



*Vestiaire Collective
Got Nothing to Wear
Research*

(16) BENDITO MOCKUP

21/21

Introduction

This used to be someone else's "nothing".

We all feel like we have nothing to wear from time to time right? Scan the QR code. Tell us about it.

#NothingToWear

Vestiaire Collective



About this research

Despite unprecedented levels of clothing ownership, the feeling of having “nothing to wear” remains widespread. This contradiction sits at the heart of contemporary fashion behaviour and has profound implications for consumption, waste, and emotional wellbeing. In partnership with Vestiaire Collective, WRÅD conducted a mixed-method research project to investigate the psychological, emotional, and behavioural drivers behind the “Got Nothing to Wear” (GNTW) phenomenon. The research reframes GNTW not as a material problem, but as a perception gap rooted in emotional disconnection, identity variations, and social context.

Methodology

This research combines quantitative survey analysis with qualitative in-home wardrobe audits.

Phase 1: Survey

An online survey was distributed across the Vestiaire Collective ecosystem. The survey collected 5,643 responses across five key markets: France, Italy, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The questionnaire was structured to progressively move from contextual data to emotional depth, and then to behavioural consequences.

Phase 2: Wardrobe Audits

To move beyond self-reported data, the research included 10 in-home wardrobe audits, each lasting approximately 60 minutes. These sessions were designed to observe emotional obsolescence as it manifests in real wardrobes, while generating qualitative insight to support the wider research. Participants were recruited from Phase 1 respondents who had indicated openness to taking part in follow-up qualitative research. The final group included a mix of Vestiaire Collective engagement profiles: 4 sellers, 4 buyers, and 2 prospects.

Research Objectives

- 1. Understand “got nothing to wear”:** map the frequency of GNTW across demographics and user profiles, and identify the emotional triggers that cause it.
- 2. Expose emotional obsolescence:** why people fall out of love with perfectly wearable clothes and quantify the gap between perceived scarcity and actual abundance.
- 3. Engagement patterns:** examine how different levels of platform engagement relate to reported GNTW frequency and wardrobe satisfaction.

Methodological note:

All respondents belong to the Vestiaire Collective ecosystem. Comparisons between users and non-users (prospects) therefore reflect differences within this audience and should not be generalised to the broader population.

References to “universal” within this report reflect the very high prevalence of the phenomenon within this predominantly female, fashion-engaged sample, and should not be interpreted as population-level generalisation.

Executive Summary

Our exploratory research into the “nothing to wear” phenomenon, conducted with predominantly fashion-engaged individuals within the Vestiaire Collective ecosystem, suggests that the feeling is near-universal within this sample and reveals that it has little to do with the quantity of clothes people own and more to do with how they relate to them emotionally.

Emotional obsolescence emerges as the primary driver behind the moment of “nothing to wear.” Across age groups and genders nearly one in three respondents experience it weekly or more, and the feeling is consistently associated with frustration, insecurity, and pressure around self-presentation. Among those who experience “got nothing to wear” weekly or more, nearly three quarters (72%) own more than 100 items, and almost half (47%) own more than 200. The research further shows that emotional and identity-related factors dominate, with 68% of respondents reporting that their “nothing to wear” moments are triggered by emotions rather than practical wardrobe limitations.

The in-home wardrobe audits qualitatively support these findings, revealing a perception-

reality gap (*“I honestly thought I owned 15 dresses. When we counted them... there were 33”*). Participants significantly underestimated what they owned, frequently rediscovering items they had forgotten altogether. Almost all participants verbalised surprise during the audit (*“I forgot I had this”*).

This emotional disconnection has behavioural and economic consequences. 89% of frequent GNTW respondents report that the feeling has led them to purchase at least once, positioning it as a powerful upstream driver of reactive consumption. At the same time, the audits suggest that each “nothing to wear” moment conceals untapped circular value: on average, participants’ rarely worn designer and luxury items represented approximately **€890** in potential resale value per wardrobe*. This highlights how emotional obsolescence does not only drive overconsumption, but also blocks circulation and value recovery.

Engagement with Vestiaire Collective is associated with lower reported frequency of “nothing to wear” moments and higher wardrobe satisfaction. While this research does not establish causality, the correlation suggests that circular engagement may play a stabilising

role within the emotional wardrobe cycle. Together, these findings are consistent with the campaign hypothesis that: ***“Got Nothing to Wear is a Lie. You are not out of options, you are out of love. Find it on Vestiaire Collective.”***

“Nothing to wear” moments conceal untapped circular value: on average, participants’ rarely worn designer and luxury items represented approximately €890 in potential resale value per wardrobe.

*Valuations were estimated by the Vestiaire Collective team based on photographed items and current platform pricing logic.



Phase 1: Survey Raw Results & Learnings

Key Insights

“Got Nothing to Wear” is a near-universal experience and it intensifies sharply among younger generations. Across the full survey sample, 84% of respondents report experiencing the feeling with nearly one in three experiencing it weekly or more. Among 18–24-year-olds, the phenomenon reaches peak intensity: 94% experience “nothing to wear,” and almost 60% feel it on a weekly basis*, highlighting a generational pressure point around identity, appearance, and self-presentation.

“Got nothing to wear” is a near-universal frustration, experienced by 84% of people.

Among those who experience “got nothing to wear” weekly or more, nearly three quarters (72%) own more than 100 items, and almost half (47%) own more than 200.

The data suggests a breakdown in emotional connection. As GNTW frequency increases, emotional attachment to clothing collapses: only 58% of frequent GNTW respondents say they like or love their wardrobe, compared to nearly 87% among those who rarely or never experience the feeling.

It happens most in objectively large wardrobes.

Emotional triggers dominate this phenomenon—39% cite bad body-image days, while self-doubt and insecurity are each cited by 22% of respondents. 86.5% report at least one emotional or identity-related trigger, and 68% attribute the feeling exclusively to emotional factors, reinforcing that “nothing to wear” is a confidence crash rather than a clothing problem.

As the frequency of GNTW increases, emotional attachment to clothing decreases.

GNTW is a psychological driver of overconsumption, 89% of frequent GNTW respondents report that the feeling has led them to purchase at least once. Against this backdrop, engagement with Vestiaire Collective emerges as a stabilising force. Buyers and sellers are up to 25% more likely to say they like or love their wardrobe compared to non-transacting members and weekly GNTW incidence drops from approximately 38%

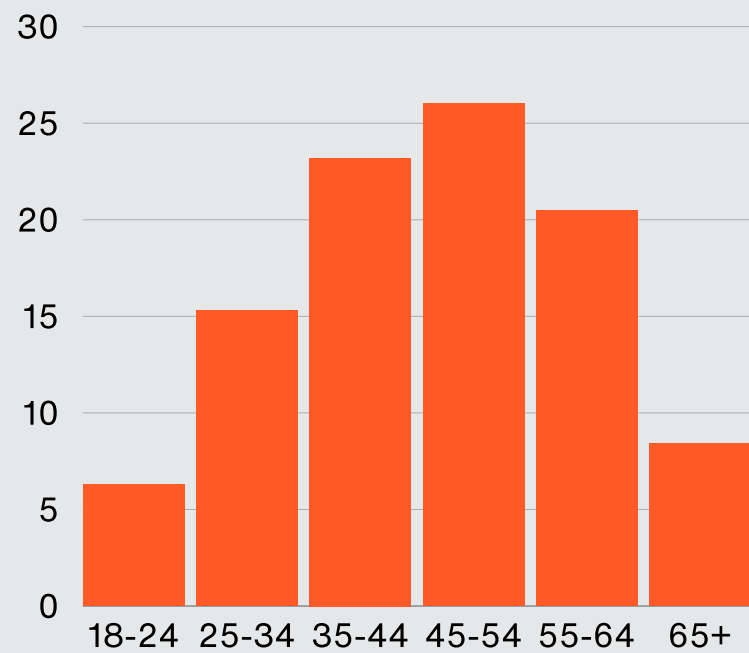
among prospects to around 30% among buyers—a relative reduction of about 21%.

GNTW is a key psychological driver of overconsumption, 89% of frequent GNTW respondents report that the feeling has led them to purchase at least once. The good news? Engagement with Vestiaire Collective is associated with lower reported GNTW frequency and higher reported wardrobe satisfaction.

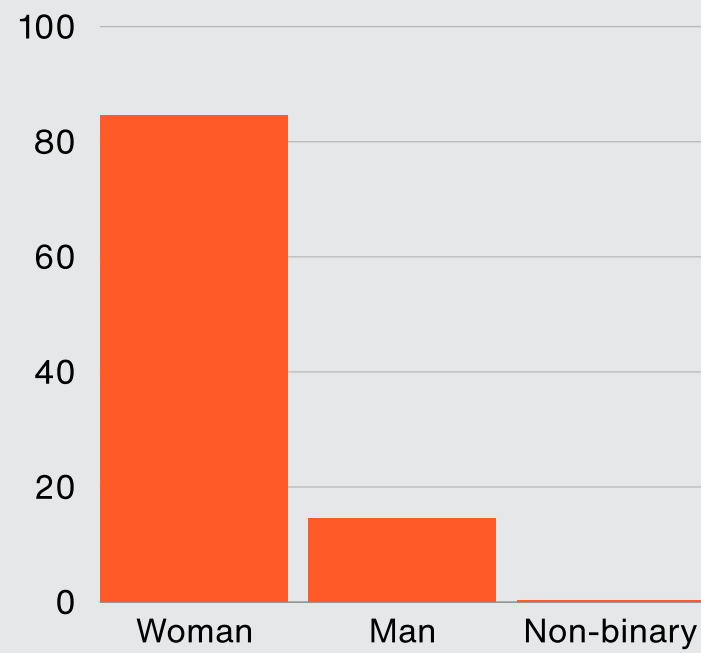
*While the 18–24 age group is highlighted due to its highest reported GNTW frequency and particular relevance for a social-first campaign strategy, it represents the smallest segment of the sample (6.3%). Findings should therefore be interpreted in proportion to its relative size within the respondent pool.

Respondents

Respondents by age group



Respondents by gender identity



Survey respondents were invited to participate via email communication sent to members of the Vestiaire Collective database. The resulting sample therefore represents individuals who are already part of, or connected to, the Vestiaire Collective ecosystem and should be interpreted within that context.

Respondents by Vestiaire Collective Status

- Buyers: 2,008 (35.6%)
- Sellers: 1360 (24.1%)
- Buyers & Sellers: 1,563 (27.7%)
- Prospects (non-transacting): 710 (12.6%)
- Total: 5,643 respondents

Respondents by Geography

- Italy: 1,805 (32.0%)
- France: 1,739 (30.8%)
- Germany: 819 (14.5%)
- United States: 647 (11.5%)
- United Kingdom: 633 (11.2%)

Respondents by gender identity:

- Women: 3,327 (84.5%)
- Man: 571 (14.5%)
- Non-binary: 11 (0.3%)

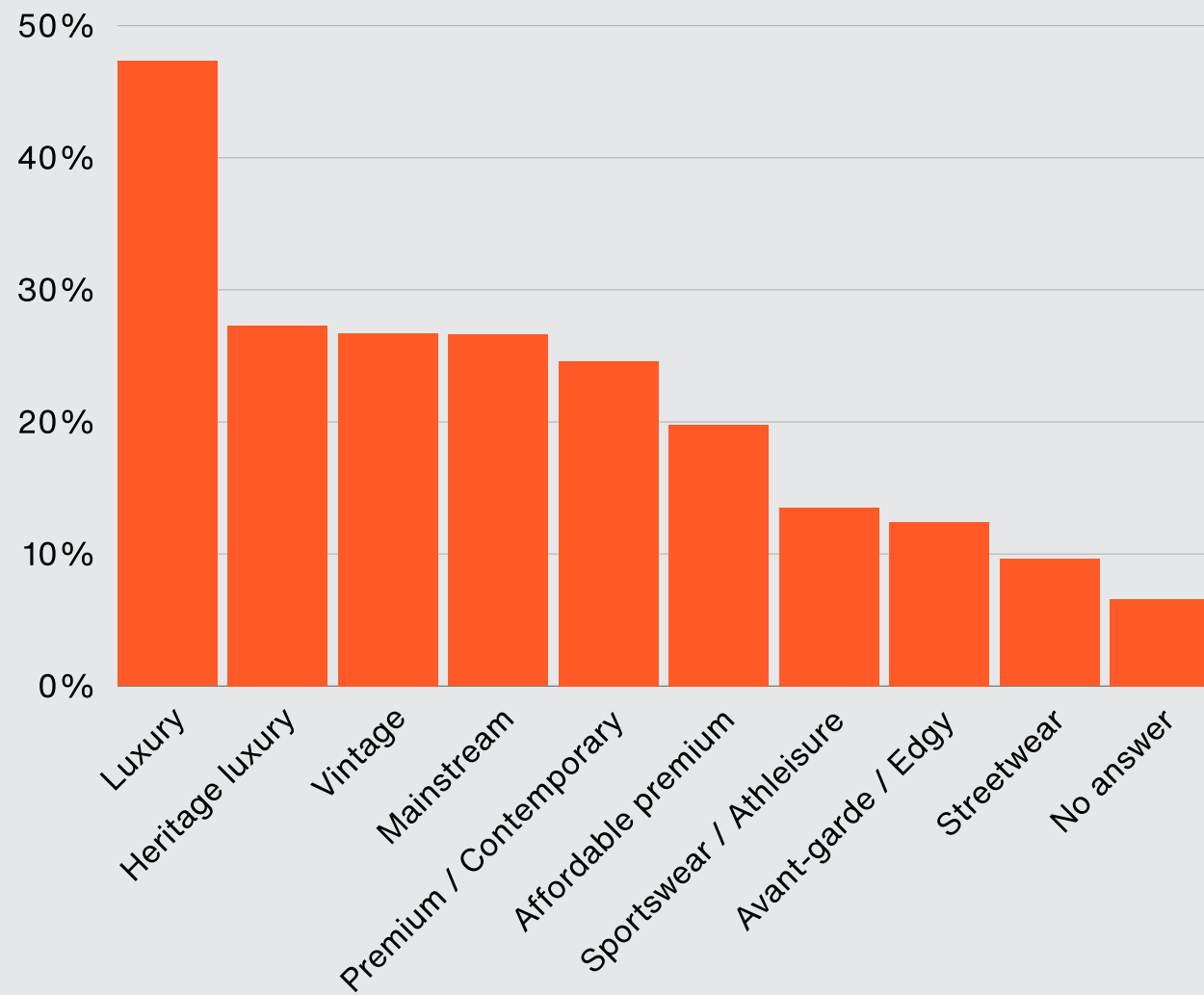
Respondents by age group:

