

Consumer Buying Behavior: A Comparative Analysis of Thrifted and Branded Items

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Abstract

This study examined the consumer buying behavior of residents of San Isidro, Nueva Ecija toward thrifted and branded items by identifying their profile, purchasing influences, perceptions, challenges, and possible marketing strategies aligned with consumer preferences. The study was conceptually grounded in consumer buying behavior, focusing on economic, social, psychological, demographic, and lifestyle-related factors. A descriptive quantitative research design was used, with data gathered from 110 respondents through an electronic survey questionnaire administered via Google Forms. Frequency, percentage, mean, and weighted mean were used to analyze the data. Findings showed that most respondents were 18–25 years old, female, students, and had a monthly income or allowance below PHP 5,000. Quality assurance and personal preferences and lifestyle both obtained the highest overall weighted mean of 3.28, interpreted as Strongly Agree, indicating that consumers prioritize product quality, personal style, values, and identity when choosing between thrifted and branded items. Price sensitivity, quality and value, sustainability, affordability, trust, authenticity, condition, and shopping convenience were also important considerations. Shopping convenience and availability emerged as the highest challenge-related factor, followed by product authenticity and condition concerns. The study concludes that consumers are increasingly guided by affordability, quality, sustainability, self-expression, and convenience rather than brand preference alone. It supports SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production, SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth, and SDG 9 on industry, innovation, and infrastructure. Its sustainability impact lies in promoting environmentally responsible consumption, practical consumer decision-making, and improved marketing strategies for thrifted and branded retail markets.

Keywords: Affordability, Branded Items, Consumer Buying Behavior, Consumer Perceptions, Purchasing Decisions, Shopping Convenience, Sustainability, Thrifted Items, Value for Money

1. Introduction

Consumer buying behavior remains a significant area of inquiry because purchasing decisions are increasingly shaped by economic realities, social influence, personal values, environmental awareness, and changing retail platforms. In the context of thrifted and branded items, consumers are confronted with two distinct but connected options: thrifted products that emphasize affordability, uniqueness, and sustainability, and branded products that emphasize quality, reliability, status, and reputation. This study examines the consumer buying behavior of residents of San Isidro, Nueva Ecija toward thrifted and branded items by identifying their demographic profile, determining the factors influencing their decisions, analyzing their perceptions, examining the challenges they encounter, and proposing marketing strategies aligned with consumer preferences.

Understanding consumer buying behavior is essential in today's marketplace because it affects business strategies, marketing approaches, and economic performance (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). Consumer behavior involves the process by which individuals or groups select, purchase, use, and dispose of products, services, or ideas to satisfy needs and desires. Purchasing decisions are influenced by economic factors such as income, pricing, and availability (Liu, 2024); social factors such as culture, social class, and peer groups (Trung & Long, 2025); and psychological factors such as motivation, perception, learning, and attitudes (Antony & Rajinikanth, 2024). These factors help explain why consumers choose particular products and how businesses can respond to evolving preferences. Recent changes in consumer preferences reflect increasingly complex purchasing behavior (Deloitte, 2023). Consumers now consider not only product function but also affordability, sustainability, identity, and value alignment. One significant trend is the growing popularity of thrift shopping alongside the continued demand for branded products. Thrifted items appeal to consumers because they are more affordable, environmentally conscious, and unique, while branded products continue to attract consumers because they are associated with quality, durability, lifestyle, and social status. The growing interest in thrift shopping is linked to environmental awareness and the desire to reduce the negative effects of fast fashion, while still providing budget-friendly

options and access to rare or vintage pieces (Business Insider, 2025). In contrast, branded items remain attractive because consumers often associate them with superior value and performance, and according to Qiao (2025), some consumers are willing to pay premium prices for branded products due to perceived quality and status.

