

An Empirical Study On Sustainable Style And Financial Sense Among Thrift Shoppers In Kohima

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Abstract

In this study the emerging trend of thrift shopping in Kohima, Nagaland is explored, and emphasis is made on relations between attitudes towards sustainable fashion and financial rationality. Based on a survey with 308 consumers, the study examines demographic factors, motivations, and beliefs about trust that influence second-hand shopping. Descriptive statistics indicate that young, female students are the largest demographic group of thrift shoppers, motivated by low cost and the originality of goods. Chi-square shows that occupation shows a significant difference in shopping frequency. In addition, logistic regression shows that regular thrift shoppers report greater trust in online shopping for thrifted merchandise. Although hygiene and quality are a significant concern, concern about the waste effect is of medium level. The research concludes that increased exposure to thrift culture could play an important role in fostering trust in online platforms, particularly in emerging markets such as Kohima.

Keywords: Thrift shopping, sustainable fashion, financial sense, second-hand clothing, consumer behavior, online trust, quality concerns, youth shopping, affordability, circular economy, eco-consciousness, logistic regression, chi-square test, Kohima

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I. Introduction

Thrift shopping has transitioned from a marginal economic transaction to a main stream cultural and sustainable phenomena over the last few decades. Globally, increasing concerns over the effects on the environment and price have prompted consumers to consider purchasing second-hand goods as a more considered way of life. Although thrift shopping serves to alleviate textile waste and overconsumption, they also provide occasions for self-expression and distinct identity (Bardhi & Arnould, 2005; Turunen & Leipämaa-Leskinen, 2018).

Thrift shopping is also becoming popular in India, especially among students and youth who have developed a sense of fashion, coupled with financial constraints. Growing availability of thrifted items in local markets and online platforms has also helped this transition. Notwithstanding these trends, there is underpinning research on thrift shopping behavior in smaller cities and semi-urban towns such as Kohima.

A distinctive space is presented by Kohima, the capital of Nagaland, where young consumers, characterized by their price sensitivity and cultural openness, have been appropriating the second-hand lifestyle. The ecosystem of local thrift store buying, street market trade, and customer-seller interactions on Instagram is becoming a preferred place to purchase affordable yet stylish clothing items. However, the lack of trust between consumers and sellers about the clothing's quality and cleanness, especially with online purchasing, has a notable impact (Shah & Gajjar, 2021).

This study aims to empirically assess thrift shopping in Kohima through the sustainable style and financial sense. The purpose is to determine the demographic factors, motives, and trustworthiness that govern consumers' behavior for 308 respondents from different ages, genders, and incomes, and define the relationship between them using descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, and logistic regression.

II. Review Of Literature

Economic thrift shopping has dictated second-hand shopping for years, but in the 21st Century it is more of a social and environmental, savvy consumer statement. Academics have studied second-hand consumption from many angles—economic rationality, sustainability, social signaling, self-expression.

Bardhi and Arnould (2005) defined thrift shopping as a combination of utilitarian and hedonic consumption, makes explicit the extent to which low price and the serendipity of finding treasures constitute a key part of the appeal. Similarly, Christiansen and Snepenger (2005) identified “thrift mavens” who act as

influencers in thrift networks, demonstrating that second-hand consumption is often socially reinforced.

A major theme in contemporary literature is the rise of sustainability consciousness among consumers. Turunen and Leipämaa-Leskinen (2018) identified that second-hand shopping is more and more associated with ethical consumption, especially among the younger age groups. These shoppers align thrift with recycle, slow or conscious fashion, and overall sustainability.

Ferraro et al. (2016) identifies that individuals with a fashion-oriented approach, especially the younger segment, express emerging interest in second-hand fashion not for survival, but in order to achieve a fashion-style trajectory that is cost-effective. Under such circumstances, thrift rebounds as a recycled and identity-marked consumption.

The Indian thrift movement is still emerging. Shah and Gajjar (2021) highlighted that affordability and environmental awareness drive second-hand clothing behavior among Indian college students. Kakalia (2022) further noted that thrift allows youth to experiment with aesthetics and simultaneously participate in eco-conscious practices.

Other studies examine the role of digital platforms. Cozer (2018) emphasized that concerns around product quality, hygiene, and trust in online representations are central to consumer decision-making in second-hand e-commerce. Likewise, Hedge and Patel (2023) suggested that transparency and product validation can boost customer confidence on digital thrift platforms. Vicamara and Santoso (2023) studied Southeast Asian consumers and identified price sensitivity, environmental awareness, and previous positive experiences as strong predictors of intention to shop second-hand. This aligns with findings from Isla (2013), who emphasized the influence of household income and social acceptance in developing economies.