- 18-24: 366 (6.3%)
- 25-34: 891 (15.4%)
- 35-44: 1,344 (23.3%)
- 45-54: 1,507 (26.1%)
- 55-64: 1,181 (20.4%)
- 65+: 479 (8.3%)

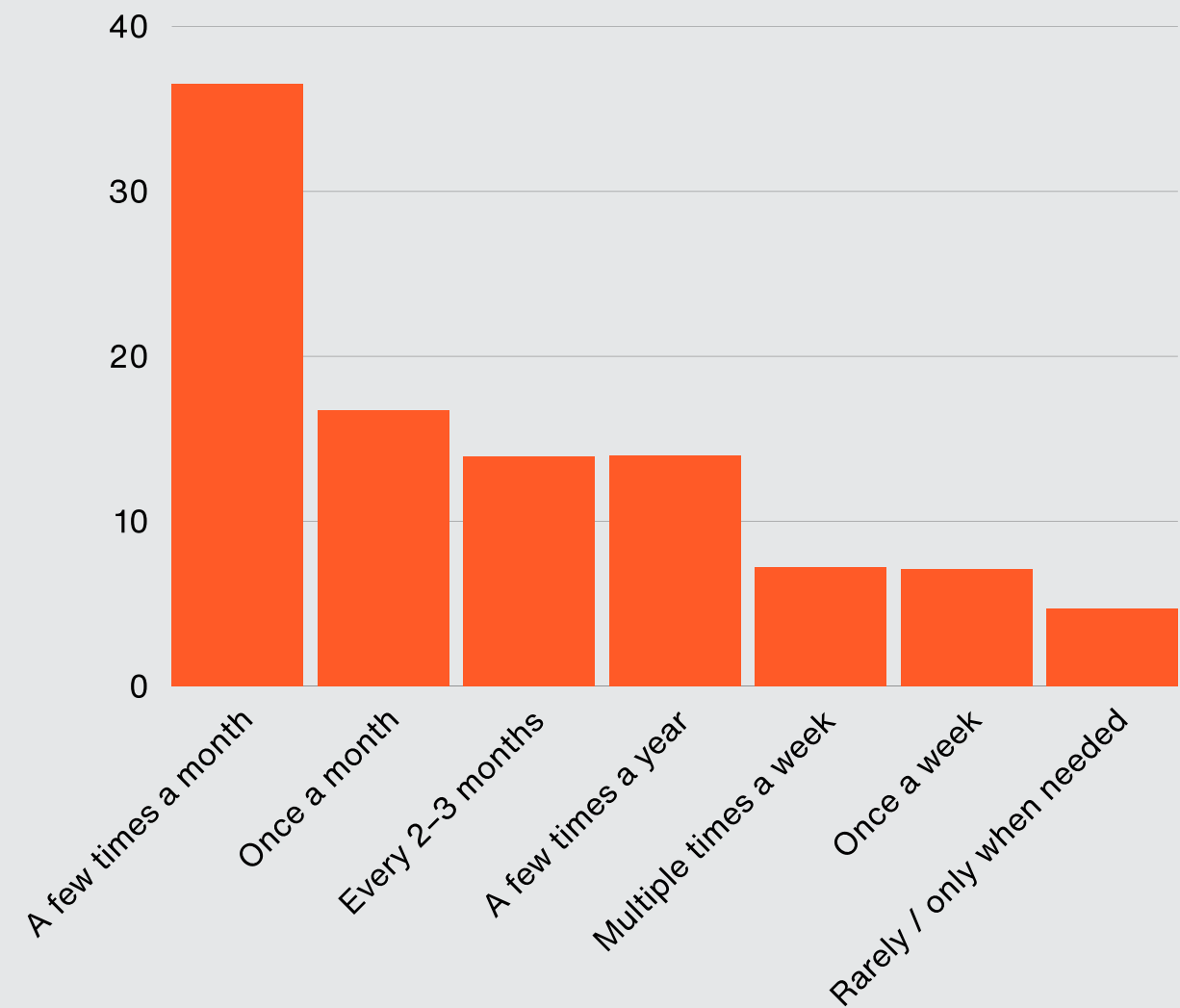
Age Lens: Younger demographics have been highlighted separately due to highest GNTW frequency, strongest emotional volatility and highest relevance for a social-first campaign strategy.

Nearly 70% of respondents shop for fashion monthly or more, and a majority report purchasing premium, luxury or heritage luxury brands.

3. Which brands do you buy most often?
(% of total sample)



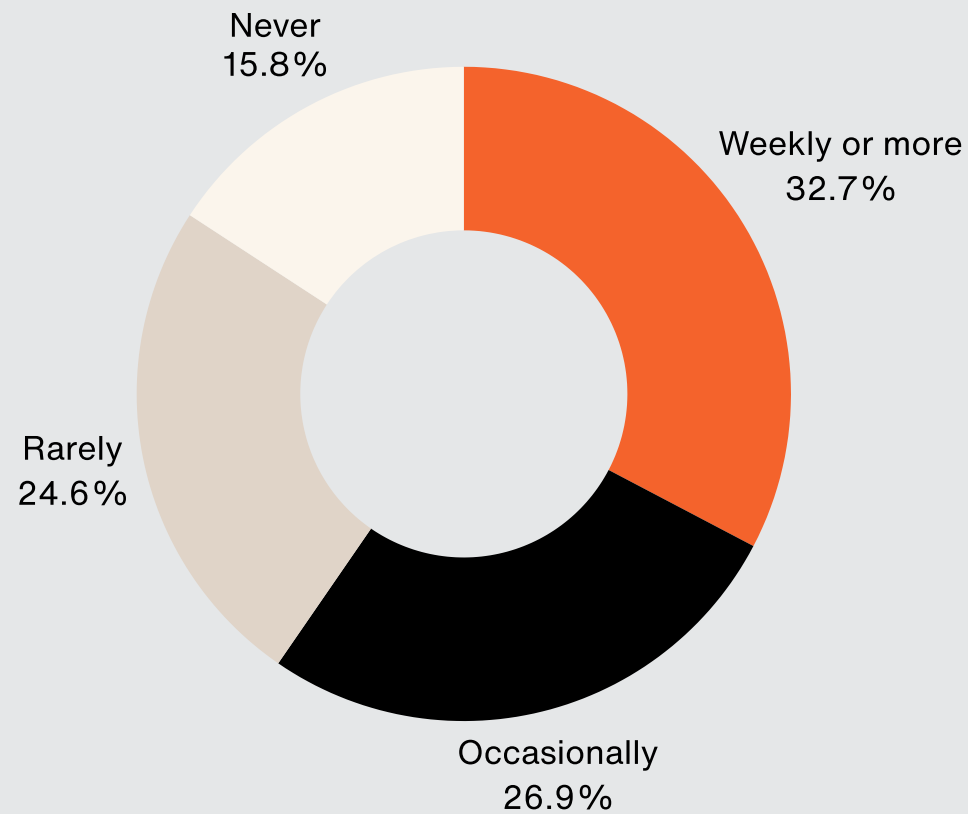
4. How often do you buy fashion items?
(% of total sample)



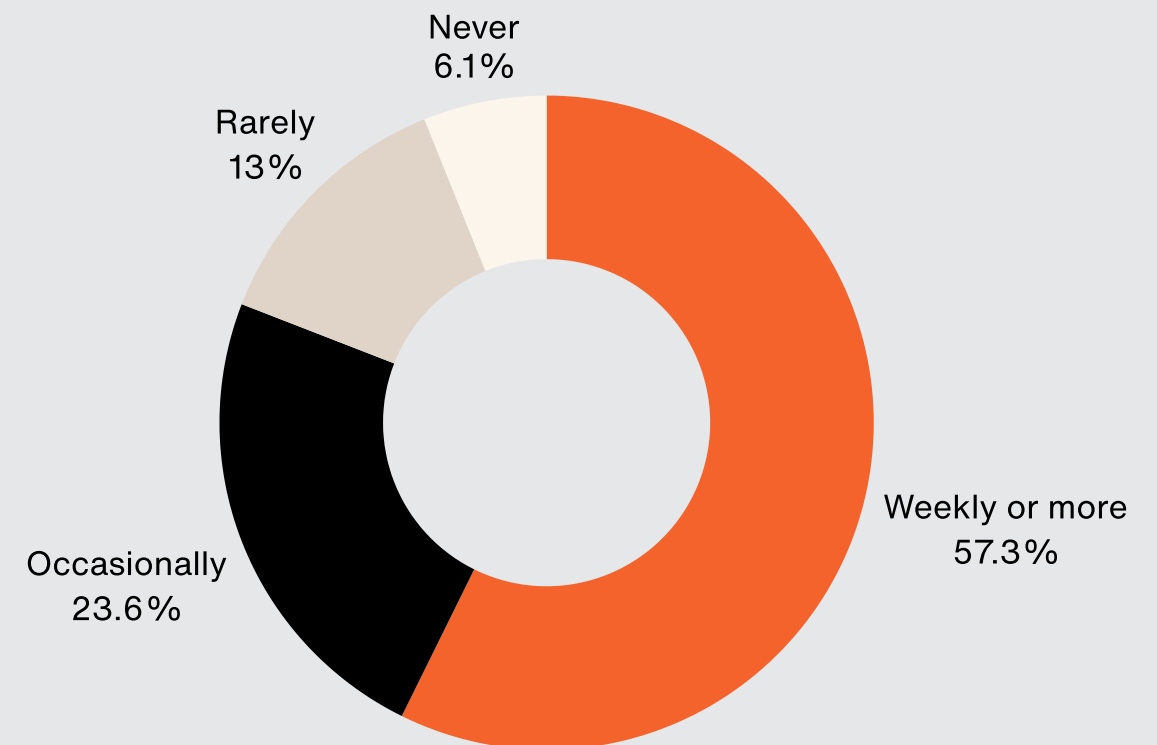
“Got nothing to wear” is widespread across all age groups (experienced by 84% of respondents) and reaches peak intensity among Gen Z (experienced by 94%).

