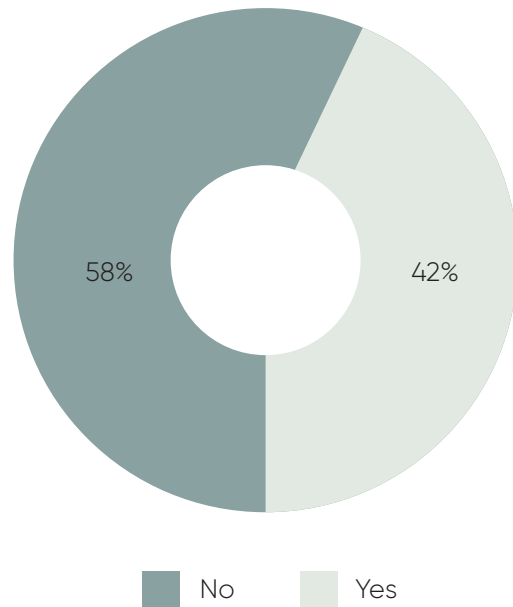
To what extent do you agree with the following statements:



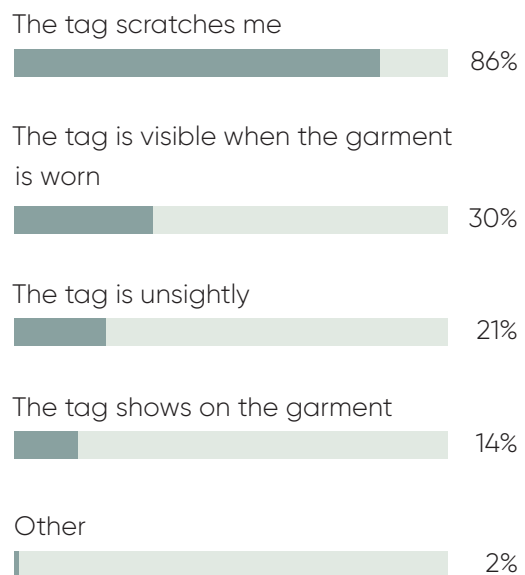
Cutting off tags



Do you cut off the tags?

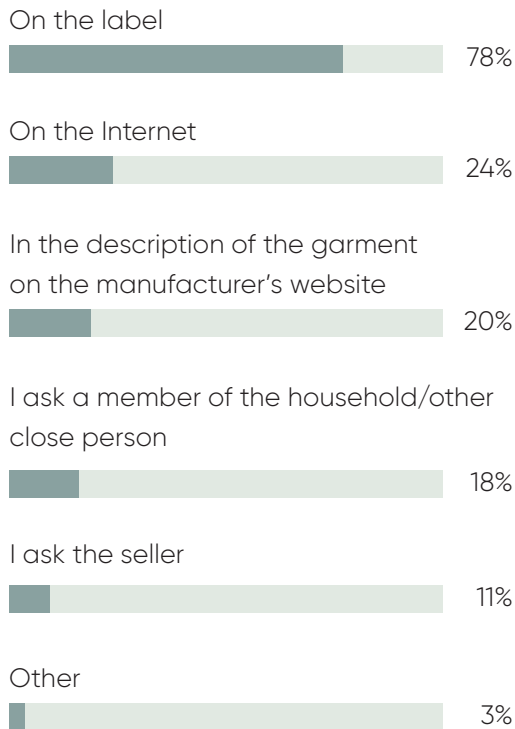


Reasons for cutting off tags

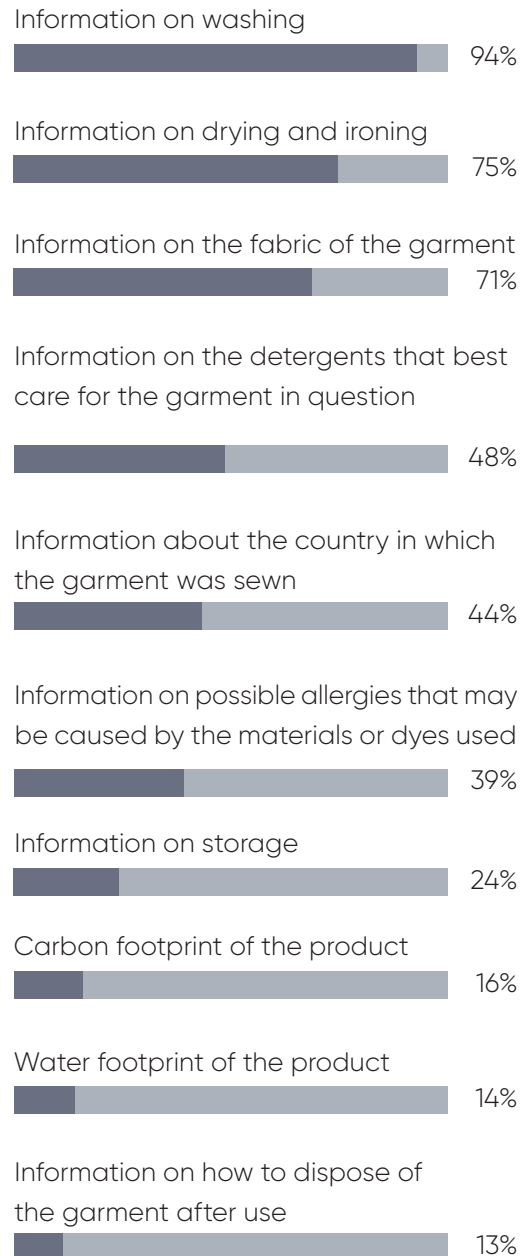


Searching for information about clothing care

Places to look for information about clothing care



What information should be included on the label?