The literature shows that thrifed and branded items differ in terms of price, perceived value, accessibility, identity expression, and consumer trust. Branded products are generally more expensive because of brand equity, reputation, and prestige, while thrifed items offer value through affordability, sustainability, and the possibility of finding distinctive or vintage products (Scott & Wu, 2025). Consumer Buying Behavior is considered a complex and multi-dimensional field because it examines how internal and external factors shape purchasing decisions. The growth of thrift shopping and the continued appeal of branded products have produced two interconnected retail markets with different motivations and consumer expectations. Thrift shopping is associated with affordability, environmental benefits, and rare secondhand finds, while branded products are associated with perceived quality, exclusivity, and status, according to Markova and Grajeda (2024). Younger consumers, particularly Millennials and Gen Z, are increasingly drawn to thrifed items because of cost-effectiveness and sustainable lifestyle values, while branded goods remain important for those who prioritize reliability, durability, and prestige (Capital One Shopping, 2025). These preferences reveal the importance of demographic factors, social influence, and personal values in shaping buying decisions. Examining quality, affordability, sustainability, brand loyalty, authenticity, and shopping convenience can help businesses align marketing strategies with changing consumer needs (Gartner Research, 2025). Thrifting has also gained global attention as a sustainable alternative to fast fashion. Hodgkinson and Hoogendoorn (2024) explain that consumers are motivated by affordability, environmental consciousness, and the search for unique fashion pieces, although some curated or niche thrifed items may become more expensive than brand-new clothing. Elias et al. (2023) highlight that teenagers are attracted to thrift shopping because it supports individuality and sustainable fashion values. However, thrift store “gentrification” has also emerged in Western contexts, where wealthier consumers and resellers increase demand and prices, potentially reducing access for low-income shoppers who depend on thrifed items (Filidore, 2022). Branding studies further show that localness and globalness influence consumer attitudes. Safeer et al. (2022) found that brand localness and globalness positively influence brand attitudes, purchase intentions, willingness to pay a premium, and word-of-mouth in emerging markets. Han and Nam (2023) found that perceived localness of foreign brands in developing Asian markets enhances brand trust and purchase intentions, while Lopez-Lomeli et al. (2019) affirm that both local and global brand perceptions influence consumer attitudes because of their association with quality, prestige, and familiarity. In the Philippine context, however, consumers appear more pragmatic. Agdigos et al. (2022) observed that brand image influences clothing purchases but is often secondary to price and quality, suggesting that Filipino consumers may be more open to thrifed or alternative products when these offer better value.

Globally, thrift shopping has become part of the broader movement toward sustainable fashion, circular consumption, and ethical purchasing. Online thrift platforms and curated secondhand markets have made thrifed items more accessible while also creating concerns about product quality, fraud, and affordability. At the same time, branded goods continue to maintain global appeal through reputation, consistent quality, and lifestyle positioning. In the Philippines, thrift shopping reflects both international trends and local realities. According to the Carousell Recommerce Index (Bigtas, 2021), the Philippines is the most receptive market for second-hand items in Greater Southeast Asia, with 58% of Filipino online consumers comfortable purchasing second-hand clothing and 75% of sellers willing to market them. A related finding indicates that 92% of consumers in the country have purchased unused or brand-new items from casual sellers, with affordability cited as the main reason by 74% of respondents. Desiderio (2022) similarly reported that 83% of Filipino consumers had purchased second-hand fashion items, motivated by affordability, access to branded goods at lower prices, variety, and unique styles. However, only 28% reduced their purchases of brand-new clothing after buying second-hand fashion, indicating that thrift shopping in the Philippines often complements rather than replaces conventional shopping. The local setting of this study is San Isidro, Nueva Ecija, Philippines, where consumer behavior toward thrifed and branded items is examined through a 2025 survey. The local context is important because residents may reflect diverse income levels, occupations, shopping frequencies, and social influences. Since the study focuses on a local community, its findings may provide practical insights for retailers, consumers, and policymakers seeking to understand purchasing behavior in similar local markets.

