

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Vestiaire Collective study links self-doubt to new purchases

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Vestiaire Collective finds that nearly 9 in 10 “nothing to wear” moments are triggered by emotional factors, and in 90 percent of cases, the feeling prompts consumers to make a new purchase. Image courtesy of Vestiaire Collective

By AMIRAH KEATON

French luxury resale platform Vestiaire Collective is making the case that full closets and the feeling of having nothing to wear are not mutually exclusive.

The gap between the two is emotional, not material, according to a new study conducted by the secondhand seller in partnership with sustainability-focused consulting studio and creative agency WRD. Examining the psychological triggers behind wardrobe dissatisfaction, Vestiaire Collective finds that nearly 9 in 10 “nothing to wear” moments are triggered by emotional factors, and in 90 percent of cases, the feeling prompts consumers to make a new purchase, prompting the launch of its latest campaign.

“This research is of particular significance as it moves the needle from circularity is good for the planet’ to circularity creates a healthier relationship with consumption,” said Hortense Pruvost, impact director at Vestiaire Collective, in a statement.

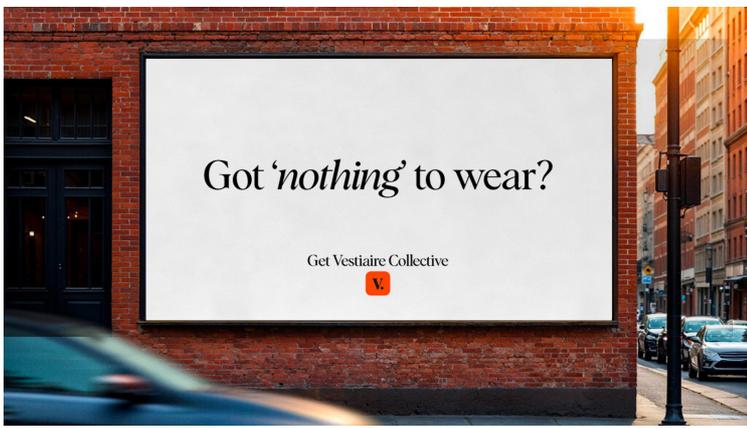
For the report, 5,643 Vestiaire Collective users and prospects across France, Italy, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States were surveyed, supplemented by 10 in-home wardrobe audits. The platform notes that survey respondents were invited to participate via email communication sent to members of its database.

Understanding overconsumption

Vestiaire Collective’s “Got Nothing to Wear” campaign starts with stats, suggesting the “nothing to wear” feeling is less a reflection of what people own than of how they feel about themselves in a given moment.

The platform reports that 84 percent of its survey respondents said they have experienced the “nothing to wear” feeling, a figure that climbs to 94 percent among Gen Z.

In 90 percent of cases, the feeling triggers a new purchase, a behavioral loop that, the research argues, feeds overconsumption while doing little to address the underlying dissatisfaction.



Launching March 2, Vestiaire Collective's "Got Nothing to Wear" campaign features OOH placements. Image courtesy of Vestiaire Collective

The study found that respondents underestimate their wardrobes by 40 percent on average, despite owning more than 100 items each. Only 15 percent wear most of what they own, and a quarter admit they forget certain items exist entirely.

The frustration, per Vestiaire Collective's data, is not about scarcity but about emotional disconnection: 86.5 percent of respondents reported emotional or identity-related triggers for the feeling, with 39 percent citing body image concerns, 22 percent self-doubt and 22 percent insecurity. Seven in 10 "nothing to wear" moments, the researchers concluded, are emotional in origin.

The pattern compounds itself: as "nothing to wear" episodes increase in frequency, emotional attachment to one's wardrobe declines, while impulse purchasing escalates. Larger wardrobes accumulate alongside lower satisfaction, creating what the study calls a frustration cycle driven by emotional obsolescence rather than actual shortage.

"We've all felt like we have nothing to wear, even when our wardrobes are full," said Matteo Ward, CEO and cofounder of WRD, in a statement.

"It's a frustrating feeling that's not about absence, but about disconnection."

Rebuilding through recommerce

The research suggests that the remedy lies not in purchasing more but in rebuilding the relationship between consumers and what they already own.

Vestiaire Collective buyers and sellers in the study showed 25 percent higher wardrobe satisfaction than the broader sample, a finding the platform attributes to more considered purchasing behavior and a stronger emotional connection to the pieces they acquire.



Campaign visuals associate overflowing closets with frustrated consumers. Image courtesy of Vestiaire Collective

Those who buy on Vestiaire Collective also reported 23 percent fewer weekly "nothing to wear" moments ([see story](#)), while the share of buyers who say they never experience the feeling at all increased by 50 percent compared to the general population surveyed.

The campaign accompanying the research, also launching March 2, uses imagery of overflowing closets juxtaposed with moments of consumer frustration to put a visual frame around the paradox the data describes.

Nearly 70 percent of survey respondents told Vestiaire Collective they shop for fashion monthly or more, while a majority report purchasing premium, luxury or heritage luxury brands, as the global resale fashion market prepares to reach \$360 billion in value by 2030 ([see story](#)).

"The overconsumption cycle is built on emotional vulnerability, turning self-doubt into sales," Vestiaire Collective's Mr. Pruvost said, in a statement.

"Vestiaire Collective breaks this cycle by rewiring how we relate to fashion."

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