

Age and Value :

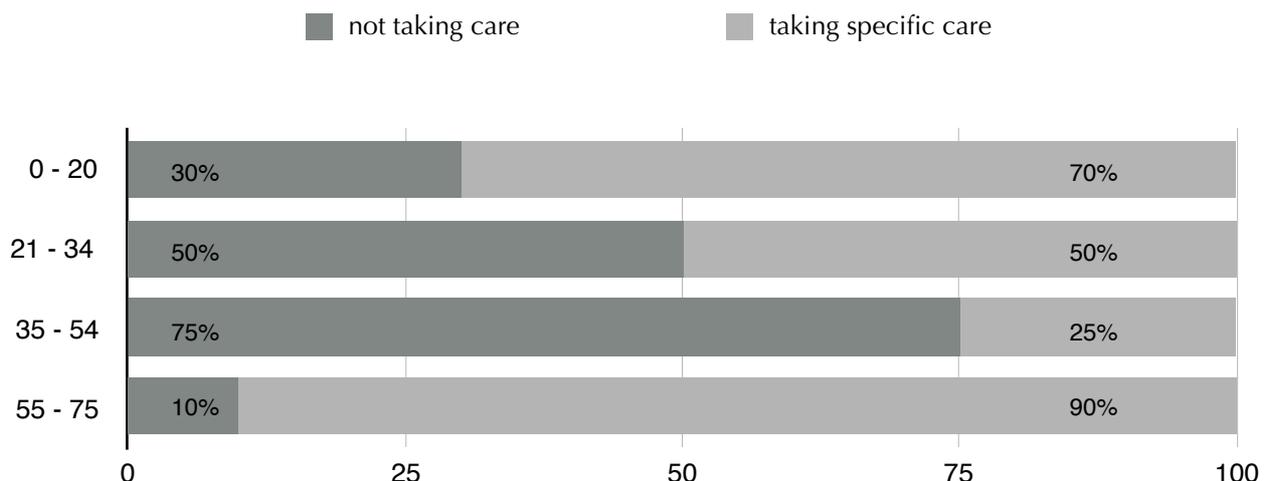
generational habits

The collected data of the Portal_001 research pointed towards an interesting examination in regards to the way in which different age categories treat and experience their garments. Specifically, is there a difference in the way different generations care for their clothing? And could this be determined by habits in terms of washing, keeping it clean, or deciding when and how often to wear it?

After comparing the gathered data I wondered if there were similarities or differences in the way different age categories care for their garments and if I could use the results as a sort of measure system in regards to *consumption*. The results of Portal presented four age categories, and I have examined the results in form of percentages and comments that really stood out.

“HOW DO YOU TAKE CARE OF YOUR GARMENT?”

Unsurprisingly, almost every answer contained the word “washing”. But when taking a closer look at all the responses, some of them were very specific or either generated a general idea. In all cases they revealed a typical way of thinking or looking at a garment presenting a set of norms or values with a specific age group.



AGE 0 - 20 This age category was really distinctive in mentioning a time reference when answering in how they “take care” of their garment. For instance almost every sentence would begin with “i wash it” and be followed by “once a week” / “twice a week” / “once a month”.

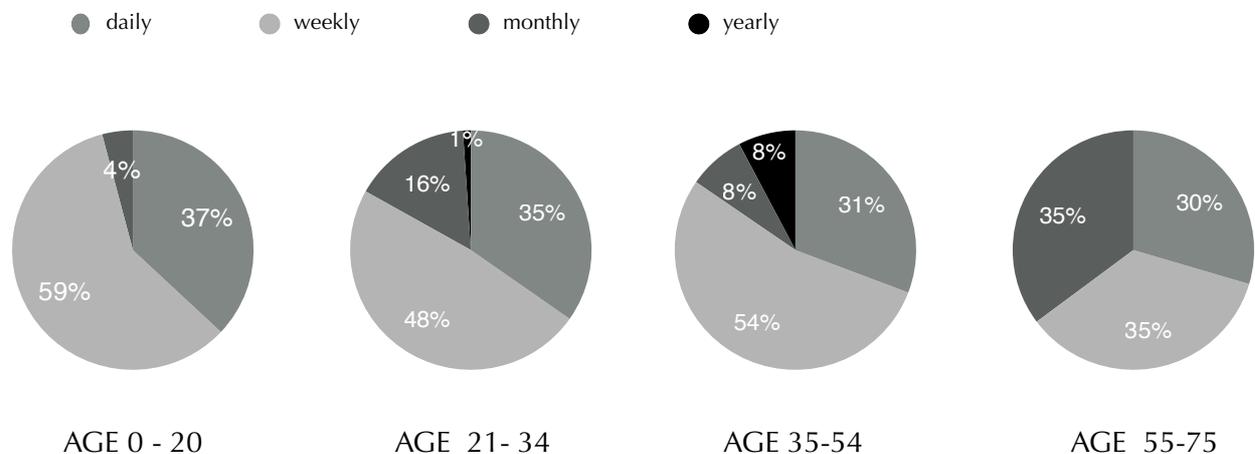
AGE 21 - 34 Answers in this category really balanced each other out by either an “I don’t” or “I’m very careful.” People were either care-less or really careful with their garments and those who were careful were not always in possession of the most expensive garment. So you could conclude that this was not entirely depended on the monetary value of the item.