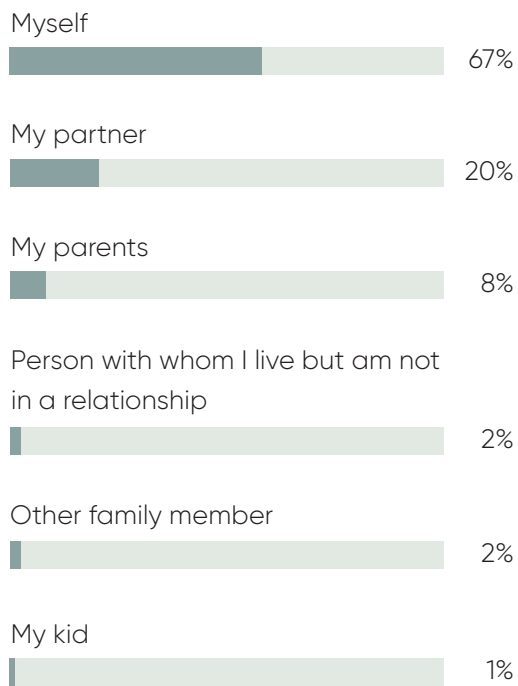
Washing

It is women (91 per cent) who are significantly more likely than men (42 per cent) to do the laundry themselves. They are also more likely to adjust the temperature of the wash and to wait until they have collected enough dirty clothes that require washing under similar parameters.

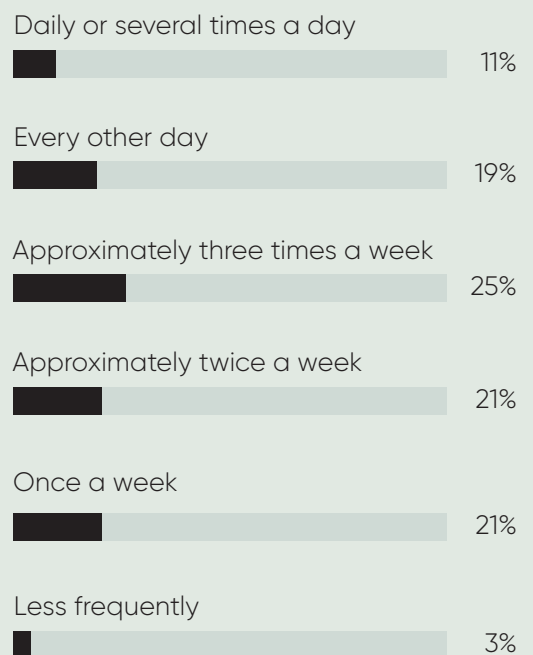
Respondents declare that they use the washing machine similarly to the dishwasher – i.e. both are usually loaded to capacity. The most frequently chosen temperature is 40 degrees and the cycle is mixed fabrics. Two-thirds of respondents also wash shoes or textile bags in the washing machine.

Washing clothes

Who does the laundry?



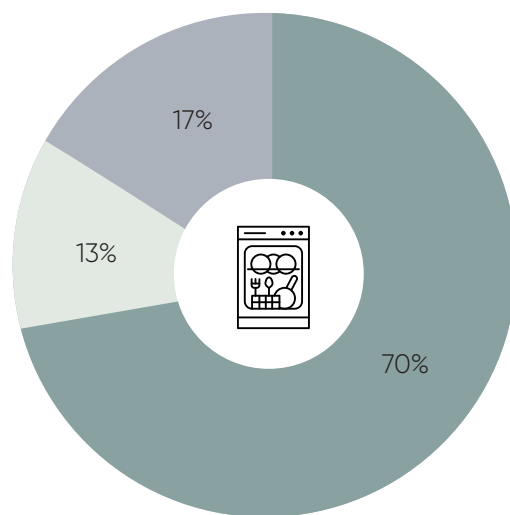
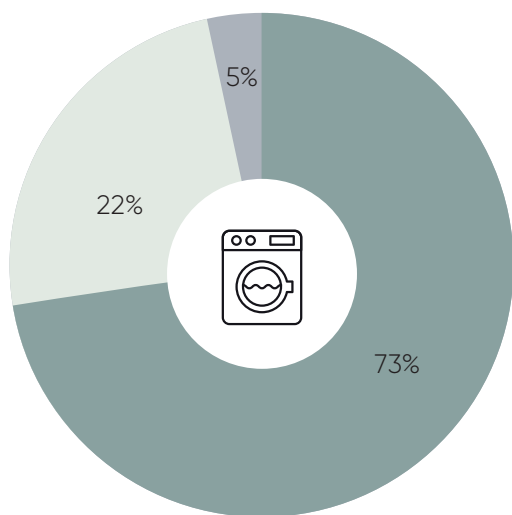
How often?



Laundry versus dish-washing

Do you always wash with the full washing machine drum?