The study is conceptually grounded in consumer buying behavior, particularly the idea that purchasing decisions are shaped by economic, social, psychological, demographic, and lifestyle-related factors. Age influences preference because Generation Z consumers are highly interested in secondhand apparel due to affordability, uniqueness, and sustainability, while older consumers may show stronger preference for branded goods associated with durability and prestige (Capital One Shopping, 2025; Shopify, 2025). Gender also affects buying behavior, as female consumers are more likely to engage in thrift shopping because of cost-effectiveness and environmental benefits, while male consumers may prefer branded products for quality, reliability, and professional image, as noted by Markova and Grajeda (2024) and Exploding Topics (2024). Social influence is another major component of the study’s conceptual basis. According to Maulidyah et al. (2024), thrift shopping among younger consumers is connected with sustainability and individuality, while branded products

benefit from influencer marketing, especially among Generation Z and Millennials (Exploding Topics, 2024). Income and occupation also shape buying decisions. Lower-income consumers are more likely to purchase thrifted items due to affordability, while higher-income consumers may buy branded products because these are associated with quality, prestige, and financial success (Capital One Shopping, 2025; Shopify, 2025). Professionals may value branded items as symbols of success, while students and part-time workers may prefer thrifted products because of budget limitations and self-expression (Savers Thrift Report, 2024; Capital One Shopping, 2025). The study further considers price sensitivity, uniqueness, quality assurance, accessibility, branding, and lifestyle. Price sensitivity affects thrift and branded purchasing because thrift shoppers are often motivated by affordability, while branded buyers may pay more for quality and exclusivity (Savers Thrift Report, 2024; Capital One Shopping, 2025; Markova & Grajeda, 2024). Uniqueness matters because thrift shoppers often seek rare or one-of-a-kind pieces, while branded consumers may value exclusivity through limited-edition collections (Savers Thrift Report, 2024; Maulidiah et al., 2024). Quality assurance is also central because thrifted items may require closer inspection, while branded items are often trusted due to warranties, durability, and consistent standards (Savers Thrift Report, 2024; Markova & Grajeda, 2024). Lifestyle and personal values also influence consumer choices, as thrift shoppers may support sustainable living while branded consumers may seek luxury, status, and professional identity (Gartner Research, 2025; Markova & Grajeda, 2024).

Although there is growing research on thrift shopping and branded consumption, many studies examine these trends separately. Limited research compares the motivations and decision-making processes behind thrifted and branded purchases within a single framework. This creates a gap in understanding how consumers balance affordability, quality, sustainability, brand loyalty, identity, convenience, and authenticity when choosing between thrifted and branded items. The study addresses this gap by providing a comparative analysis of consumer buying behavior toward thrifted and branded items among residents of San Isidro, Nueva Ecija. It examines not only the factors that influence purchasing decisions but also consumer perceptions and challenges. These include quality and value, affordability, sustainability, trust, product authenticity, condition and durability, social stigma or status perception, and shopping convenience. The study is also relevant because thrifted items are increasingly viewed as comparable in quality to new clothing and valuable because of affordability and uniqueness (Savers Thrift Report, 2024; Bolton et al., 2023). At the same time, branded items remain trusted because of reputation, quality assurance, and durability (Capital One Shopping, 2025; Markova & Grajeda, 2024). The study also responds to practical concerns in both thrift and branded markets. Consumers may worry about authenticity when buying thrifted items and counterfeit products when buying branded goods (Gartner Research, 2025; McKinsey, 2024). They may also consider condition, durability, and repairability when buying thrifted products, while still trusting branded products for longer use (Bolton et al., 2023; McKinsey, 2024). Social stigma remains relevant because thrift shopping, or ukay-ukay, has historically been linked to poverty, although younger consumers increasingly view it as sustainable, unique, and stylish (Vogue Philippines, 2025; Villarente, 2024). Shopping convenience is also changing, as thrifted products are now more accessible through online platforms, even though inventory unpredictability remains a challenge, while branded products remain easier to access through established retail channels (ThredUp, 2022; Effective Retail Leader, 2025).