AGE 35 - 54 People within this group were really precise on what tool they used to clean the garment like “washing machine” or “dry-clean”. Despite this fact, a lot of people in this age category also answered this question by saying that they don’t take care of their items it at all.

AGE 55 - 75 This category precisely describes how they wash it, what method or washing programme they use, and what products they use to do so. You could see that they cared about their garment from the way they almost instruct the reader, similar to how a clothing label instructs its wearer how to take care of an item. By the way they wrote their description, the reader can almost guess what kind of fabric the garment is made of, without having any visuals or more information about the actual garment.

“HOW OFTEN DO YOU WEAR YOUR GARMENT?”

By determining how often an individual wears a garment a presumption can be made in effects to that person liking and enjoying the garment. But I questioned if that rather translated into someone also effectively valuing the garment. Trying to make a connection between items that are worn frequently and are taken specific care of, can determine if the categories (in comparison to each other) actually have different values towards garments.



^ this chart displays the variables between each age group, showing how often each individual wears their examined garment.

AGE 0 - 20 : Daily 27% / Weekly 43% / Monthly 3% / Yearly 0%

The vast majority of this group uses their proposed garment at least a few times a week. That either means the product is practical, fulfilled its purpose or can’t be missed for a longer period of time. Looking back at the fact that, to this group, the time frame in which they take care of the garment was important; you can assume that the taking-care-part goes hand in hand with full practicality. So in other words: the product is mainly taken care of, because it is used fairly often.

AGE 21 - 34 : Daily 33% / Weekly 46% / Monthly 15% / Yearly 1%

Within this group garments were used fairly often on a daily base as well as a weekly base. Because this group was the biggest and had the least vague responses when asked if and how they took care of their

items, you could say the fast turnover, or rather; the holding on and repeat-wearing those items can be split 50/50, in regards to valued or just using because it's an only option. you could almost say that the people that announced that they don't take care of their items, don't bother because they wear them too often and the people that proclaimed that they are really careful with their garments do so, because they wear the items so often, and want to keep wearing them.

AGE 35-54 : Daily 20% / Weekly 35% / Monthly 5% / Yearly 5%

In the chart we can see that this group also peaks in the daily and weekly category. Interesting was that in this group the majority of the people announced that they do not take care of their garments. Also a lot of the participants commented that their garment was seasonal, and thus the main reason for wearing it as often as they described.

AGE 55-75 : Daily 21% / Weekly 25% / Monthly 25% / Yearly 0%

In contrast to the other age categories, this one holds a very fixed and equally divided percentage over the various time groups. Because they were so specific in their regime of care taking for their garments, you could presume that every item holds a certain quality that can be applied when looking at the garment. In other words: whenever needed; daily, weekly or monthly, the garment will be up to standard and ready for use.

CONCLUDING; When only reviewing the data measured in this chapter, an easy conclusion could be that age does indeed add to the way someone takes care of their garments. The difference in outcome could have something to do with living or growing up in a specific time resulting in a different mindset and perspective on object/clothes. The middle two categories are way less apologetic about their 'non-caring' than the youngest category, therefore utilising their garments to the max, and maybe even replacing their items quicker with new ones, than an older generation would do. In the article "aging and identity: a post modern dialogue" writer Krekula¹ (2007) specifically mentions the pride women feel when dressing according to rules. Krekula suggests that because older generations have been conditioned to care for their presence in a much stricter way, this can be related to the way they care for their clothes less freely. When sticking to a certain garment it makes one feel less old, because they don't have to dress old. It is a way of keeping identity within reach by caring for the clothes and being able to stay fixed in age and time, and thus, in relation to the gathered information via the PORTAL, this assumption can be confirmed. According to Julia Twigg² (2007) "the postmodern dream of fluidity and self fashioning has been exaggerated, certainly in regard to old age and the role that appearance and dress play in its constitution" and thereby holding on to youthful styles, can help to present the self in a less clearly age defined manner. You could conclude in regards to the info graphics, that age does determine how individuals value their garments, because the aim is to hold its presence as long as possible to convey some sort of timelessness, and maybe even to get a grip on the fast turnover of trends, styles and the (over) consumption of clothes. •

¹In J. Powell and T. Gilbert (eds) *Aging and Identity: A Postmodern Dialogue*, New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2009

²School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research, University of Kent, Canterbury, Kent, CT2 7NY, UK, j.m.twigg@kent.ac.uk