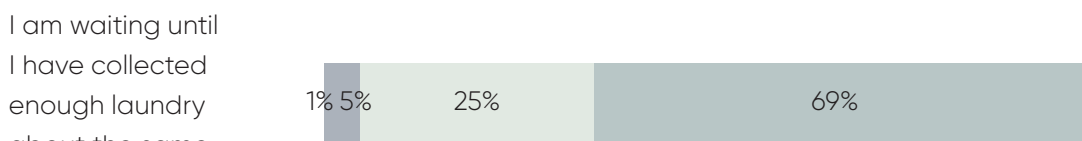
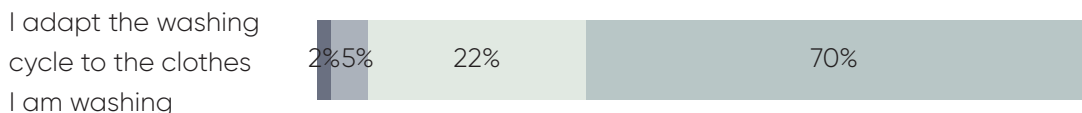
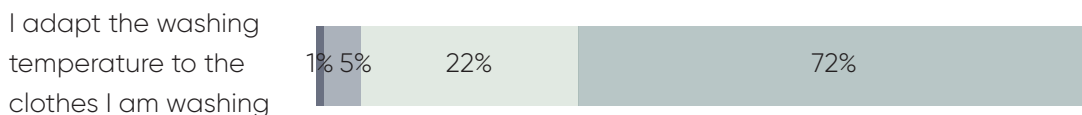
Do you always only run the dishwasher when it is full?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Not sure

Washing – adjusting parameters

How often do you do the following:

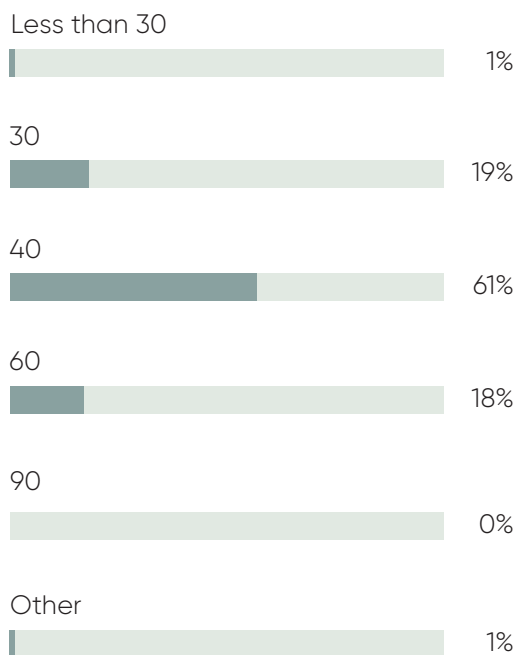


■ Never ■ Rarely ■ Sometimes ■ Always

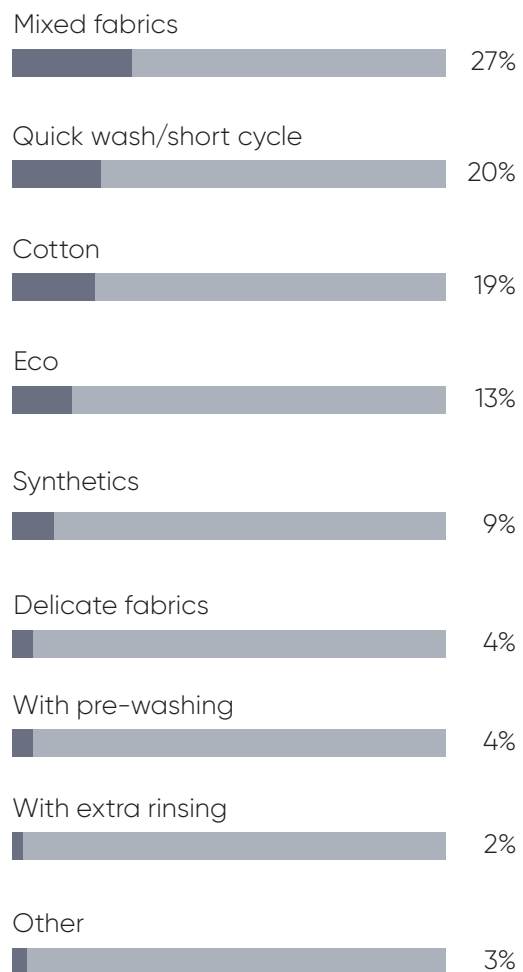
Washing – temperature and cycle



Washing temperature

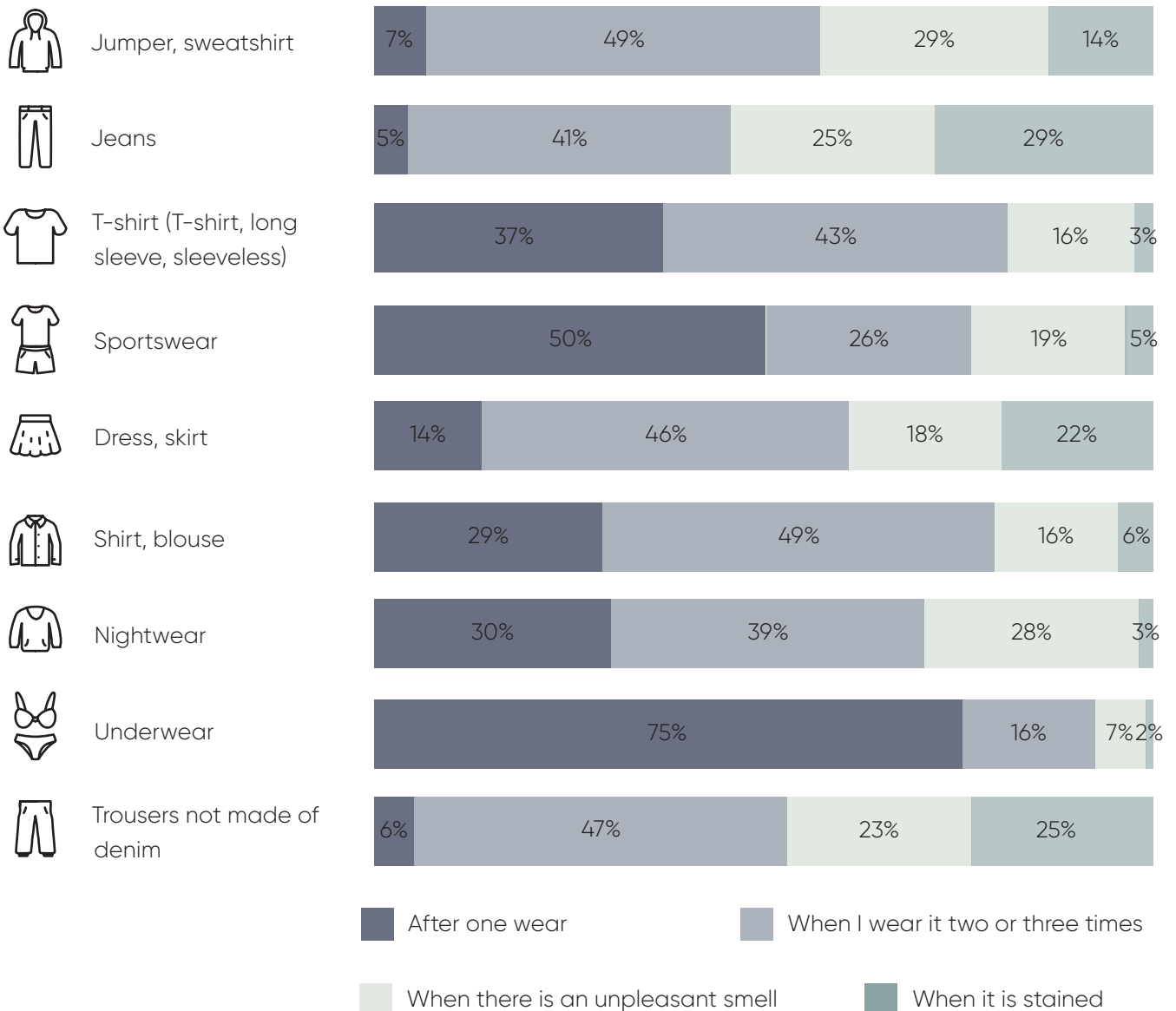


Washing cycle



Frequency of washing of individual garments

How often do you wash the following types of clothes?



Detergents

Among laundry detergents, powder (63 per cent) and washing liquid (61 per cent) are the most popular. Of laundry additives, the most popular choices are fabric softener (87 per cent) and stain remover (46 per cent). Very rarely (4 per cent) do we use natural laundry detergents, i.e. nuts and homemade natural products. Women are statistically more likely than men to use washing liquid and capsules, as well as stain remover or scented pearls. The majority of those asked say they know how to dose detergent and do not use a measuring cup to do so. They measure laundry detergent at a guess.

Dosage

I know how much detergent I need, I dose at a guess



I don't know how much detergent I need, I add at a guess each time



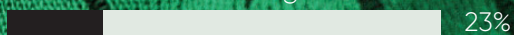
I know how much detergent I need, I always dose the same amount with a measuring cup



I don't know how much detergent I need, I feel that I use too little of it



I adjust the amount of detergent according to the manufacturer's guidelines



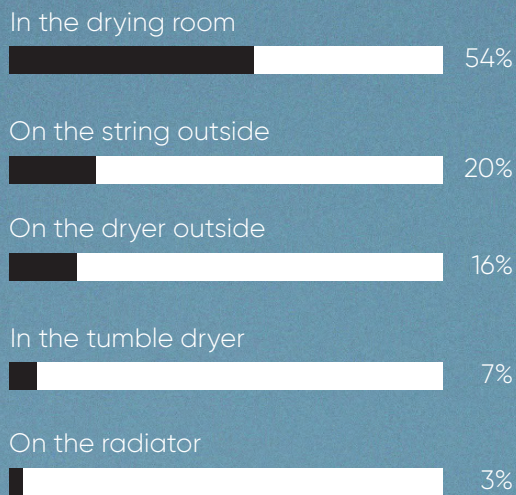
I don't know how much detergent I need, I feel like I use too much of it



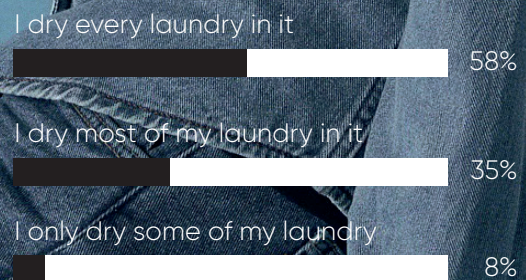
Drying

The majority of respondents dry their laundry on the clothes dryer indoors, shake it out before hanging it (women are far more likely than men to shake out their laundry to avoid creases), hang it as soon as the cycle is complete and remove it as soon as it is dry.