This study is most directly aligned with SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production because it examines thrift shopping as a form of secondhand consumption that supports reuse, waste reduction, and sustainable fashion. The literature indicates that thrift shopping helps reduce environmental waste and supports more conscious consumption, while many brands are also adopting sustainable practices to respond to consumer demand for greener options (Savers Thrift Report, 2024; Markova & Grajeda, 2024). The study also supports SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth because it provides insights that may help thrift and branded retailers develop marketing strategies aligned with consumer preferences, purchasing motivations, and local market behavior. Marketing strategies for thrifted items may emphasize sustainability, uniqueness, and affordability, while branded products may emphasize quality, exclusivity, and loyalty (ThriftCart, 2025; Markova & Grajeda, 2024). The study may also relate to SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure through the role of online platforms and digital commerce in improving access to both thrifted and branded products. Online thrift stores, social media platforms, and resale markets have changed how consumers discover, evaluate, and purchase products (ThriftCart, 2025). Moreover, a hybrid approach that combines sustainability and branding may help businesses respond to environmentally conscious consumers while maintaining market competitiveness (MDPI, 2023). The study also supports SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities in a local sense because it examines consumer behavior within San Isidro, Nueva Ecija and may inform more sustainable and practical consumption patterns in local communities. Finally, the study connects with SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals only in a limited marketing sense, as thrift stores, brands, and influencers may collaborate to promote sustainable fashion and consumer awareness (ThriftCart, 2025).

This study contributes to multidisciplinary sustainability by linking consumer behavior, marketing, environmental responsibility, digital commerce, community development, and policy relevance. From an environmental sustainability perspective, it highlights thrift shopping as a practice connected with reuse, waste reduction, and reduced dependence on fast fashion. From a socio-economic sustainability perspective, it examines affordability, income level, occupation, and shopping frequency as factors that shape consumer access to both thrifted and branded products. This is important for

understanding how consumers with limited purchasing power make practical decisions while still considering quality, identity, and lifestyle. From a business and marketing perspective, the study can help retailers design strategies that reflect consumer values. Thrift-related marketing may focus on sustainability, uniqueness, affordability, and storytelling, while branded marketing may focus on quality, exclusivity, loyalty programs, and reputation (ThriftCart, 2025; Effective Retail Leader, 2025). From a technological and digital sustainability perspective, the study recognizes how online resale platforms and social media have made thrift shopping more convenient and have expanded consumer access to both secondhand and branded products. From a policy and governance sustainability perspective, the study may support efforts to promote responsible consumption and reduce environmental impact, as policymakers can use consumer insights to encourage sustainable consumption patterns and environmentally friendly business practices (OECD, 2018). Overall, the study is significant because it examines how modern consumers balance affordability, quality, sustainability, identity, trust, and convenience in a changing retail environment.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive quantitative research design to analyze consumer buying behavior concerning thrifted and branded items. The descriptive approach was appropriate because it allowed the researchers to assess consumer preferences, purchasing motivations, and perceptions toward both product categories. According to McCombes (2023), descriptive research aims to accurately and systematically describe a population, situation, or phenomenon, making it suitable for examining specific behaviors or trends. The quantitative component involved the collection and statistical analysis of numerical data from survey questionnaires, allowing the researchers to objectively measure factors influencing purchasing decisions and compare consumer behavior toward thrifted and branded items.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in the municipality of San Isidro, Nueva Ecija. The locale was selected because of its accessibility and convenience for the researchers, which supported efficient data collection. Residents of San Isidro were considered suitable respondents because they represent varied socio-economic backgrounds, making the setting relevant for examining differences in consumer preferences and decision-making processes when choosing between thrifted and branded items.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents were residents of San Isidro, Nueva Ecija, ranging from below 18 years old to 56 years old and above. This broad age range was included to capture the buying behavior of different age groups in relation to thrifted and branded products. A total of 110 respondents participated in the study.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The researchers used convenience sampling in selecting the respondents. Participants were chosen based on their availability and willingness to answer the survey, which was considered practical given the limited time and resources of the study. Data collection was conducted over five days, allowing the researchers to gather sufficient responses for analyzing consumer preferences and buying behavior.

2.5 Research Instrument

The primary instrument used in the study was an electronic survey questionnaire administered through Google Forms. The questionnaire was designed to collect quantitative data on consumer preferences, purchasing motivations, and perceptions of thrifted and branded items. To support the accuracy and reliability of the instrument, the questionnaire was subjected to validity and reliability testing before distribution.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers first collected secondary data from published articles, studies, and reports relevant to consumer behavior, thrift shopping, and branded products. These sources provided background information on existing trends and factors influencing consumer choices. The electronic survey questionnaire was then prepared using Likert-scale items to assess preferences, motivations, and perceptions toward thrifted and branded items. The survey was administered through Google Forms and distributed through social media platforms and messaging applications to reach respondents in San Isidro. After data collection, the responses were systematically recorded and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools to identify patterns, trends, and differences in consumer buying behavior.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