Overall, the assemblage of literature suggests an emerging alignment between economic incentive, sustainability orientations, and digital access in the transnational context of thrifting. However, less is known from studies conducted in smaller cities or in culturally different regions as Nagaland. This gap highlights the significance of the present study which will explore the economic and social aspects of secondhand shopping in Kohima.

III. Research Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative, empirical design to explore the link between sustainable fashion behavior and financial sensibility among thrift shoppers in Kohima. A structured questionnaire facilitated the collection of primary data and enabled statistical analysis of demographic characteristics, shopping motivations, and perceptions.

Sampling Method and Sample Size

Simple random sampling was used to ensure unbiased respondent selection. The target population consisted of active thrift shoppers in Kohima. A total of 308 responses were collected, which satisfies Cochran's formula for an acceptable sample size at a 95% confidence level for finite populations.

Data Collection

Primary data were collected using a semi-structured questionnaire distributed both online and offline. The online form was shared via Google Forms and Instagram-based thrift pages, while printed copies were administered at local thrift stores and markets. The questionnaire included both multiple-choice and Likert-scale questions and was pre-tested for clarity.

Software and Tools Used

Data cleaning and analysis were conducted using Microsoft Excel and Python (pandas, seaborn, statsmodels libraries). Charts and statistical outputs were generated to support descriptive, inferential, and regression-based analysis.

Variables Used

The key variables used in the study are summarized below:

- **Dependent Variables:**

- Trust in Online Quality (Binary: 1 = Yes, 0 = No or Maybe)
- Frequency of Thrift Visits (Ordinal: Never to Regularly)
- Satisfaction Rating (Ordinal: 1 = Very Dissatisfied to 5 = Very Satisfied)

- **Independent Variables:**

- Gender (Male, Female, Prefer not to say)
- Age Group (Below 18, 19–28, 29–38, 39+)
- Occupation (Student, Self-employed, Unemployed, Employed, etc.)

- Shopping Preferences (Offline, Online, Both)
- Motivation (Price, Uniqueness, Eco-consciousness)
- Concerns (Quality, Hygiene, Durability)

Variable Coding

Table 1: Summary of Variable Coding

Variable	Type	Coding Example
Gender	Categorical	Male = 0, Female = 1
Age Group	Ordinal	1 = Below 18, 2 = 19–28, 3 = 29–38, 4 = 39+
Visit Frequency	Ordinal	1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Monthly, etc.
Trust in Online Quality	Binary	Yes = 1, No/Maybe = 0
Satisfaction	Ordinal	1 (Very Dissatisfied) to 5 (Very Satisfied)
Shopping Mode	Nominal	1 = Offline, 2 = Online, 3 = Both

Analytical Tools Applied

The study used the following tools and techniques:

- **Descriptive Statistics** – To summarize age, gender, shopping preferences, and behavioral trends.
- **Chi-Square Test of Independence** – To explore relationships between variables like occupation and visit frequency.
- **Binary Logistic Regression** – To predict trust in online thrift quality based on demographic and behavioral indicators.
- **Visualization** – Bar graphs and pie charts were used to enhance data interpretation.

Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire used for data collection consist of both closed-ended and Likert-scale items that captured demographics, frequency of shopping, motivations, sustainability perceptions, and satisfaction levels.

IV. Data Analysis And Interpretation

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize the demographic profile, shopping patterns, and motivations of the respondents. This helped provide a foundational understanding of the thrift shopping landscape in Kohima.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The sample consisted of 308 respondents. Table 2 presents a summary of the key demographic variables.

Table 2: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	58
	Male	42
Age Group	Below 18	6
	19–28	72
	29–38	15
	39 and above	7
Occupation	Student	58
	Employed	24
	Self-Employed	11
	Unemployed	7

As shown in Table 2, the majority of respondents were female (58%) and belonged to the 19–28 age group (72%). Students made up over half of the sample, reflecting the youth-driven nature of thrift shopping in Kohima.