11. How often do you feel like you have nothing to wear?
(% of total sample)

Base: full sample



Base: 18-24 age group

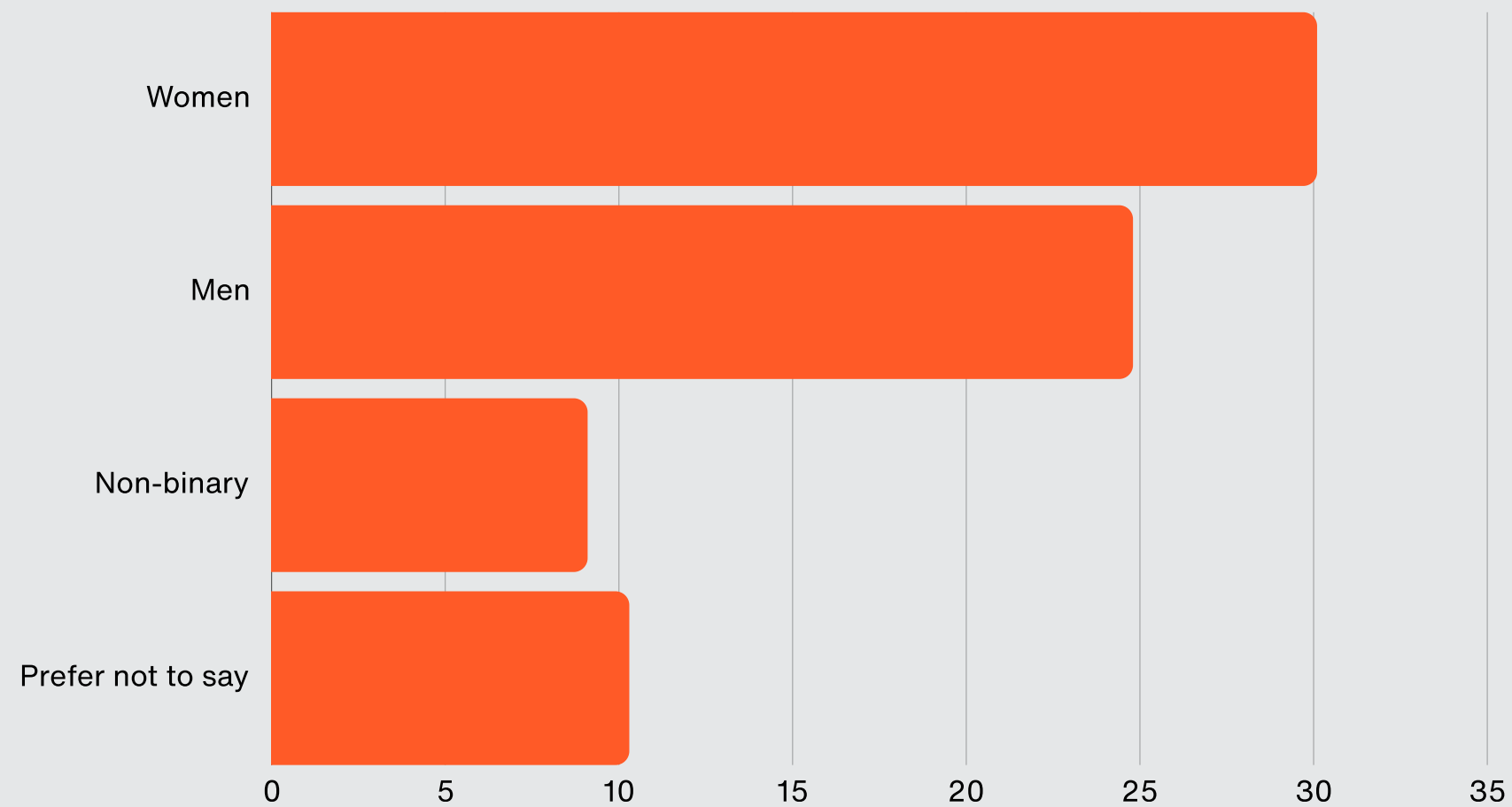


“Got nothing to wear” is almost universal. Across all age groups in our sample, more than 8 in 10 people report experiencing “nothing to wear” at least occasionally. Frequency declines steadily with age, but peaks sharply among 18–24-year-olds, where nearly 6 in 10 experience it weekly or more.

Women experience frequent 'got nothing to wear' ~21% more often than men.

Comparison between gender and % experiencing GNTW weekly or more

Base: full sample



Within this sample, women report experiencing “got nothing to wear” weekly or more at higher rates than men (30.1% vs. 24.8%), representing a ~21% relative difference and a +5.3 percentage point absolute difference.

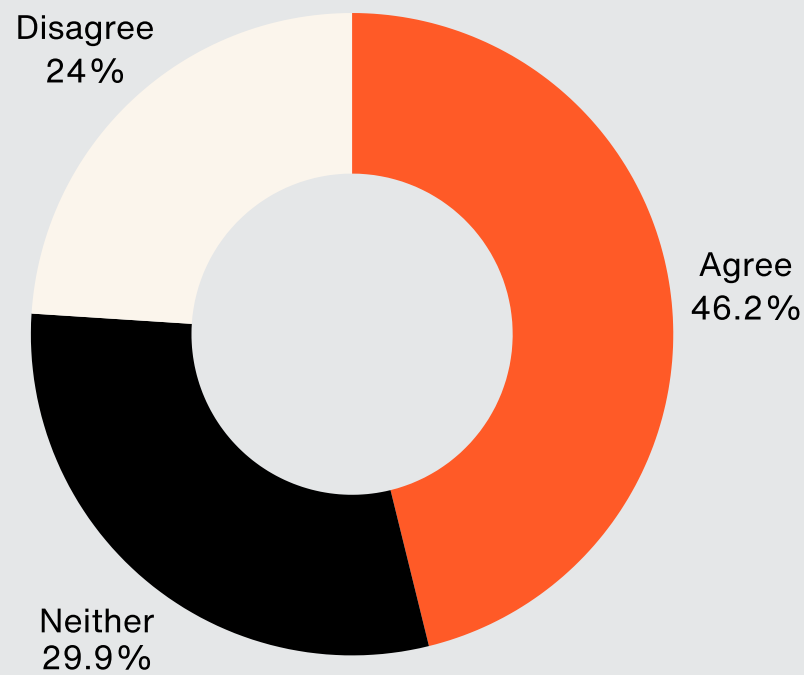
The proposed definition of 'got nothing to wear' resonates with 46% of total respondents and 61.6% of Gen Z.

9. Below is a definition for feeling like 'I've got nothing to wear'. Do you agree with it?

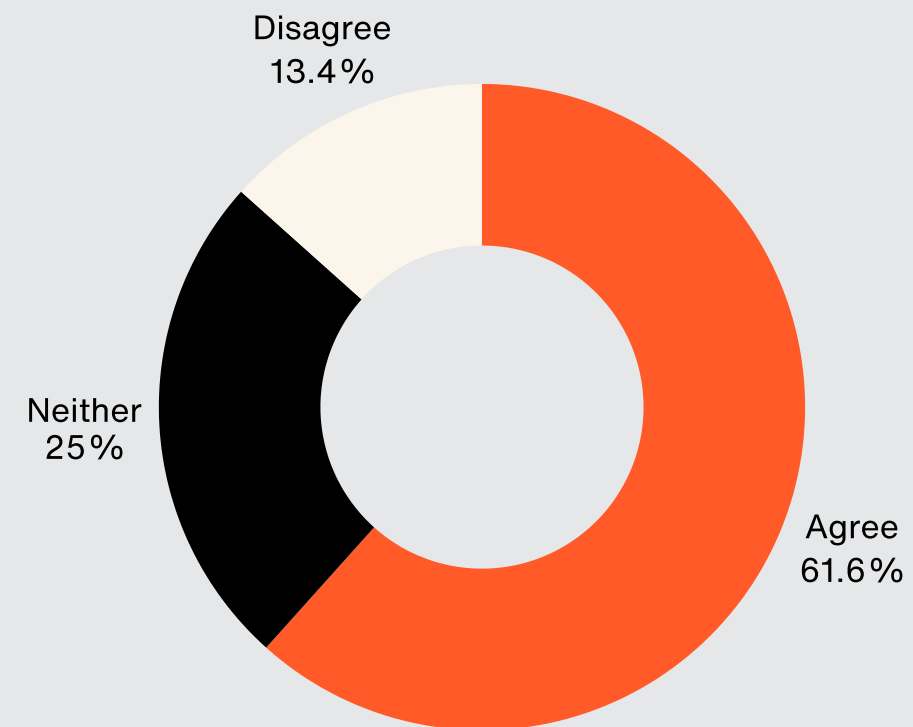
"You have clothes available, but none of them seem suitable, appealing, or aligned with how you want to present yourself that day."

(% of total sample)

Base: full sample



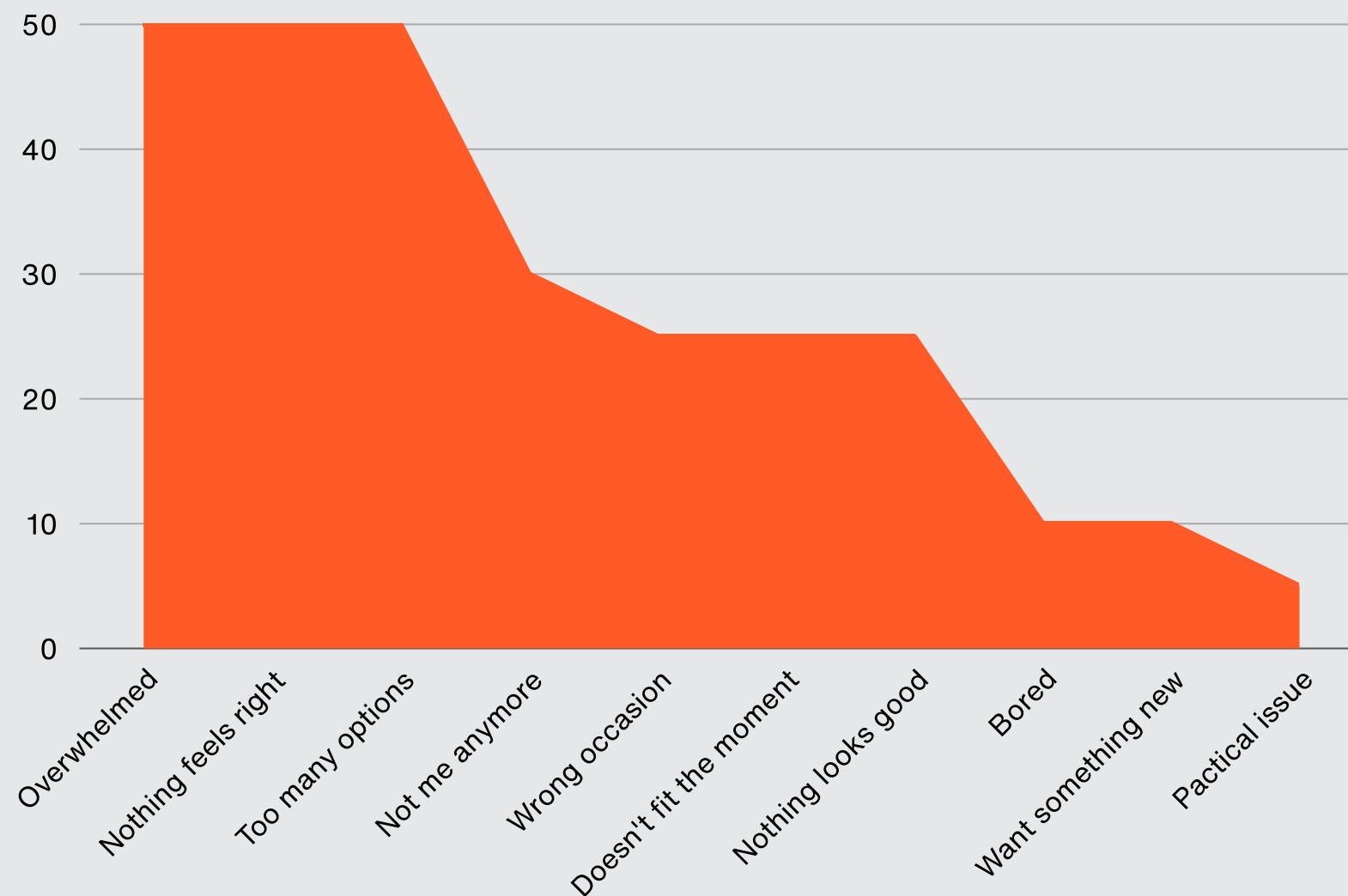
Base: 18-24 age group



18-24-year-olds are ~33% more likely (62% vs 46%) than the average respondent to agree with Vestiaire Collective's definition of 'nothing to wear.'

The open responses provided by those who do not agree with the definition indicate an opportunity to enrich it emotionally rather than revise it conceptually.

Alternative definitions and specific themes that emerge.



≈ 45-50%

Emotional overload, decision paralysis.
Keywords: overwhelmed, too many options, stuck, confused

≈ 30-35%

Identity mismatch, "not me anymore"
Keywords: not me, style changed, don't recognise myself, outdated, identity

≈ 25-30%

Contextual mismatch (occasion / moment)
Keywords: occasion, situation, moment, weather, event

≈ 20-25%

Body perception & confidence
Keywords: body, confidence, nothing looks good, weight.