Frequency and percentage distribution were used to analyze the demographic profile of the respondents, including age, gender, social influence, income or allowance, occupation, and shopping frequency. Mean and weighted mean were used to assess consumer perceptions, purchasing motivations, and factors affecting buying behavior toward thrifted and branded

items. The weighted mean was interpreted using a four-point scale, where 3.25–4.00 indicated Strongly Agree, 2.50–3.24 indicated Agree, 1.75–2.49 indicated Disagree, and 1.00–1.74 indicated Strongly Disagree.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study followed ethical guidelines to ensure that respondents were treated fairly and respectfully. Before data collection, participants were asked to provide informed consent after being informed about the purpose of the study, their participation, possible benefits and risks, and their right to refuse or withdraw without consequences. Respondents were also allowed to skip questions. The researchers maintained confidentiality of personal information and strictly adhered to the Data Privacy Act of 2012, also known as Republic Act No. 10173, to ensure that collected data were handled securely and confidentially. The findings were reported in aggregate form to protect respondent identities, and any concerns during the research process were to be addressed immediately to ensure participant safety and research integrity.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Respondent Profile

The study included 110 respondents. Most belonged to the 18–25 age group, representing 74.50% of the sample, followed by smaller groups from 26–35, 36–45, 46–55, below 18, and 56 and above. Female respondents slightly outnumbered male respondents, with females comprising 53.60% and males 46.40%. In terms of social influence, most respondents reported being slightly or moderately influenced by others when making purchase decisions. More than half had a monthly income or allowance of less than PHP 5,000, and the majority were students. Shopping frequency was generally low, with most respondents shopping rarely or only 1–2 times a month. These findings suggest that the respondent group was largely composed of young, budget-conscious consumers whose purchasing behavior may be shaped by limited financial resources, personal style, and social influence. The dominance of young respondents is consistent with literature showing that younger consumers are increasingly interested in thrifted items because of affordability, uniqueness, and sustainability (Capital One Shopping, 2025). The strong presence of students also supports the view that students and part-time workers are more likely to consider thrifted products because of budget constraints and opportunities for self-expression (Capital One Shopping, 2025).

3.2 Factors Influencing Consumers' Decisions to Purchase Thrifted and Branded Items

3.2.1 Price Sensitivity

Price sensitivity obtained an overall weighted mean of 3.15, interpreted as Agree. Respondents strongly agreed that price is a primary factor when deciding between thrifted and branded items, with a weighted mean of 3.40. They also agreed that thrifted items are purchased because they are more affordable than branded ones, while willingness to pay a premium for branded products received a lower but still agreeable mean of 2.90. This result indicates that affordability strongly influences purchasing decisions, although consumers may still pay more for branded products when they perceive greater value. The finding aligns with the idea that thrift shoppers are motivated by affordability, while branded items appeal to consumers who value quality and exclusivity (Savers Thrift Report, 2024; Markova & Grajeda, 2024). It also supports the view that cost remains important in consumer decision-making, especially among respondents with limited income or allowance.

3.2.2 Uniqueness

Uniqueness received an overall weighted mean of 2.96, interpreted as Agree. Respondents agreed that rare or one-of-a-kind pieces influence their shopping decisions, with a weighted mean of 3.03, and that thrifted items are preferred because they are unique compared to mass-produced branded items, with a mean of 3.00. Branded items offering exclusive designs received a slightly lower mean of 2.85. The findings suggest that consumers value individuality and self-expression when choosing products. Thrifted items appear attractive because they provide distinct fashion choices that are not always available in mainstream retail. This supports the literature stating that many thrift shoppers seek one-of-a-kind items that reflect creativity and individuality, while branded products offer exclusivity through high-end or limited-edition designs (Savers Thrift Report, 2024; Maulidyah et al., 2024).