The most common method of drying



Frequency of using the tumble dryer



Drying – the most common methods

The most common way to hang laundry

I unravel the laundry before hanging it up to avoid creases



I hang the laundry on hangers



I hang the laundry and do nothing extra with it



I lay the laundry flat, at least some of the garments



Other



Time of hanging up washed clothes

Immediately after the end of the cycle



The laundry sits in the washing machine for some time and then I hang it up



I take the laundry out of the washing machine straight away, but hang it up later



Time of taking the laundry off the dryer

I take it off as soon as it dries



I take it off when it's dry, but sometimes it hangs a bit longer because I don't have time to take it off



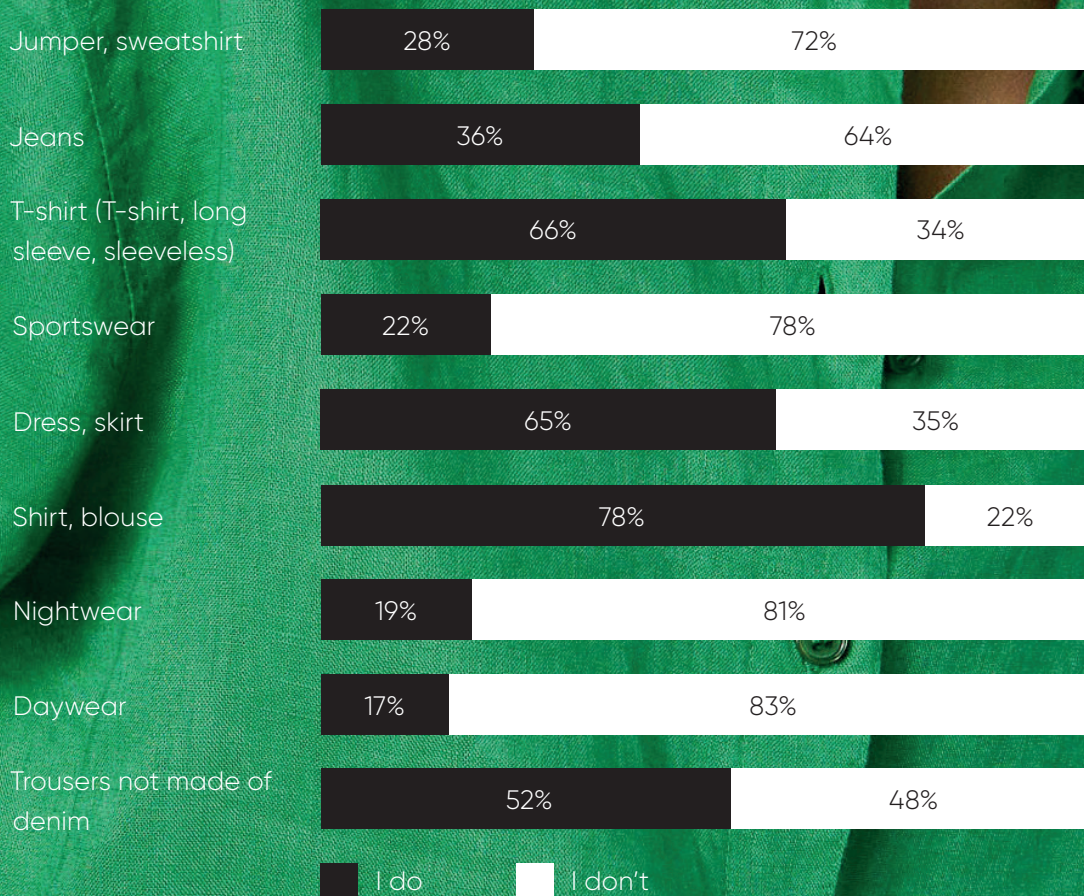
I take it off when it is still a little wet



Ironing

Almost two-thirds of the respondents put their clothes in the wardrobe before ironing and 26 per cent do not iron at all or very rarely. 40 per cent of those surveyed segregate their laundry before ironing to choose the right temperature, but as many as 34 per cent do not do this and iron everything at the same temperature.

Do you iron the following garments?



Storage, care

Consumers often consciously care for their clothes, knowing that proper care prolongs the life of clothes, keeps them looking good and helps to preserve their original qualities. Women are significantly more likely than men to declare that they care for their clothes properly, and they are also more likely to sort their clothes into those that are hung up and those that are folded.

How do you store your clothes?

I hang some of the clothes on a hanger and fold others



I fold all my clothes



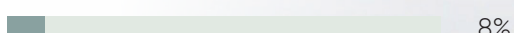
I hang all my clothes on hangers



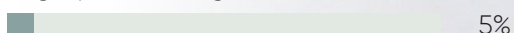
I hang natural moth remedies in the wardrobe (e.g. a bag of lavender)



I throw everything in the cupboard/drawer



I hang conventional moth preparations (e.g. special hangers) in the wardrobe





The greatest difficulties in clothes care

In clothes care, the greatest difficulty is hand washing or dry cleaning. Consumers like washing in the washing machine, while they indicate ironing as the least liked activity.