≈ 15-20%

Desire for novelty, boredom
Keywords: bored, seen it before, want something new, tired of

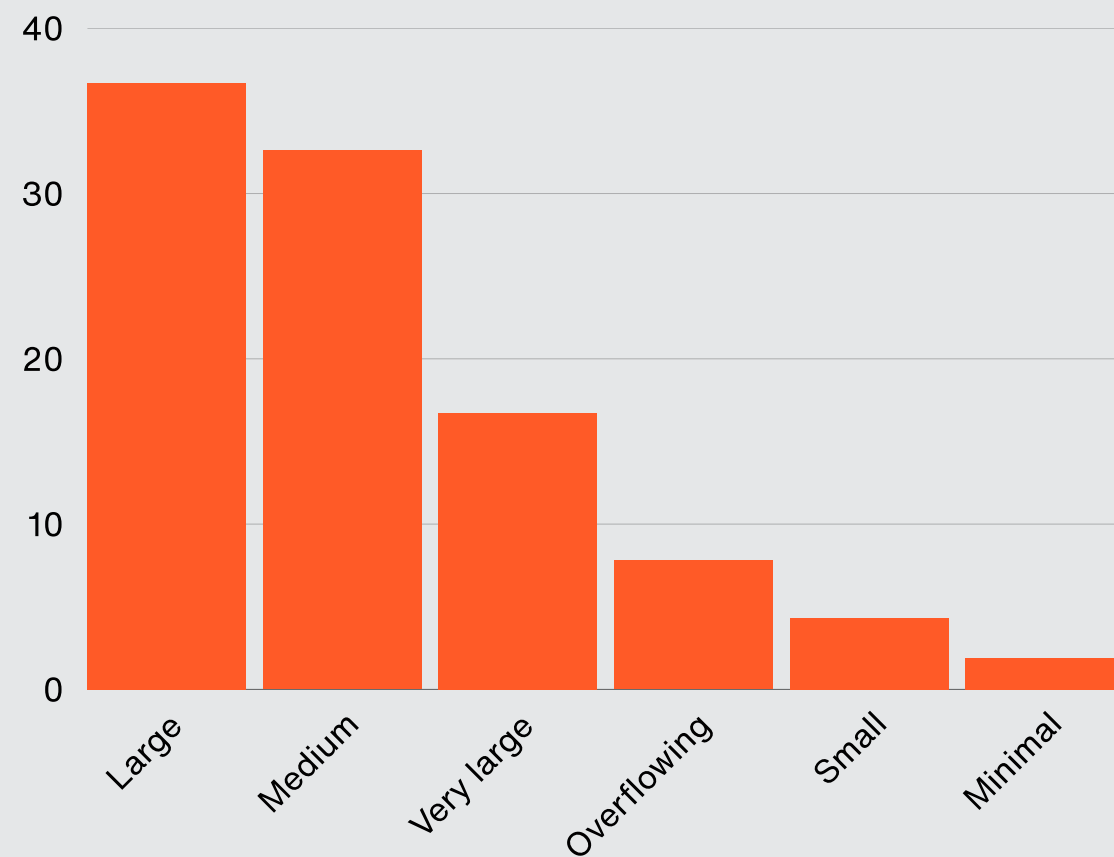
<10%

Practical, functional issues
Keywords: fit, damage, comfort, quality

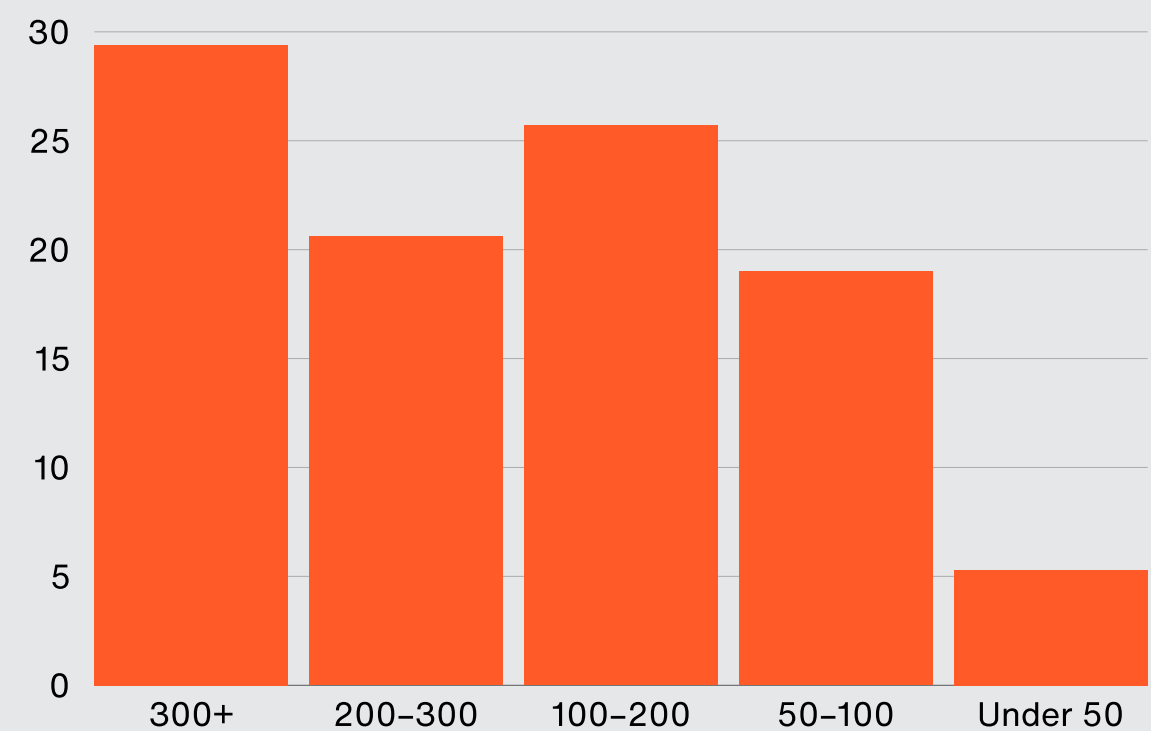
Methodological note: percentages represent the share of respondents whose open-ended response referenced a given theme at least once. Responses could include multiple themes; totals therefore exceed 100%. The analysis is based on thematic coding of open responses from participants who disagreed with the provided definition.

Wardrobes are full, yet ‘nothing to wear’ persists, suggesting that the issue may extend beyond simple material scarcity.

5. How would you describe the size of your wardrobe?
(% of total sample)



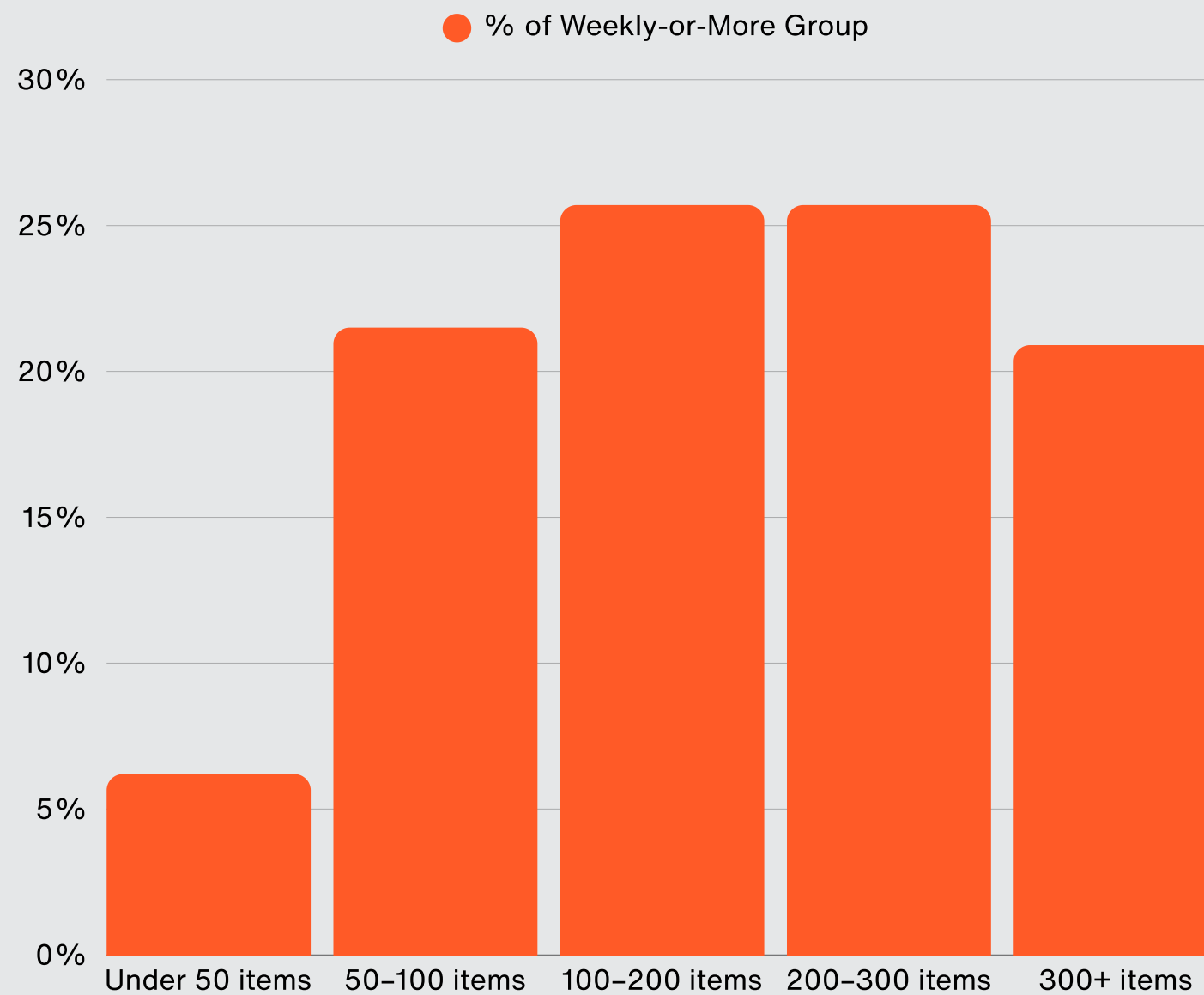
6. How many items do you have in your wardrobe?
(% of total sample)



36% of respondents describe their wardrobe as “large,” while a further 32% consider it “medium.” When translated into item counts, this perception is substantiated: 29% of total respondents report owning more than 300 items, and an additional 20% report owning between 200 and 300 items. In total, nearly half of the sample reports wardrobes exceeding 200 items.

Abundance doesn't protect against frustration, it often amplifies it.

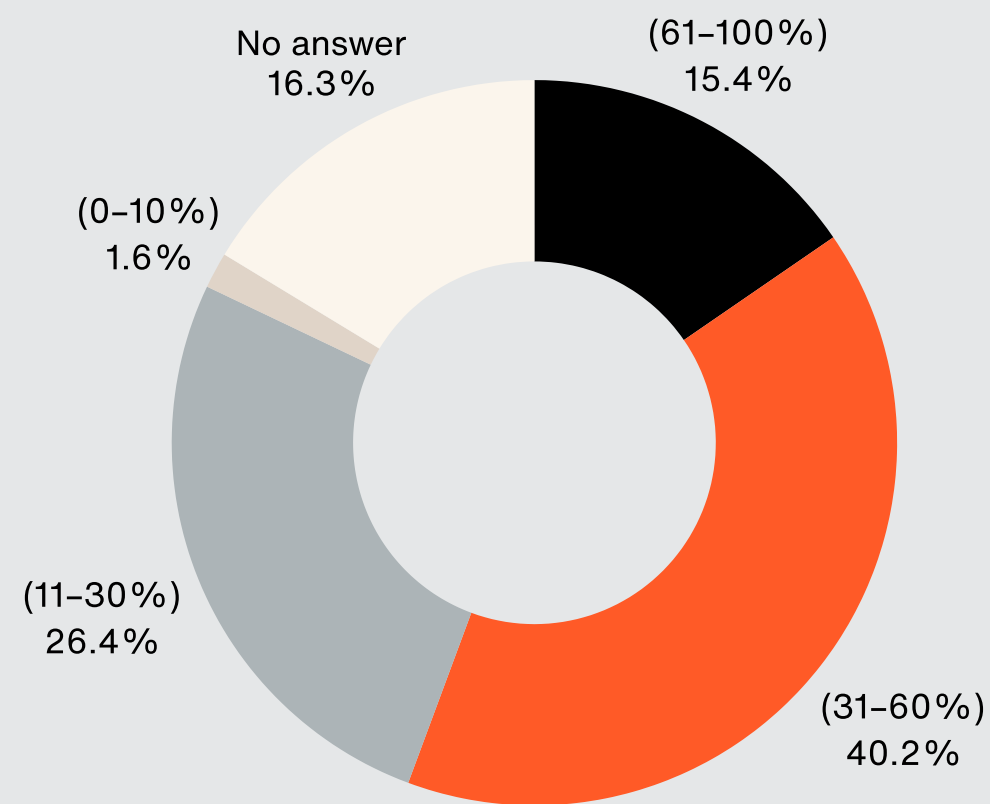
Correlation between wardrobe size and weekly or more GNTW episodes
Data (Base: Weekly-or-more GNTW respondents)