3.2.3 Quality Assurance

Quality assurance obtained an overall weighted mean of 3.28, interpreted as Strongly Agree. Respondents strongly agreed that quality plays a bigger role in their purchasing decision than brand name, with a mean of 3.45. They also strongly agreed that they inspect thrifted items carefully before buying, with a mean of 3.30, and agreed that they trust branded products because these guarantee quality, with a mean of 3.10. The results show that quality is one of the strongest factors affecting consumer choice. Respondents value durability and product condition, whether the item is thrifted or branded. This is consistent with the literature stating that branded products are preferred for their guaranteed quality and consistent standards, while many consumers also consider secondhand clothing comparable in quality when properly inspected (Savers Thrift Report, 2024; Markova & Grajeda, 2024).

3.2.4 Availability and Accessibility

Availability and accessibility received an overall weighted mean of 3.01, interpreted as Agree. Respondents agreed that they prefer stores offering both thrifted and branded items, with a mean of 3.12. They also agreed that branded items are more convenient to purchase because of their availability, while the limited availability of thrifted items makes shopping more exciting. These results indicate that convenience and product access influence consumer behavior, although they are not the strongest determinants. Consumers appreciate having both thrifted and branded options in one shopping space because it allows them to decide based on budget, purpose, and preference. This finding reflects the literature showing that thrifted items are increasingly accessible through physical stores and online resale platforms, while branded products remain more predictably available through established retail channels (Capital One Shopping, 2025; Savers Thrift Report, 2024).

3.2.5 Branding

Branding obtained an overall weighted mean of 2.91, interpreted as Agree. Respondents agreed that they buy branded products because of reputation and that prestige associated with branded items influences their decisions. However, the highest mean under this area was for the statement that respondents focus on product quality rather than branding, with a mean of 3.06. The findings suggest that branding matters but does not dominate consumer decision-making. Respondents recognize the value of brand reputation and prestige, but they still prioritize product quality. This supports the Philippine-based observation that brand image influences clothing purchases but is moderate compared with price and quality, indicating that Filipino consumers often choose based on perceived value rather than brand prestige (Agdigos et al., 2022).

3.2.6 Personal Preferences and Lifestyle

Personal preferences and lifestyle obtained an overall weighted mean of 3.28, interpreted as Strongly Agree. Respondents strongly agreed that their shopping habits are influenced by personal lifestyle and values, with a mean of 3.30, and that they choose thrifted or branded items based on fashion sense rather than price, with a mean of 3.40. They also agreed that their purchase choices reflect personal identity and values. The results show that consumer behavior is not based solely on affordability or brand name but also on self-expression, lifestyle, and personal values. This supports the view that thrift shoppers may choose secondhand goods to support sustainable living, while consumers of branded products may seek items that reflect luxury, status, and professional identity (Gartner Research, 2025; Markova & Grajeda, 2024). The finding highlights the growing importance of identity-driven and value-based purchasing.

3.3 Consumer Perceptions of Thrifted and Branded Items

3.3.1 Quality and Value

Quality and value received an overall weighted mean of 3.15, interpreted as Agree. Respondents agreed that branded items provide better durability than thrifted ones, but they also agreed that thrifted products can offer similar quality to branded items. The highest mean was recorded for the importance of price-to-value ratio, with a mean of 3.30. This result indicates that respondents evaluate products based on whether the quality justifies the price. While branded products are associated with durability, thrifted products are also seen as capable of offering comparable quality. This aligns with literature showing that thrifted items are increasingly viewed as comparable in quality to new clothing, while branded items are valued because of durability and consistent production standards (Savers Thrift Report, 2024; Capital One Shopping, 2025).

3.3.2 Affordability and Pricing Strategies

Affordability and pricing strategies obtained an overall weighted mean of 3.00, interpreted as Agree. Respondents agreed that they buy thrifted items mainly because of affordability and that discounted branded products encourage them to choose branded items over thrifted alternatives. They also agreed, though at a lower mean of 2.73, that they are willing to buy high-quality branded items even if these cost more. The findings show that affordability remains a major consideration, but discounts and perceived quality can influence consumers to buy branded items. This reflects the balance between cost-saving behavior and willingness to pay for perceived value. The result supports existing insights that thrift shopping is attractive to budget-conscious consumers, while branded pricing strategies emphasize exclusivity and premium value (Capital One Shopping, 2025; Markova & Grajeda, 2024).