The greatest difficulties in clothes care

The fact that I can't wash in the washing machine



I have no information on the proper care of certain clothes, e.g. coat or jumper



I have no information on the proper care of difficult fabrics, e.g. silk or wool



I don't have the right detergents



I don't know/difficult to say



Ranking of care activities

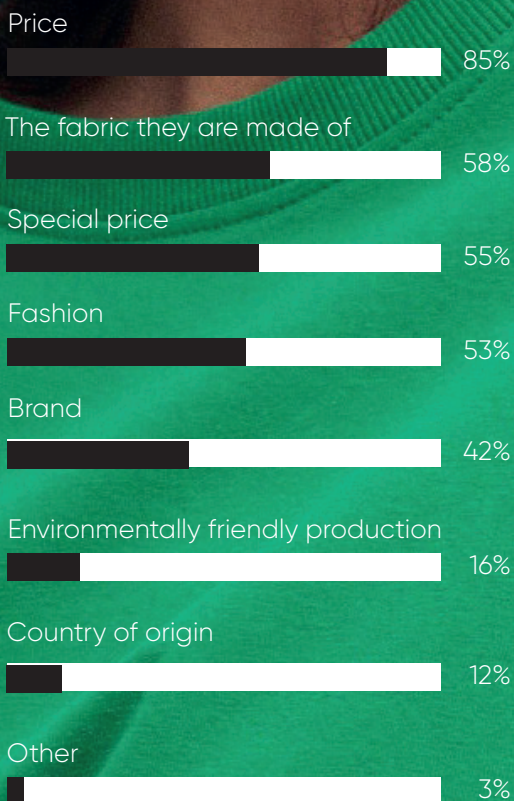
- 1 Washing
- 2 Sorting clothes before washing
- 3 Hanging laundry/drying
- 4 Arranging clothes in wardrobe
- 5 Ironing



Buying clothes

Consumers usually buy clothes once every three months. Women do so once a month or more often. When choosing clothes, women tend to pay attention to the cut or fabric from which they are sewn, while men pay attention to the brand. Women are also statistically more likely than men to be able to pay more for clothes if they are produced with care for the environment.

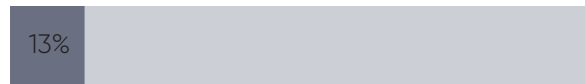
What do you look out for when buying clothes?



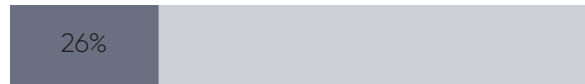


Willingness to pay more for clothes produced in respect of environmental standards

I am able to pay more **for all the clothes** I buy, as long as they are produced in respect of environmental standards.



I am only able to pay more **for some of the clothes** I buy, as long as they are produced in respect of environmental standards.



I am not willing to pay more for clothes, even if they are produced in respect of environmental standards



I don't know/difficult to say



Willingness to purchase clothes made of recycled fabrics, if...

It would have a slightly different texture



It would not be perfectly soft



It would have visible knots



The colour would not be expressive

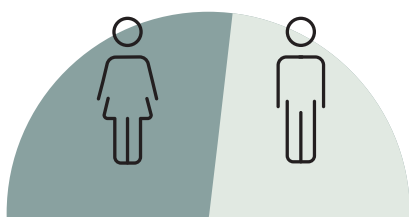
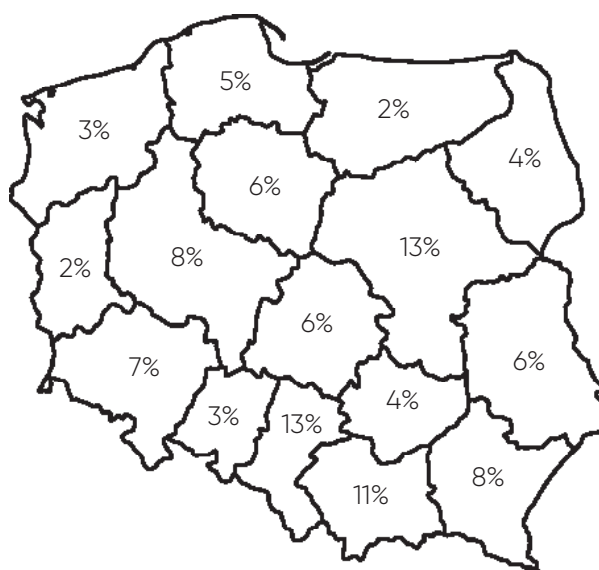


I would buy I wouldn't buy

About the study:

The survey was conducted using the CAWI method (Computer-Assisted Web Interview – a technique for gathering information in quantitative market research in which the respondent is asked to complete an electronic survey) on a nationwide representative sample (N=1000) between 24.01 and 02.02.2022.

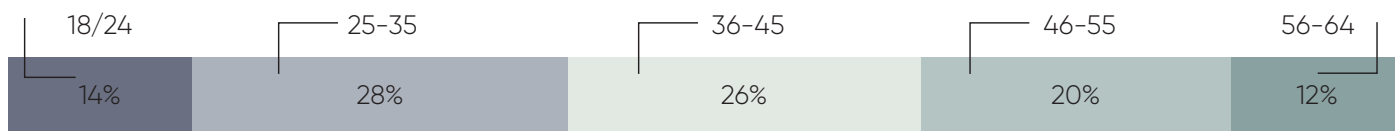
Voivodeship



Female 51%
Male 49%

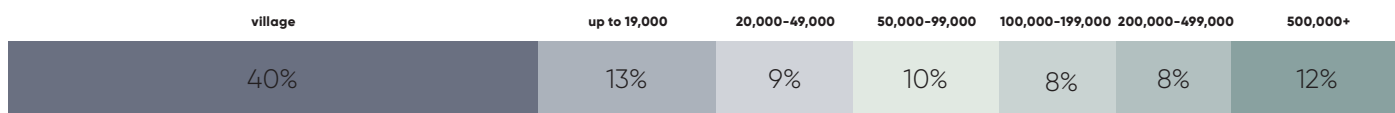


Education



Age

(in years)



Size of residence

(number of inhabitants)

Agnieszka Oleksyn-Wajda

**Director of the Institute for
Sustainable Development
Head of Postgraduate Studies in
Environmental Law
at the Postgraduate Training
Centre of Lazarski University**



The report shows that consumers often consciously take care of clothing, knowing that proper care extends the life of the garment. However, according to the results, we don't quite know as consumers how to act to care for the environment at the same time.