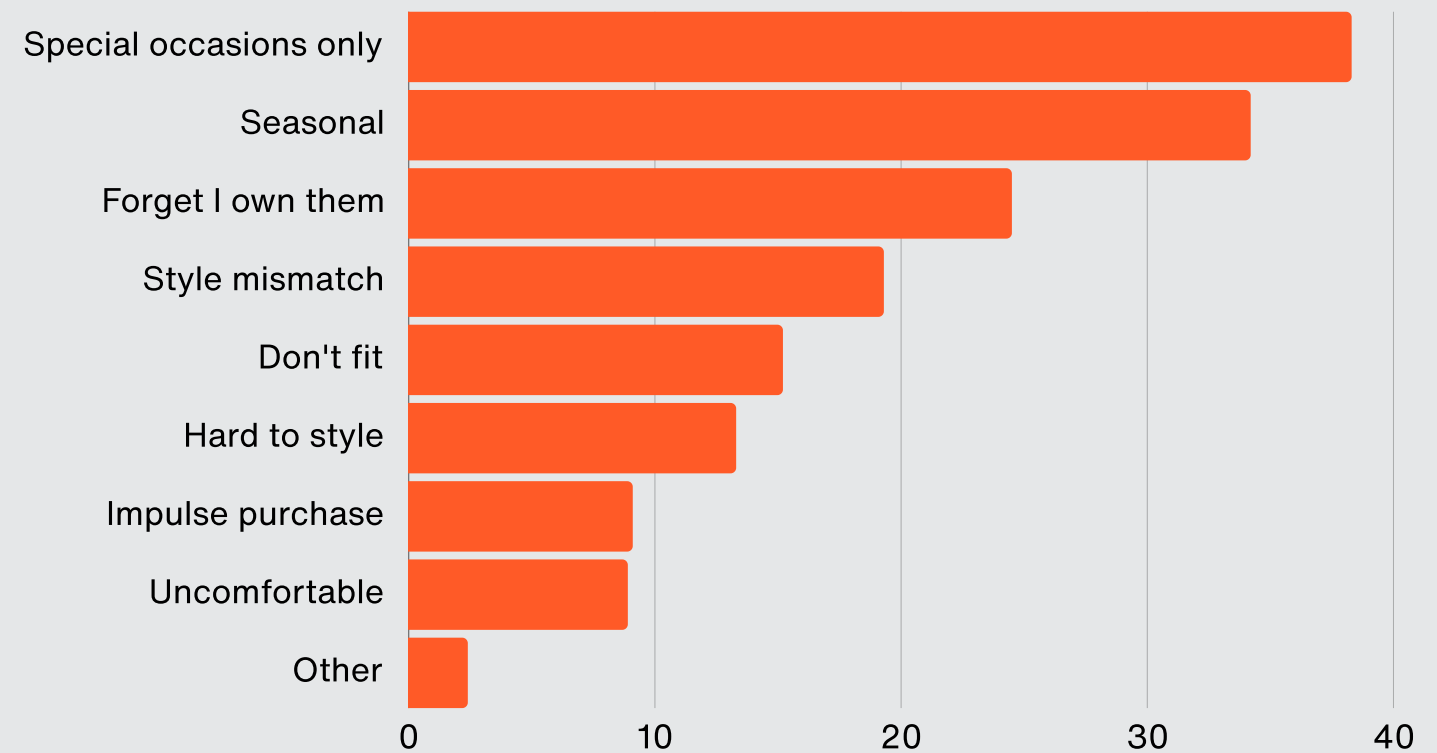
Among those who experience “got nothing to wear” weekly or more, nearly three quarters (72%) own more than 100 items, and almost half (47%) own more than 200.

We dress from habit: a few familiar pieces do all the work, while many others are forgotten altogether.

7. How much of your wardrobe do you feel you actually wear?
(% of total sample)



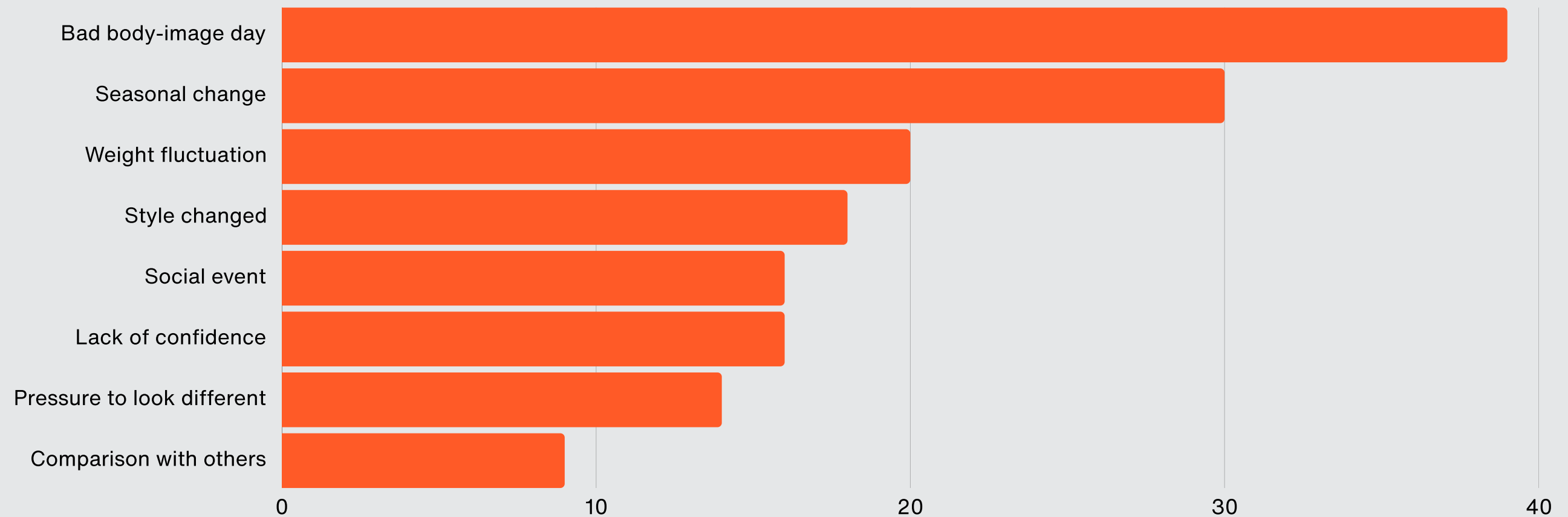
8. Why do you rarely wear certain items in your wardrobe?
(% of total sample)



Only 15% of people say they wear most of what they own, while a quarter admit they forget certain items exist at all.

‘Got nothing to wear’ doesn’t start in the wardrobe. It starts in the mirror. For most people, the trigger isn’t missing clothes, it’s a bad body-image day.

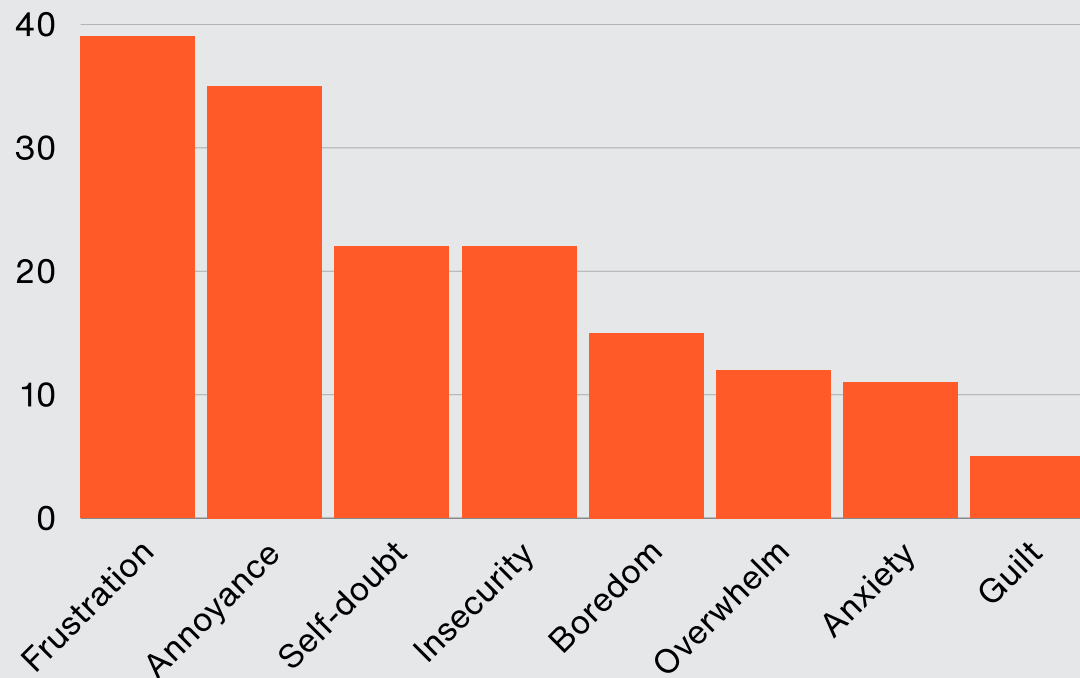
12. What usually triggers this feeling?
(% of total sample)



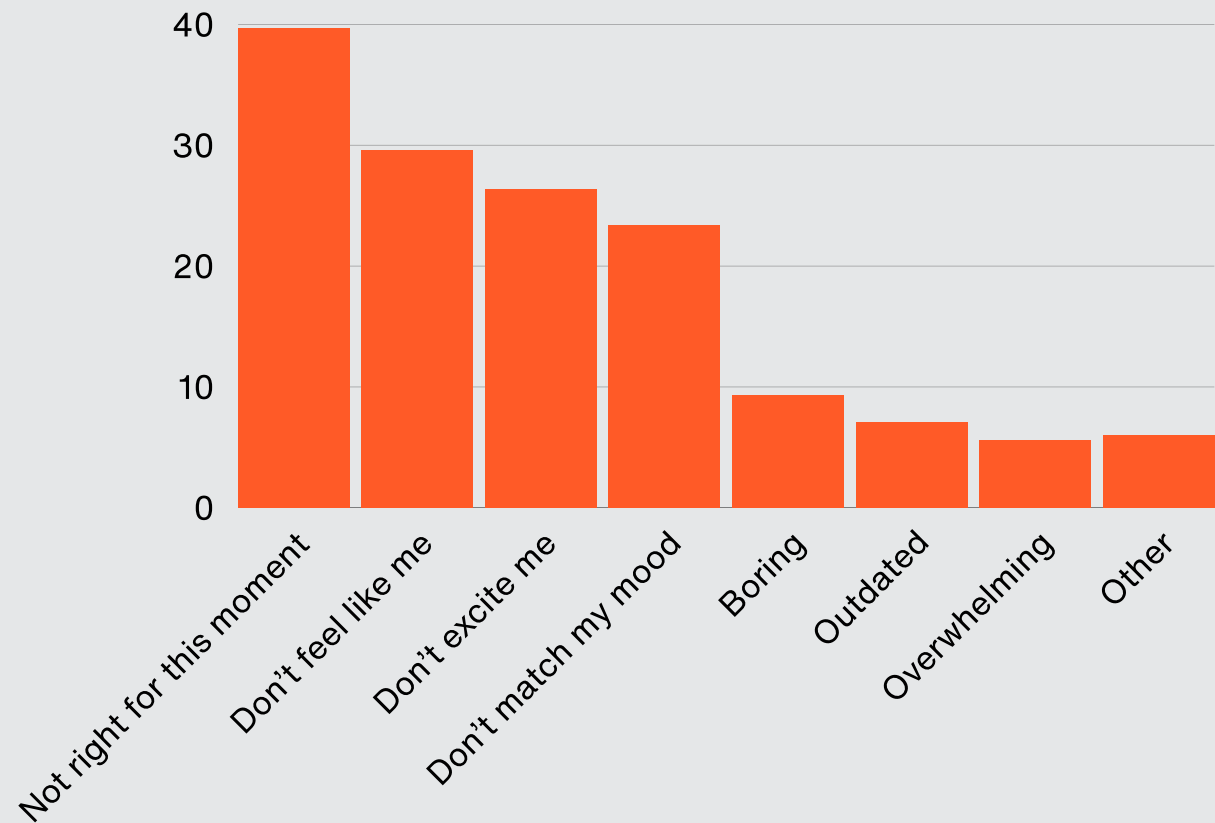
Almost 7 in 10 people say this feeling is driven purely by emotions and identity, not by practical gaps. Seasonal shifts, social plans, and comparison with others can amplify it, but the root is internal. ‘Nothing to wear’ is rarely about what’s hanging in the wardrobe. It’s about how we feel about ourselves in that moment.

In 'got nothing to wear' moments, emotions peak around frustration and self-doubt. Clothes fail to reflect who we are in the present moment, they feel misaligned, uninspiring, and disconnected from our identity.

13. What emotions best describe that moment to you?
(% of total sample)



14. How would you best describe the items you own?
(% of total sample)

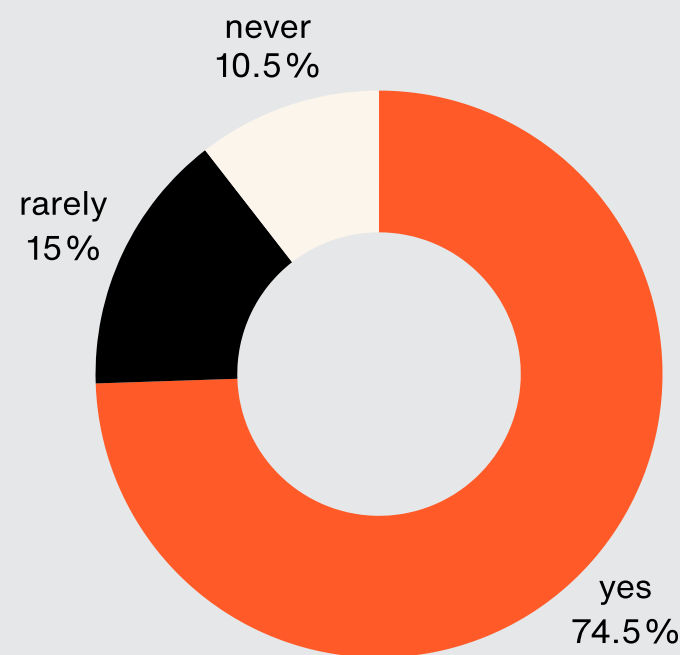


In GNTW moments, emotions peak around frustration and self-doubt (39% and 22%), while perceptions of clothing mirror the same tension: nearly 40% say their clothes feel 'not right for this moment' and almost 30% say they 'don't feel like me today.' Together, this shows that the frustration is not about what people own, but about how their wardrobe fails to reflect their identity in the moment.