Shopping Preferences and Frequency

Table 3: Shopping Behavior Summary

Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
Preferred Shopping Mode	Offline	56
	Online	4
	Both	40
Visit Frequency	Rarely	48
	Monthly	41
	Weekly/Regularly	11
Main Items Bought	Clothes	92

	Shoes	38
	Bags	22

Most respondents preferred shopping offline (56%), though a significant number used both online and offline platforms (40%). Nearly half of the respondents visited thrift stores rarely, while 41% reported monthly visits. Clothing emerged as the most frequently purchased item (92%), followed by shoes and bags.

Motivations and Concerns

Table 4: Motivations and Concerns Among Respondents

Aspect	Category	Percentage (%)
Primary Motivation	Unique Items	68
	Cheap Price	57
	Eco-Friendly	35
Main Concern	Quality/Durability	70
	Hygiene	45
	Style/Fit	38

The main motivations behind thrift shopping were uniqueness (68%) and affordability (57%), with eco-consciousness also influencing over a third of respondents. Quality and durability were top concerns, reported by 70% of shoppers, followed by hygiene.

Satisfaction and Trust Perception

Table 5: Satisfaction and Trust in Online Thrift Platforms

Aspect	Response	Percentage (%)
Satisfaction Rating	Very Satisfied	14
	Satisfied	35
	Neutral	44
	Dissatisfied	5
	Very Dissatisfied	2
Trust in Online Quality	Yes	14
	Maybe	53
	No	33

Satisfaction levels were moderate, with most respondents rating their experience as neutral (44%) or satisfied (35%). When it came to trust in the quality of thrift items sold online, more than half expressed uncertainty, indicating a critical area for improvement.

These descriptive insights provide a strong foundation for the inferential analysis that follows, offering clues about consumer behavior, trust formation, and the role of digital engagement in Kohima's thrift ecosystem.

Chi-Square Test of Independence

The Chi-Square Test of Independence was used to examine associations between key categorical variables in the dataset. This non-parametric test determines whether observed frequencies differ significantly from expected frequencies under the assumption of independence. It is particularly useful in identifying relationships between demographic characteristics and shopping behaviors.

The test statistic is calculated as:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O_{ij} - E_{ij})^2}{E_{ij}}$$

Where:

- O_{ij} is the observed frequency for cell (i, j)
- E_{ij} is the expected frequency for cell (i, j) , calculated as $\frac{(\text{row total} \times \text{column total})}{\text{grand total}}$

Three variable pairs were tested for association:

- Gender vs. Preferred Mode of Thrift Shopping
- Age Group vs. Concerns About Pre-Owned Products

Table 6: Chi-Square Test Results

Variable Pair	Chi-Square Value	df	p-value	Significance
Gender vs. Mode of Purchase	5.86	2	0.0534	Marginal
Age Group vs. Concerns	7.12	6	0.3098	Not Significant
Occupation vs. Visit Frequency	50.65	20	0.0002	Significant

Interpretation of Results

- **Occupation and Visit Frequency:** A statistically significant result ($p < 0.01$) indicates a strong association between a respondent's occupation and how often they visit thrift stores. Students and unemployed individuals reported higher visitation frequencies, likely due to financial prudence and lifestyle flexibility.
- **Gender and Mode of Shopping:** The relationship was marginally significant with a p-value slightly above 0.05. This suggests a weak association where female respondents may be more inclined toward hybrid shopping (both online and offline).
- **Age Group and Concerns:** No statistically significant association was observed, indicating that concerns such as hygiene or product quality are relatively consistent across age groups.

These findings help identify which demographic factors influence thrift shopping habits and highlight areas where businesses can tailor outreach or build trust with specific groups.

Binary Logistic Regression

To determine the factors influencing whether respondents trust the quality of thrifted items sold online, a binary logistic regression model was applied. This technique estimates the probability of a binary outcome—here, trust in online thrift platforms—based on a set of predictor variables.

Dependent and Independent Variables

- **Dependent Variable:** Trust in online quality (1 = Yes, 0 = No or Maybe)
- **Independent Variables:**
 - Gender (1 = Female, 0 = Male)
 - Frequent Visitor (1 = Weekly/Regularly, 0 = Otherwise)
 - Motivated by Unique Items (1 = Yes, 0 = No)
 - Age Group (Dummy variables with “Below 18” as the reference group)

Logistic Regression Equation

The model estimates the log-odds of trusting online thrift quality using the equation:

$$\log \frac{P}{1 - P} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot \text{Gender} + \beta_2 \cdot \text{FrequentVisitor} + \beta_3 \cdot \text{MotivatedByUnique} + \beta_4 \cdot \text{Age19-28} + \beta_5 \cdot \text{Age29-38} + \beta_6 \cdot \text{Age39+}$$