There is growing concern about reports from the scientific world about the scale of environmental pollution, including air, ocean and sea pollution or climate change. The latest report from the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) confirms that the world is already struggling with the effects of a warming climate. The authors of the report leave no doubt that human activity is the source of the growing greenhouse effect. Its effects in the form of floods, droughts and hurricanes are increasingly hitting human wellbeing and the planet's ecosystems.

In 'fixing the world', it is not only well-thought-out business strategies that take into account appropriate supply chains, moving towards low-carbon or closed-loop, but also many other actions that are important. One of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals outlined in Agenda 2030 are responsible production and consumption. So there should be a change in our habits in this area too.

On the one hand, thoughtful shopping is important, and on the other hand, proper care of clothes, including home methods. Proper clothes maintenance can reduce the negative impact on the environment. In addition, it will allow real savings in the household budget.

With environmental protection in mind, it is worth remembering that, for example, the washing process is water- and energy-intensive, results in water contamination with detergents that may contain harmful substances or the release of microfibres from fabrics. Man pollutes water faster than nature can clean it. Therefore, in order to reduce the negative impact on the environment, it is advisable to use more environmentally friendly detergents that do not contain harsh preservatives, toxic fragrances or environmentally harmful water softeners. It is also worth noting the efficiency of laundry products, which translates additionally into reducing the generation of plastic packaging and, on the

other hand, reducing the cost of the laundry itself. Even if the saving per unit is small, we can already save a real sum on an annual basis with minimal effort. It is very important to do the laundry according to the manufacturer's instructions on the labels and tags. It is precisely such labelling that is an important source of information for consumers.

Drying and ironing processes in the fashion industry are also energy-intensive, especially if the ironing is done without adjusting the process to temperatures specific to certain fabrics. Consumption of electricity from the combustion of fossil fuels is one of the largest sources of carbon dioxide emissions. Studies show that household consumption of utilities accounted for almost a fifth of the EU's carbon footprint in 2019. It is well known that the release of large amounts of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere due to human activities is the cause of a warming climate.

A big problem in the clothing and textile industry is the generation of waste. Available studies show that consumers in Poland use clothes 'to the very end', i.e. until they are wearable, but this does not mean that they do not generate waste. The problem of textile and clothing waste is a major challenge. The European Environment Agency states that consumers in the EU throw away around 5.8 million tonnes of clothes every year, which equates to 11.3 kg of textiles per person per year. Only 1 per cent of used clothing is recycled to make new clothes.

This is why it is so important to shop smart and find ways to give clothes a second life. And if you have no idea what to do with the clothes you don't need, it is worth simply returning them to selected Reserved, House and Mohito stores where second-hand clothes are collected. The clothes will find a new use, and we will not contribute to 'littering' the world with textile waste.

dr inż. Anetta Walawska

**Chief Specialist Scientific
and Research Affairs,
Centre for a Closed Economy
Łukasiewicz Research Network –
Łódź Institute of Technology**



Customers' clothing purchasing decisions are primarily influenced by economic reasons. As many as 85 per cent of them pay attention to the price, while only 16 per cent pay attention to the production of the product using environmentally friendly processes. **This confirms that there is still a lot to be done in terms of raising consumers' environmental awareness and building an incentive system to support the purchase of clothes produced in an environmentally friendly way – it is worth betting on information campaigns on sustainable consumption.** It should be noted that 39 per cent of customers are willing to pay more for clothes produced in respect of environmental standards. The same number are not prepared to pay more for clothes just because they are more environmentally friendly. For the majority of Poles, an obstacle to buying clothes made from recycled materials is not the altered texture of the material (73 per cent), slightly less softness (61 per cent) or less pronounced colour (61 per cent). On the other hand, 55 per cent of respondents would not buy clothes where knots would be visible – probably associated with signs of wear and tear on the garment. These customer concerns are misplaced, as 'recycled textiles' are new materials made from recycled raw materials, e.g. polyester fibres or cotton.

Poles still shop frequently for clothes, with 72 per cent of respondents buying clothes at least once a quarter and 16 per cent even more often than once a month. Europeans buy on average almost 26 kg of textiles per year and throw away about 11 kg. Hence the need for an appropriate policy for dealing with textile waste.

Poles' environmental awareness is growing, manifested in sorting waste, saving water and electricity, and a desire to reduce the purchase of plastic. At the same time, for 38 per cent of respondents the term 'sustainable fashion' is not understood. This is another argument in favour of the need, and even the necessity, of awareness campaigns on the possibility of reducing the negative impact of consumers on the environment. Choosing clothes that are made with care for the planet, caring for them properly, donating or selling unwanted clothes as a way of prolonging their life, and managing postconsumer clothing waste are just some of the many ways in which consumers can care for the environment. In particular, there is a need to promote the actions which clothing brands are increasingly implementing to collect used textiles in their shops in order to pass them on to, among others, people in need.

Information on the correct care of clothes can be found on the labels, in the form of pictograms describing the following processes: washing, drying, ironing, bleaching and professional maintenance, including dry cleaning and water washing. From this point of view, it is inappropriate to cut the tags, declared by 42 per cent of respondents. A very good solution, positively assessed by 73 per cent of respondents, is to place a QR code on the label. This would allow, after scanning it, quick access to a lot of information about a given clothing product, including information on proper care of the garment and recommended detergents, the raw material composition of the textile from which the garment is made, its allergenic properties, storage of the garment, its disposal at the end of its use, as well as information on the carbon and water footprint of the product. Thus, a tag printed with a QR code can become the most easily accessible source of product and care information for the consumer.