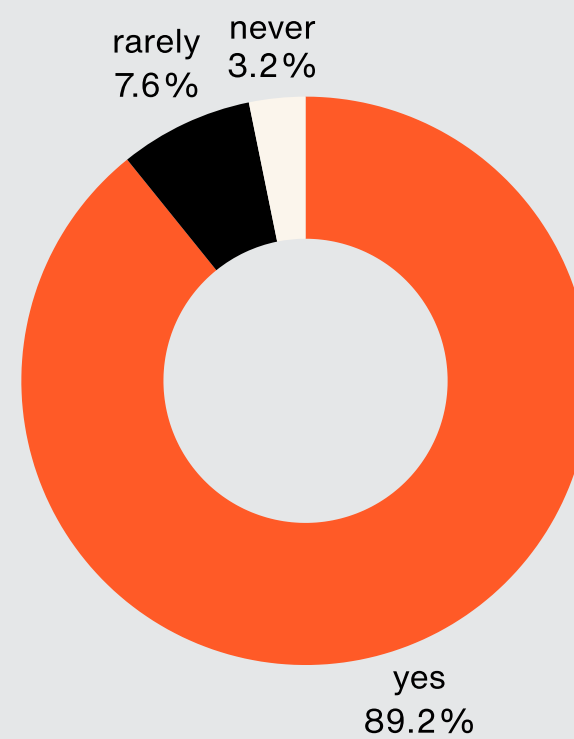
‘Got nothing to wear’ moments fuel over-consumption. 89% of frequent GNTW respondents report that the feeling has led them to purchase at least once.

15. Does it ever lead you to buy something new?
(% of total sample)

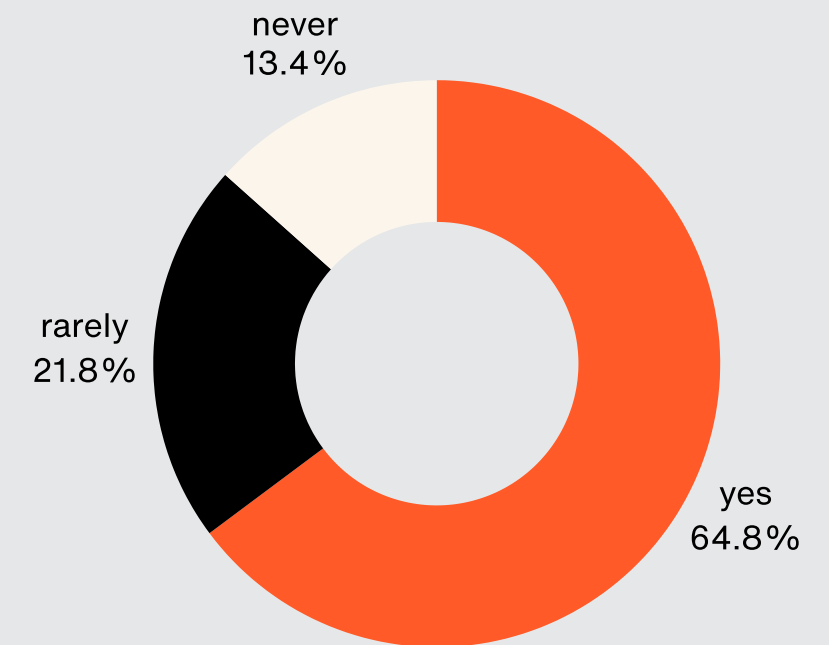
Base: full sample



Base: Weekly-or-more GNTW group



Base: rarely or never GNTW group



Buying becomes significantly less likely among those who rarely feel the frustration.

Buying “better” doesn’t mean buying intentionally. Even higher-quality or pre-planned purchases are a reactions to emotional discomfort.

16. If yes, what do you usually buy in response?
(% of total sample)

Base: full sample



Base: Weekly-or-more GNTW group

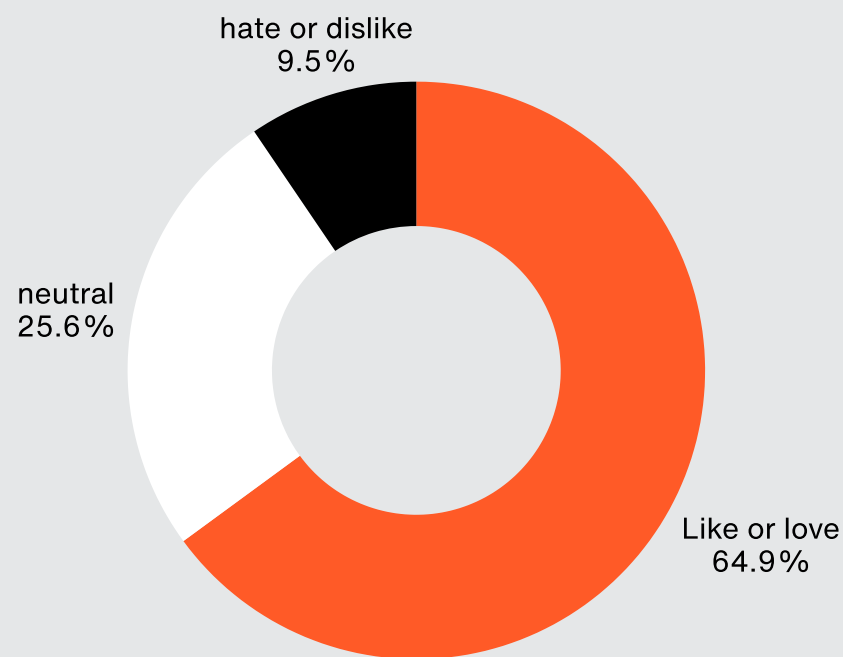


Even ‘good’ purchases are often reactive. While around 1 in 4 people say they buy higher-quality or pre-considered items in response to GNTW, buying “better” is still a corrective response to emotional discomfort, not a sign of long-term wardrobe clarity, actual need or satisfaction.

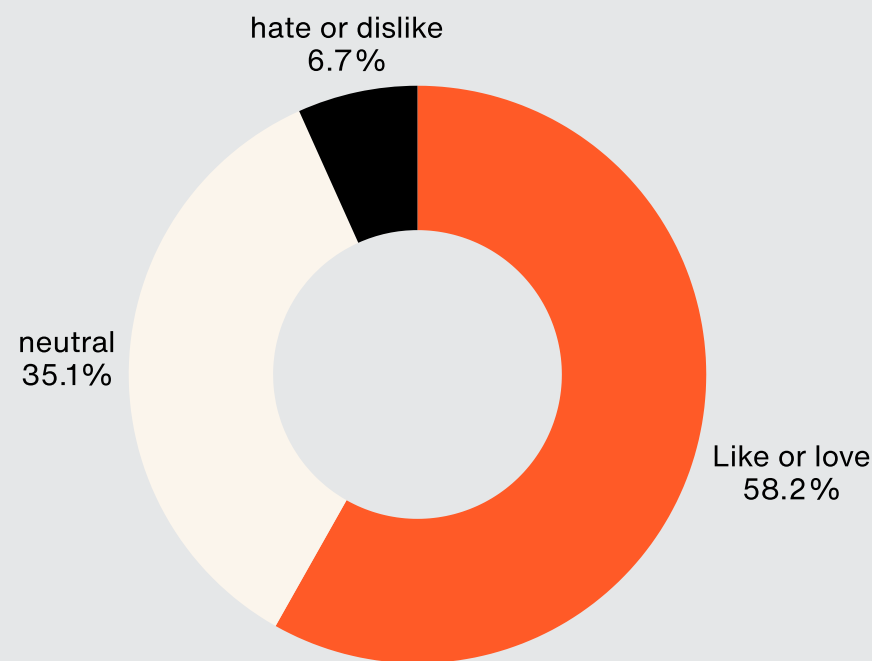
As the frequency of 'got nothing to wear' increases, emotional attachment collapses. While most people say they like their wardrobe, frequent 'nothing to wear' moments are associated with greater wardrobe dissatisfaction.

17. How in love are you with your wardrobe?
(% of total sample)

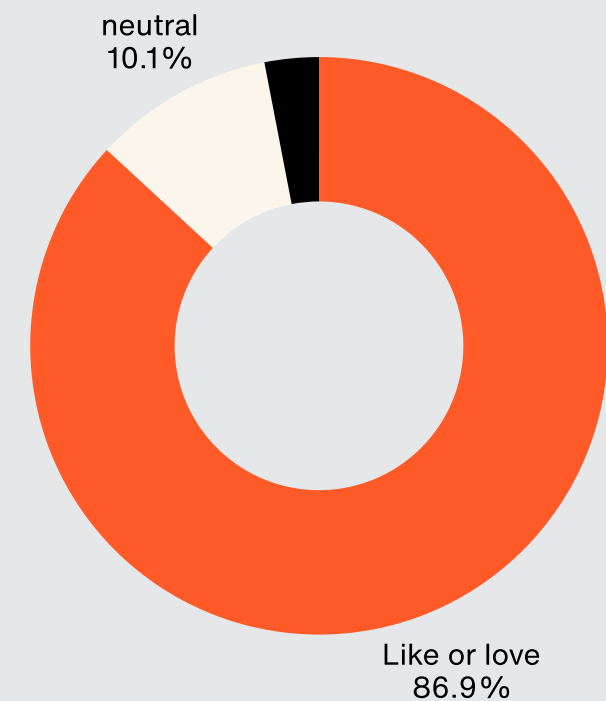
Base: full sample



Base: Weekly-or-more GNTW group



Base: rarely or never GNTW group

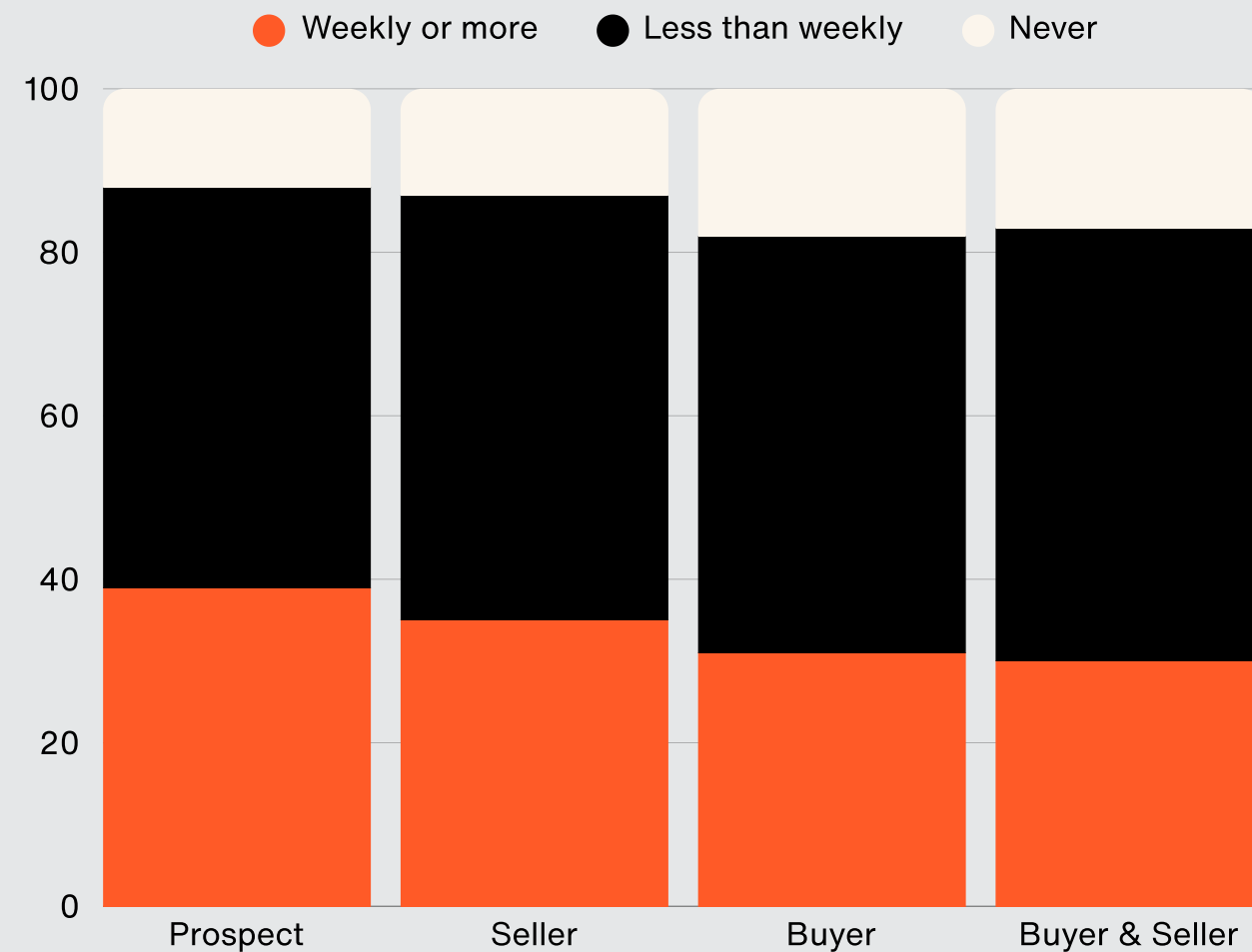


Across the full sample, nearly 2 in 3 respondents say they like or love their wardrobe, but this average masks a sharp emotional divide. Among those who experience GNTW weekly or more, only 58.2% report liking or loving their wardrobe, while emotional neutrality and detachment rise sharply (35.4% neutral). By contrast, among those who rarely or never experience GNTW, 86.9% say they like or love what they own, making them around 50% more likely to feel positively connected to their wardrobe.