Substituting the estimated coefficients:

$$\log \frac{P}{1 - P} = -1.195 - 0.639 \cdot \text{Gender} + 1.023 \cdot \text{FrequentVisitor} - 0.069 \cdot \text{MotivatedByUnique} - 0.499 \cdot \text{Age19-28} + 0.234 \cdot \text{Age29-38} - 0.653 \cdot \text{Age39+}$$

Regression Results

Table 7: Logistic Regression Output

Variable	Coefficient	p-value	Interpretation
Intercept	-1.195	0.288	Not significant
Gender (Female)	-0.639	0.059	Marginal effect (lower trust)
Frequent Visitor	1.023	0.022	Significant positive predictor

Motivated by Unique Items	-0.069	0.840	Not significant
Age 19–28	-0.499	0.658	Not significant
Age 29–38	0.234	0.846	Not significant
Age 39+	-0.653	0.635	Not significant

Model Fit and Interpretation

- **Pseudo R²:** 0.043 (modest explanatory power)
- **Log-Likelihood:** -119.21
- **AIC:** 252.42

The results suggest that frequent thrift store visitors are significantly more likely to trust online thrift quality, possibly due to higher familiarity with the resale ecosystem. Gender has a marginal effect, indicating that female respondents may be slightly more skeptical. Other variables like age and motivation by uniqueness showed no significant influence on trust.

This regression model provides useful insights into behavioral predictors of trust in online thrift platforms, offering guidance for improving customer confidence and targeting frequent users in marketing efforts.

Visual Analysis

To complement the statistical analysis, visual tools were used to highlight trends and distributions in respondent behavior. These graphs provide intuitive insights into the demographic makeup, motivations, and perceptions of thrift shoppers in Kohima.

Age Group Distribution

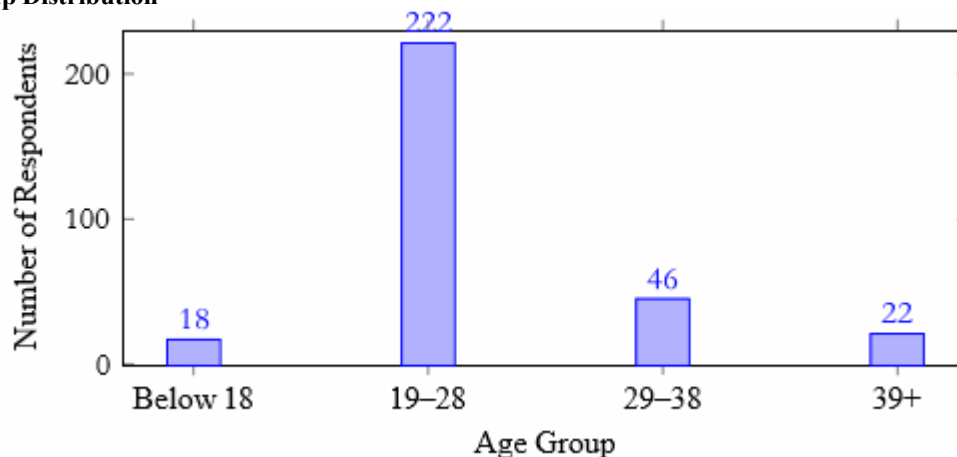


Figure 1: Distribution of Respondents by Age Group

Figure 1 clearly shows that respondents aged 19–28 constitute the largest group of thrift shoppers. This aligns with earlier findings that students and youth are more engaged in second-hand fashion due to affordability and trend-seeking behavior.

Motivations for Thrift Shopping

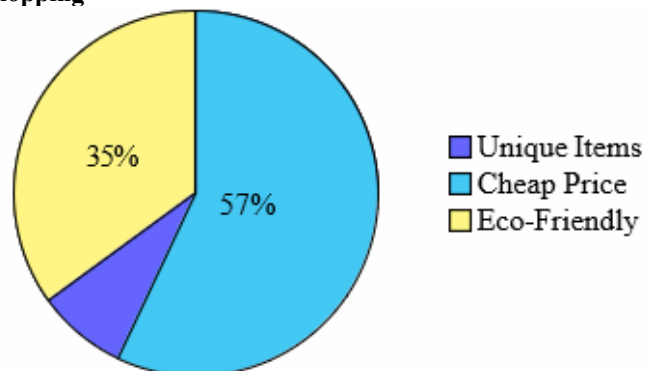


Figure 2: Primary Motivations for Thrift Shopping

As seen in Figure 2, uniqueness and affordability are the dominant motivations. Interestingly, eco-consciousness plays a notable, though less significant, role. This suggests that sustainability messaging has room to grow in local consumer awareness.