Washing clothes, especially mechanically, is associated with their high exposure to intense friction, often causing more damage than the clothes themselves. In order to avoid this, washing conditions – temperature, washing cycle and loading of the washing machine drum – should be adjusted to the type of clothes. Such correct behaviour is declared by approximately 90 per cent of respondents. Poles are increasingly willing to use washing liquids (61 per cent) and washing capsules (58 per cent), although the leader among detergents is still washing powder (63 per cent). The vast majority of respondents declare that they consciously dose detergent. This is important in terms of environmental impact.

Good habits in handling clothes after washing, i.e. unravelling before hanging (79 per cent), hanging on hangers (18 per cent), hanging immediately after the cycle (80 per cent), allow to simplify or even eliminate the ironing process of some garments. The key parameter of the ironing process is the temperature, which is selected according to the fabric of the garment. Because of the possibility of damaging the garment, it should not be ironed at a temperature higher than recommended, which is why it is recommended to sort the garment beforehand. It should also be borne in mind that laundering generates about a quarter of the carbon footprint associated with the use of the garment, which corresponds to 3 tonnes of CO₂ emissions per tonne of garment.

Proper care of clothes contributes to extending their life and reducing water and energy use. In turn, lower energy intensity not only has a positive impact on the affluence of our pockets, but above all translates directly into a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. As a result, proper care of clothes results in a reduced negative impact of the clothing sector on the environment. It is worth making a continuous effort to make customers aware that their clothing purchasing choices and proper care help to counteract the greenhouse effect on the Earth. Every small step makes a difference!

Marta Karwacka

**Senior Manager Sustainability
Consulting Central Europe
Deloitte**



The global economy faces enormous challenges. Those related to climate change require systemic decisions and multidimensional solutions involving, among other things, the transformation of companies' business models, new regulations and changing consumer attitudes. We already realise that this economic revolution requires the involvement of many parties, and consumers – their activism and environmental awareness – play a key role here. Fortunately, the growing pressure felt by companies from consumers is often consistent with their stated willingness to change their lifestyles in very different areas, including the way they use their clothes. **Many studies show that as consumers we understand our individual impact on change and are increasingly looking for ways to express our personal environmental responsibility. It could be said that not only corporate but also personal social responsibility is becoming stronger.**

Many analyses and estimates developed over the last years indicate that the clothing industry is responsible for 8-10 per cent of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The largest value (about 61 per cent) is generated at the stage of textile production, garment sewing or transport, but secondarily 21 per cent of emissions are derived from consumer attitudes and behaviour¹. The linear economy has left its mark not only on the way we produce, but also on our approach to caring for the objects we own. Over the past few decades, we have lost many of the competences that our ancestors possessed. This is borne out by a 2014 study which found that the Millennial generation lacks the knowledge of clothing care that was natural to their parents or grandparents². Of course, awareness of the industry's impact on the environment is having an impact on changing attitudes, which can clearly be seen, for example, in the growing value of the second-hand clothing market³. Given that in modern culture we treat almost everything as 'disposable', this is definitely a positive sign. However, it is worth reaching further and looking for further spheres of influence. And probably not many of us realise that inadequate care of clothes, including their washing, is the second stage, after textile production, that has the greatest impact on the environment, consuming not only huge amounts of water but also energy⁴.

¹Fashion on Climate report, Global Fashion Agenda, 2020

²Millennials Can't Sew Or Do Laundry As Well As Their Parents & Grandparents, Study Says | HuffPost Communities

³Theadup reports show that the value of the second-hand market is growing year by year.

⁴Elisabeth Cline. Ekoszafa. Ubieraj się dobrze, Pruszyński i spółka 2019; Pulse of Fashion Industry 2017, Global Fashion Agenda.

It is estimated that the use of washers and dryers in the US consumes 66 billion kilowatts annually and emits as much as 46 million tonnes of CO₂⁵. In addition, mechanical movements or high temperatures in tumble dryers and washing machines severely damage clothes, causing shrinking, tearing of fabrics and colour fading⁶.

We talk relatively little about the effects of improper clothes care, although it must be acknowledged that initiatives are already emerging to educate consumers about washing temperatures, the use of more environmentally friendly detergents or the benefits of replacing tumble dryers with air drying. More and more brands are simplifying washing instructions to avoid subjective interpretations and thus minimise environmental impact. An interesting example is the Clevercare campaign, an initiative of the Stella McCartney brand, which aims, among other things, to educate consumers about the harmfulness of certain clothes care practices⁷. Including this thread in the discussion on sustainable fashion seems to be very valuable, especially since only 4 per cent of Poles state clothes care as a practice related to caring for the environment⁸.

⁵ Elisabeth Cline, *Ecosphere ...* p. 306

⁶ Timur Senguen, Ethan Wolff-Mann, *How Dryers Destroy Clothes: We Delve Into the Research – Reviewed* A look at the scientific literature that deals with the damage that dryers do to fabric, 2019; Keith Flamer, *10 Ways to Save Energy Doing Laundry* <https://www.consumerreports.org/laundry/energy-saving-laundry-tips-a9261296729/>, 28.05.2021

⁷ <https://www.clevercare.info/en>

⁸ *Clothing Care Report*, February 2022

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