Engagement* with Vestiaire Collective is associated with lower reported frequency of “got nothing to wear” (GNTW) within this sample.

Percentage experiencing GNTW per Vestiaire Collective Status

Base: full sample



Weekly-or-more GNTW decreases from 39% among prospects to 31% among buyers (an 8 percentage point difference, ~21% lower relative to prospects). At the same time, the proportion who never experience GNTW increases from 12% to 18% (a 6 percentage point difference, ~50% relative increase). These results describe correlation rather than causation but suggest a meaningful behavioural divergence across engagement levels.

*engagement is defined as buying or selling vs. prospects (non-transacting). Findings reflect differences within the Vestiaire Collective ecosystem and should not be generalised to the broader population.

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a red, ruffled, short-sleeved dress, stands in a cluttered closet. She is looking towards the camera. The closet is filled with various items on shelves, including shoes, bags, and boxes. A red bag is visible on the left. The floor is made of light-colored wood with a herringbone pattern. The background shows a doorway leading to another room.

Phase 2: Wardrobe Audits

About the Audits

To contextualise the survey responses and bring the findings into a lived, real-world context, we conducted 10 in-home wardrobe audits in Rome with participants recruited directly from the survey sample. Each audit lasted approximately 1 hour and was designed as a conversational exercise, combining fast, instinctive prompts with reflective discussion.

The methodology was intentionally built to explore the survey’s central mechanism: that “got nothing to wear” is most often a perception and identity gap rather than a true shortage of clothing. In particular, the audits allowed us to observe how much participants underestimated what they owned within a selected category (e.g. trousers, jackets, shoes), directly investigating the mismatch between felt scarcity and actual abundance.

The audits followed a consistent narrative arc. They began with a short warm-up using “fire questions” to lock in participants’ initial emotional state and assumptions before interacting with their wardrobe. This was followed by a reconstruction of a real “nothing to wear” moment, anchoring the session in lived experience. Participants were then asked to identify rarely worn items, enabling us to quantify usage patterns and classify reasons for

non-use as emotional or physical obsolescence. The sessions also included a resale-relevant scan to identify garments with potential circular value and to explore the emotional and practical barriers preventing circulation. Selected items were photographed on-site and shared with the Vestiaire Collective team for financial evaluation, allowing us to estimate their potential resale value within the platform ecosystem.

Finally, the audits closed with a perception-reality reveal, where initial assumptions were compared against actual counts, and a reflection moment to capture emotional shifts and learning.

Together, these audits allowed us to observe how the quantitative survey findings manifest in everyday life, generating direct quotes and behavioural insights that clarify not only what people feel about their wardrobes, but how and why those feelings shape their decisions.



Executive Summary

Across the audits, participants consistently underestimated the quantity of items they owned within a selected category. **On average, participants underestimated what they owned by around 15–20%, with several extreme cases showing gaps of over 100%. When all audits are considered, the average perception–reality gap rises to approximately 45–50%, revealing how dramatically people can misjudge their own wardrobes.** These figures are illustrative and based on the 10 Rome-based audits; they are not intended to be statistically representative.

Emotionally, the audits revealed a clear before-and-after shift. Initial “emotional snapshots” frequently described wardrobes as full but uninspiring, messy, pale, or overwhelming. By the end of the audit, these perceptions often changed: 7 out of 10 participants reported appreciating the value of their wardrobe more than at the start, describing it as better understood. The act of slowing down, being more present, and reconnecting with forgotten items proved to be emotionally restorative in itself. One striking and near-universal moment emerged during the audits: with only one exception, every participant verbalised some version of “*I forgot I had this*” or “*oh, that’s where that was.*” Items were forgotten because

they had not been worn in a long time or were buried in dense wardrobes. This reinforces the idea that disengagement, not absence, drives the GNTW feeling.

When analysing rarely worn items, emotional obsolescence dominated physical obsolescence. Most garments were in good condition and fit correctly; they were rejected because they no longer felt like the wearer, belonged to a past life phase, felt too visible or exposing. Seasonal transitions emerged as a major trigger for GNTW, often activating feelings of misalignment and perceived “gaps” even when suitable items already existed.

Barriers to circulation followed clear and recurring patterns. Participants held on to unworn clothes due to sentimental attachment, sunk cost, guilt, or the hope of future reconnection “*maybe one day I’ll wear it again.*” Designer and heritage pieces were especially difficult to let go of, often perceived as too valuable to sell “*at a loss,*” even when unused.

At the same time, many wardrobes contained significant untapped resale potential, with an estimated average value of **€890***, highlighting a substantial opportunity for re-circulation.

Finally, the audits highlighted an important emotional paradox: while GNTW moments are characterised by frustration, self-doubt, and dissatisfaction, reconnecting with one’s wardrobe — even briefly — often appeared to restore appreciation, agency, and care. The audits did not aim to prove the broader survey findings, but rather to illustrate and contextualise how they can manifest in lived experience. They suggest that increased awareness and reframing may meaningfully shift how people feel about what they own. Together, these qualitative insights help explain the campaign’s core message: wardrobes are not empty — they are emotionally disconnected. The audits provide human evidence that “got nothing to wear” can reflect an addressable emotional and behavioural cycle. Within this context, Vestiaire Collective may play a role in supporting people to rediscover value, reduce friction, and re-engage more consciously with their wardrobes.

*Valuations were estimated by the Vestiaire Collective team based on photographed items and current platform pricing logic.

Key Quotes

“I honestly thought I owned 15 dresses. When we counted them... there were 33.”

“I look at myself in the mirror and I don’t like what I see, so nothing I try on feels right. Somedays are just like that.”

“I genuinely forgot I owned this. Seeing it again feels like finding something I’d lost.”

“It’s like being at a restaurant with a massive menu, you don’t know where to start. But when there are just a few good dishes, everything becomes clearer, including how you feel.”

“I always end up wearing the same things, the outfits I know won’t make me feel bad. They make me feel safe, but never really satisfied. I’d love to dress differently, but I don’t feel confident enough to do it.”

“Everytime the season changes, I panic. I open my wardrobe and feel like I need to start from scratch, like nothing works anymore. It makes me want to buy everything again, even though I know I already have so much.”

“I have this dress that I think is beautiful. I absolutely love it. But when I wear it, I feel self-conscious, like everyone is looking at me. So I keep it, admire it, but never actually put it on.”

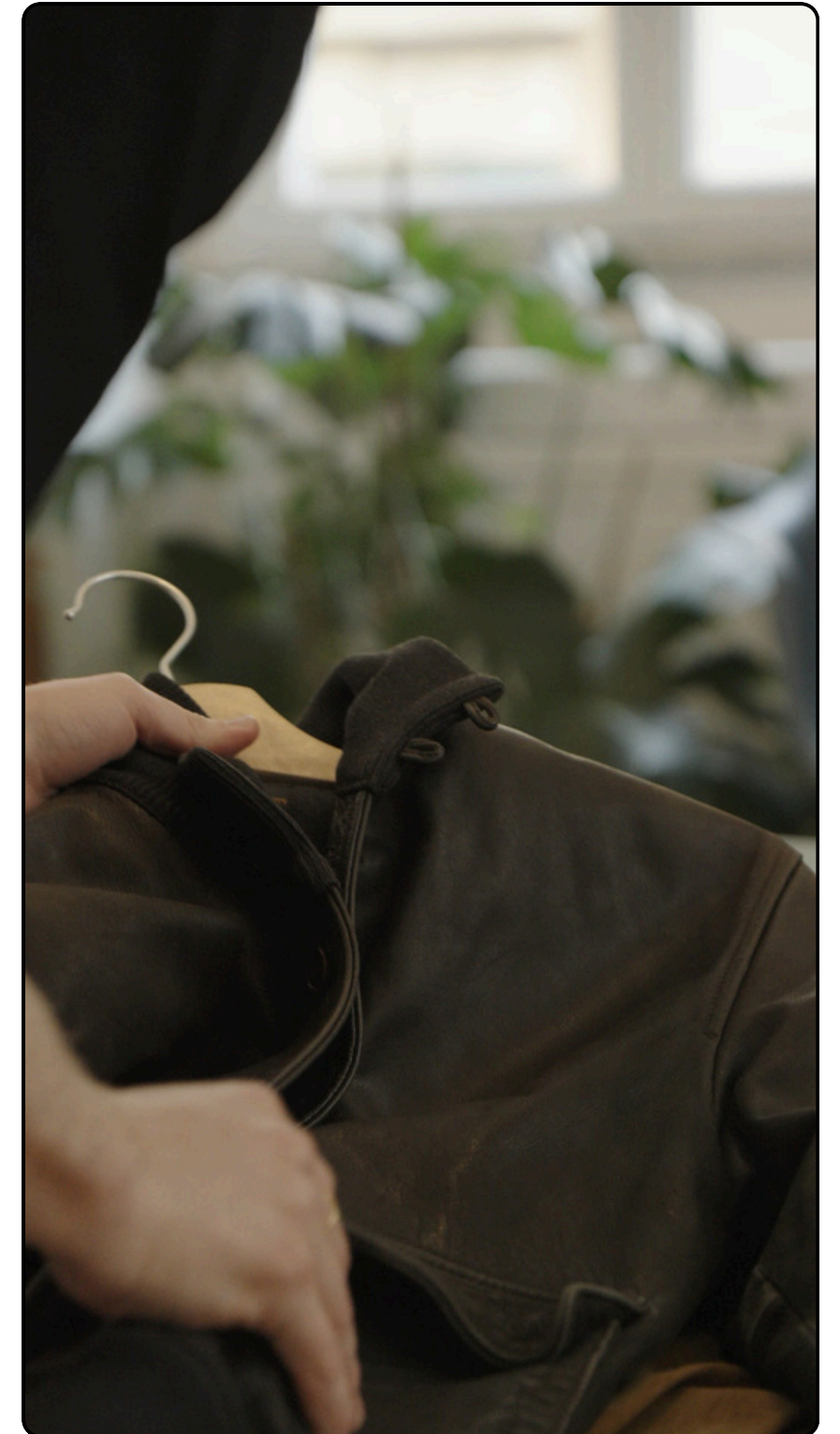
Key Quotes

“These clothes belong to versions of me I don’t feel like anymore. I don’t throw them away because they’re still ‘good’, but I don’t reach for them because they don’t represent me now.”

“When I feel like I have nothing to wear, I immediately think buying something new will fix it. It’s not that I need more clothes... I just want the feeling to go away.”

“Seeing everything laid out like this makes me realise I don’t actually have a wardrobe problem.”

“I keep things thinking maybe one day I’ll feel like wearing them again. They become emotional safety nets. Even if I don’t wear them, letting them go feels harder than keeping them.”



‘Got nothing to wear’ reconstruction

Participant 1: seller

She experiences “got nothing to wear” most frequently when getting dressed for work. Her weekday wardrobe feels repetitive and constrained, driven by comfort, habit, and fear of damaging clothes she values. She rotates the same “safe” outfits, neutral colours and familiar silhouettes, because they make her feel secure, even though they leave her bored and dissatisfied. **“I end up wearing the same things because I know they work and I feel safe in them.”**

The frustration is about self-perception. On certain days, she doesn’t feel confident in her body and believes she **“doesn’t look good in anything,”** which pushes her toward outfits she already trusts. Clothes she loved and wore frequently in the past now feel wrong, even though nothing has physically changed. **“There are things I used to wear all the time because I felt confident in them. Now I just can’t see myself in them anymore.”**

Without the constraints of work, she experiments more and reconnects with statement pieces linked to pleasure and identity. However, during the week, GNTW often leads to browsing and buying new items as a way to relieve frustration, even if the purchase doesn’t fully resolve the feeling.