Trust in Online Thrift Quality

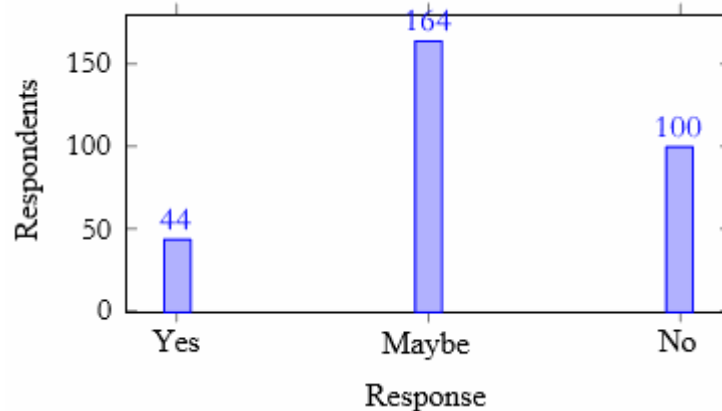


Figure 3: Trust in Online Thrift Quality

As shown in Figure 3, a majority of respondents (53%) are uncertain about trusting thrift quality online. Only 14% express full trust, pointing to the need for improved product validation and consumer education by online thrift platforms.

Satisfaction Levels



Figure 4: Satisfaction Ratings with Thrift Shopping

Figure 4 highlights that most respondents were either neutral or satisfied with their thrift shopping experiences. Very few expressed dissatisfaction, suggesting general acceptance with potential for enhancement.

These visual summaries validate and reinforce the earlier statistical findings, offering accessible representations of how thrift culture is shaped by age, motivations, trust, and satisfaction.

V. Discussion And Conclusion

Discussion

The results of the study provide significant information about thrift shopping in Kohima, mainly on sustainable fashion behaviours and the economic consciousness.

The descriptive results indicated that the thrift-shopping culture was mainly influenced by young women, particularly students, who were influenced by low prices and the originality of second-hand products. The 19–28 age group is, by far, the most dominating because they embrace the lifestyle trends typical among urbanized youth who are conscious of price.

Occupation has been proved to be associated with frequency of thrift shopping by the Chi-Square Test of Independence. Students and non-employed persons were more likely to make regular purchases, indicative of frugal habits due to lack of financial resources and flexibility in time. Gender had a significant marginal effect on shopping mode, implying gender differentiation in response to online and offline thrift channels. But,

issues including hygiene and product longevity were found not to differ much between the age groups, suggesting purchasing behaviour as a function of preferences had to a degree not changed with age.

As a result, for the logistic regression analysis, only “frequent visiting” has been confirmed as a significant predictor variable for trust in online thrift quality. In other words, one-on-one exposure and familiarity with any platform can only make consumers trust the second-hand serviced providers more. Thus, variables like gender, age, and motivation by uniqueness were not validated by the statistics at hand, highlighting that it is the behavioral experience that matters the most rather than any demographic variable.

Taken together, the data paints a picture of a thrift culture in Kohima that is emerging as both a financial necessity and a form of conscious consumption. Yet, concerns about quality and hygiene, especially in online settings, continue to be barriers to wider adoption.

VI. Conclusion

This research provided the interaction of sustainable style and the sense of financial advantage amongst the thrift shoppers in Kohima based on the primary 308 sample. Descriptive analysis, chi-square tests and logistic regression showed in the study the socio-demographic patterns, motivations and trust drivers behind second-hand shopping behavior.

Findings suggest that thrift shopping is a youth-oriented, price-oriented behavior strongly informed by cultural production and economic necessity. Despite forming trust issues of online stores among the regular customers, it still a doubt for many about the quality of goods.

For these businesses, the implications are clear – that trust must be built through product validation, digital experience improvement and consistent customer engagement. Policymakers and sustainable initiatives can also use these findings by integrating thrift culture with more general efforts for waste reduction and a circular economy.

Future studies might wish to look into inter-temporal aspects of thrift shopping behavior, implications of social media for sustainable fashion promotion, or conduct comparative studies of thrift shopping behavior in various urban regions of India.

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