Participant 2: seller

For her, “got nothing to wear” is an emotionally intense experience that mostly happens on weekends, when she wants to dress more like herself. She usually starts with a clear outfit idea, but once she tries it on, it never matches how she imagined it would look. This quickly escalates into frustration, physical mess, and emotional overwhelm.

“I imagine an outfit, I try it on, and it never looks like I thought it would.” She repeatedly changes clothes, becomes self-conscious, and worries about how others might perceive her. Eventually, she returns to a simple, familiar outfit, jeans and a basic top, not because she loves it, but because it feels emotionally safe. **“It’s the outfit I know won’t make me feel uncomfortable.”**

In the past, this frustration often led to buying new clothes as a form of reassurance, something new that felt promising in the moment. Over time, she became aware of how compulsive this cycle was and deliberately stopped buying as a reaction to discomfort. **“It was scary how much I was buying just to calm that frustration.”**

Her GNTW moments are deeply tied to body image, fear of judgement, and identity shifts. Many clothes remain unworn not because she dislikes them, but because she feels exposed or embarrassed wearing them.

Participant: buyer

Her “got nothing to wear” moments emerge during periods of stress, emotional pressure, or low self-confidence. They intensified during personal changes, including weight fluctuation, when she struggled to recognise herself in the mirror.

“It happens when I don’t feel confident, emotionally or physically.” She tries on multiple outfits in the morning, rejecting each one until she settles on the option that feels **“least wrong.”** The process leaves her drained and unsatisfied, even though she still manages to get dressed and leave the house. **“I put on the thing that bothers me the least.”**

Unlike others, she does not usually buy new clothes in response to GNTW. She associates shopping with positive emotional states and avoids purchasing when she feels low. Instead, she tends to repeat the same items for long periods, then abruptly stops wearing them when they no longer feel aligned, only to return to them months or years later. **“My relationship with clothes is cyclical. I fall in and out of love.”** For her, GNTW is clearly mental rather than material. **“I always think I have nothing to wear, but I actually have so many things.”**

‘Got nothing to wear’ reconstruction

Participant 4: seller

Her “got nothing to wear” moments emerge around transitions: changes of season and moments when she wants to look different from her everyday self. During the workweek, dressing feels automatic. She rotates the same few familiar items and gets dressed quickly, almost on autopilot. The problem surfaces when she wants to step outside that routine for an evening out, a social moment, or any occasion that calls for change.

“I end up wearing the same four things I wore yesterday. And I think: what’s the point of changing, then?” She describes a mix of frustration and boredom: the desire to look different collides with the comfort of pieces she knows “work.” When she tries to force a new look, she often doesn’t feel at ease, so she retreats back to her safe options. The result is rarely satisfying. **“I try to change, but I always come back to what feels safe.”** These moments frequently trigger shopping thoughts. Especially during seasonal changes, she feels something is missing — a cardigan, a sweater, a specific colour even if she already owns similar items. **“I create needs for myself,”** she admits.

For her, GNTW is not about lacking clothes. It is about being stuck between wanting change and fearing discomfort.

Participant 5: prospect

His “got nothing to wear” moments start with anticipation. He imagines an outfit in his head before opening the wardrobe. The frustration begins when reality doesn’t match that mental picture. **“I open the wardrobe and just stare at it, hoping an answer appears.”**

Often, the issue is physical change or self-perception. Clothes that once felt right no longer do, and items he used to wear confidently now feel wrong on his body. As a result, he gravitates toward comfort pieces, wearing the same few items repeatedly for weeks at a time. **“They become my default. Then one day, they stop working too.”** When dressing for situations outside his daily routine the feeling intensifies. He wants to wear something different but can’t find anything that feels right, so he falls back on familiar choices. **“You want to change, but you don’t. You end up wearing the same thing anyway.”** These moments sometimes lead to thoughts of buying something new, but they are accompanied by a growing sense of overwhelm. **“There’s so much stuff, I don’t even know what it all is anymore.”** Rather than excitement, abundance creates confusion.

Participant 6: buyer

Her “got nothing to wear” moments are driven by mental fatigue rather than scarcity. They typically appear during the week, when she realises she has already worn her go-to outfits and struggles to imagine new combinations. **“I’ve already worn everything I feel comfortable in.”**

The feeling intensifies on days when body perception shifts. Clothes still fit, but no longer feel right. **“In my head, my body is not right for how that outfit should look like.”** The rejection happens before the clothes are even tried on. She usually resolves the moment by returning to safe, familiar outfits, pieces she knows work and won’t make her feel exposed. About 80% of the time, she chooses security over experimentation. While this frustration sometimes leads her to buy something new, the underlying need is not for more clothes, but for new ways to see and combine what she already owns. For her, “nothing to wear” is a styling and creative block, not a lack of garments.

‘Got nothing to wear’ reconstruction

Participant 7: seller

Her “got nothing to wear” moments surface mainly in the evenings and on weekends, when she wants to step outside her everyday routine. Despite owning a large, carefully curated wardrobe, she often feels dissatisfied and self-conscious when choosing what to wear. **“I know I have nice things, but I never feel in the mood to wear what I own.”**

Her frustration is closely tied to body perception and changing life phases. After years of smart working, and two pregnancies, her wardrobe has evolved, but not fully caught up emotionally. She tends to fall back on a small set of “safe” items that guarantee comfort, even if they leave her feeling underwhelmed. **“I leave the house thinking I could have done more.”**

She struggles to let go of clothes she no longer wears. Many items are kept as emotional anchors tied to past identities, memories, or a hoped-for future version of herself. **“Letting go of clothes feels like letting go of a part of who I was.”**

For her, “nothing to wear” is not about lack or disorder, but about emotional overload and misalignment.

Participant 8: buyer

Her “got nothing to wear” moments emerge primarily in social or emotionally charged contexts, rather than everyday routines. Dressing for work feels manageable and largely procedural: she relies on interchangeable pieces and established “uniforms” that allow her to get dressed quickly, even under time pressure. **“For the office, I always find a solution,”** she explains. The anxiety escalates instead when she has to dress for social occasions, unfamiliar environments, or changing conditions, dinners with new people, evenings out with friends, or situations where weather, transport, and social expectations collide. Overall however, she has a very considered wardrobe she genuinely loves and never gets overwhelmed by the feeling of having nothing wear.

Participant 9: buyer

His “nothing to wear” moments emerge primarily during everyday situations, especially when dressing for university or routine activities. The frustration does not stem from a lack of clothes, but from a sense of visual and identity misalignment when he looks at himself in the mirror. **“I feel like I’m always dressed the same,”** even though he owns many alternatives. When the feeling strikes, he pulls out multiple items, often rejecting them immediately. Some pieces are dismissed because they don’t fit how he wants to look that day; others because they feel too formal, too distinctive, or inappropriate for the context. **“I like the idea of wearing them, but then I try them on and don’t feel them.”** This leads him to default to the same familiar outfits that feel safe and reliable.

New purchases often follow these moments, especially when he feels something is “missing” to complete an outfit, but many newly bought items also end up unworn for the same emotional reasons. Many of the clothes he doesn’t wear are in good condition and fit well. As he puts it, **“I think I have nothing to wear, but then I realise I actually have a lot – I just don’t feel them.”**

‘Got nothing to wear’ reconstruction

Participant 10: prospect

Her “got nothing to wear” moments tend to appear on ordinary days. The trigger is rarely practical. She opens her wardrobe knowing it is full, yet immediately feels dissatisfied. **“Nothing feels right,”** especially when she doesn’t feel confident in her body or is under time pressure. She tries on several items, rejecting them quickly. Some feel too much, others not enough; some no longer feel like her, even though she once loved them. The process becomes emotionally draining. To resolve the moment, she falls back on a reliable formula: neutral colours, simple silhouettes, and safe fits she knows work. Black trousers, a plain top, a coat she trusts. These pieces allow her to leave the house without feeling exposed, even if she remains slightly unsatisfied. To compensate, she often adds accessories, jewellery, a bag, or shoes, as a way to inject personality and feel more put together.

New purchases sometimes follow these moments, usually in the hope of finding a piece that will “fix” the feeling next time.





Appendix

Limitations

This study is based on self-reported survey data within the Vestiaire Collective ecosystem and 10 qualitative audits conducted in Rome. Findings describe correlations within this sample and should not be interpreted as causal or fully generalisable to the wider population.

Online Survey

Sample & Format

- Total respondents: 5,643
- Markets: Italy, France, Germany, United Kingdom, United States
- Respondent profiles: Buyers, Sellers, Buyers & Sellers, and Prospects (non-transacting members) within the Vestiaire Collective ecosystem
- Fieldwork method: Online self-completion survey

The sample includes respondents already familiar with Vestiaire Collective, allowing the research to explore behavioural differences between engaged and non-engaged users within a relevant fashion-aware population.

Wardrobe Audit

Sample & Format

- Number of audits: 10
- Location: Rome, Italy
- Participant selection: Recruited directly from survey respondents
- Duration: 60 minutes per audit
- Method: In-home, facilitated wardrobe walkthrough

The audits were designed to qualitatively validate the survey's central mechanism, observing in real time how perceived scarcity, emotional disconnection, and wardrobe abundance coexist.

Survey Questions

Unless otherwise stated, survey questions allowed multiple responses. Percentages may therefore exceed 100%.

Section 1: Demographic & Contextual Filters

Used to segment results and identify patterns across age, gender, and fashion behaviour.

1. How old are you?
2. What gender do you identify as?
3. Which brands do you buy most often?
4. How often do you buy fashion items?
5. How would you describe the size of your wardrobe?
6. How many items do you have in your wardrobe?
7. How much of your wardrobe do you feel you actually wear?
8. Why do you rarely wear certain items in your wardrobe?

Section 2: Defining the “Got Nothing to Wear” Feeling

Designed to test alignment with Vestiaire Collective’s working definition and capture alternative framings. Below is a definition for feeling like “I’ve got nothing to wear”. Do you agree with it?

1. “You have clothes available, but none of them seem suitable, appealing, or aligned with how you want to present yourself that day.”
2. If you strongly disagree, how in your own words do you define the feeling of having nothing to wear?

Section 3: Mapping Frequency & Triggers

Focused on how often the feeling occurs and what initiates it.

1. How often do you feel like you have nothing to wear?
2. What usually triggers this feeling?
3. What emotions best describe that moment to you?

Section 4: Emotional Obsolescence & Consequences

Exploring how emotional disconnection manifests and what actions follow.

1. In that moment, how would you best describe the items you own?
2. Does this feeling ever lead you to buy something new?
3. If yes, what do you usually buy in response?
4. How in love are you with your current wardrobe?

Section 5: Qualitative Follow-up Recruitment

1. Would you be open to participating in an in-person wardrobe audit with our team?

Respondents who opted in were later contacted for the qualitative phase.

Audit Structure

Each audit followed a consistent, time-structured flow designed to capture perception, reality, emotion, and behavioural implications.

**Part 1:
Warm-up & Fire Questions (0–5 minutes)**

Purpose: Lock in perception before engaging with the wardrobe.

- Fire Question 1 – Internal monologue.
“When I feel like I have nothing to wear, I usually think: _____.”
- Fire Question 2 – Perception vs reality.
“In my wardrobe, I think I have about ____ blazers / coats / dresses / jackets / shoes.”
- Fire Question 3 – Emotional snapshot.
“Right now, my wardrobe feels _____.”

**Part 2:
Reconstruction of a Real GNTW Moment (5–10 minutes)**

Purpose: Anchor the audit in lived experience and capture authentic narratives.

Core prompt:

“Think of the last time you felt ‘I’ve got nothing to wear’. Walk me through what happened.”

**Part 3:
Identification of Rarely Worn Items (10–20 minutes)**

Purpose: Make emotional obsolescence physically visible.

Participants were asked to pull out all items they do not wear frequently (defined as not worn in everyday life or at least once per month).

**Part 4:
Obsolescence Coding (20–35 minutes)**

Purpose: Distinguish emotional from physical reasons for non-use.

For each item (or group of items), participants were asked:

“Why don’t you wear this anymore?”

Responses were coded by the research team as:

- Physical obsolescence: fit, comfort, damage
- Emotional obsolescence: identity shift, mood, boredom, overwhelm, contextual mismatch

**Part 5:
Resale Potential & Barriers to Circulation (35–45 minutes)**

Purpose: Link emotional obsolescence to circular opportunity.

Each emotionally obsolete item with a potential resale value on Vestiaire Collective was photographed for valuation. Participants were then asked: “Why do you still keep this item?”

This surfaced recurring barriers such as:

- Emotional attachment
- Sunk cost
- Guilt
- Hope of wearing it again “one day”

**Part 6:
Perception–Reality Reveal & Emotional Shift (45–60 minutes)**

Purpose: Reveal the perception–reality gap and capture emotional transformation.

The category estimated at the beginning of the audit was counted to make the gap between perceived and actual quantity visible.

Immediately after, Fire Question 3 was revisited to assess emotional change:

“Right now, my wardrobe feels _____.”

**Vestiaire
Collective**