3.3.3 Sustainability and Environmental Impact

Sustainability and environmental impact received an overall weighted mean of 3.06, interpreted as Agree. Respondents agreed that thrifted items support sustainable fashion, that thrift shopping helps reduce environmental waste, and that ethical impact is considered when choosing between thrifted and branded items. This finding indicates that respondents recognize the environmental and ethical value of thrift shopping. Thrifted items are viewed not only as affordable but also as connected to waste reduction and sustainable consumption. This is consistent with literature stating that thrifted items are associated with reuse and reduced waste, while many brands are adopting sustainable practices to meet consumer demand for greener options (Savers Thrift Report, 2024; Markova & Grajeda, 2024).

3.3.4 Trust and Brand Loyalty

Trust and brand loyalty obtained an overall weighted mean of 2.94, interpreted as Agree. Respondents agreed that they trust branded items because of reputation and consistent quality assurance. However, brand loyalty received the lowest

mean in this area, suggesting that although respondents trust some brands, they do not completely avoid thrifed alternatives. The results show that branded products still maintain consumer trust, but loyalty is not absolute. Consumers may remain open to thrifed items when these meet expectations for quality, affordability, or value. This supports the literature indicating that brand loyalty is linked to reliability and status, while thrifed goods can gain trust through seller transparency and community-driven platforms (Markova & Grajeda, 2024; Bolton et al., 2023).

3.4 Challenges Consumers Face When Purchasing Thrifed and Branded Items

3.4.1 Product Authenticity

Product authenticity received an overall weighted mean of 3.17, interpreted as Agree. Respondents strongly agreed that they worry about fake or counterfeit items when shopping for branded products, with a mean of 3.25. They also agreed that they have concerns about the genuineness of thrifed items and that they verify authenticity before purchase. The findings show that authenticity is a major consumer concern in both thrifed and branded markets. Consumers are cautious about counterfeit branded goods and uncertain product origins in secondhand markets. This is consistent with the literature indicating that thrifed items may raise authenticity concerns because of limited guarantees, while branded goods may still face counterfeiting risks when purchased through unofficial channels (Gartner Research, 2025; McKinsey, 2024).

3.4.2 Condition and Durability Concerns

Condition and durability concerns obtained an overall weighted mean of 3.05, interpreted as Agree. Respondents agreed that they hesitate to buy thrifed items because of wear and tear, expect branded products to last longer, and are willing to repair or alter thrifed items when needed.

These results indicate that product condition affects willingness to purchase, particularly for thrifed items. However, the willingness to repair or alter thrifed goods shows that some consumers remain open to secondhand purchases if quality is visible or manageable. This supports the literature stating that consumers may worry about the remaining lifespan of pre-owned products, while branded products are often perceived as more durable because of quality standards and warranties (Bolton et al., 2023; McKinsey, 2024).

3.4.3 Social Stigma and Status Perception

Social stigma and status perception received an overall weighted mean of 2.82, interpreted as Agree. Respondents agreed that some people associate thrift shopping with lower social status, but they also agreed that they do not feel stigma when buying thrifed items. Buying branded products to enhance social image received a lower mean of 2.54. The findings suggest that stigma toward thrift shopping still exists but is weakening. Respondents appear increasingly comfortable buying secondhand items, while branded products still carry some social value. This aligns with literature explaining that ukay-ukay in the Philippines has historically been associated with poverty but is increasingly embraced by younger consumers for uniqueness, sustainability, and personal style (Vogue Philippines, 2025; Villarente, 2024). It also supports the view that thrift shopping is shifting from a stigmatized practice to a more sustainable and aspirational choice (Gartner Research, 2025).

3.4.4 Shopping Convenience and Availability

Shopping convenience and availability obtained an overall weighted mean of 3.19, interpreted as Agree, making it the highest among the challenge-related areas. Respondents agreed that branded products are easier to shop for because they are widely available and that thrift shopping requires more effort. However, they strongly agreed that online platforms have made thrift shopping more convenient, with a mean of 3.30. The findings show that convenience plays a major role in consumer behavior. Branded products remain easier to access through established retail channels, but digital platforms are reducing barriers to thrift shopping. This supports the literature stating that thrifed items are now more accessible through online resale platforms and physical stores, though unpredictable inventory remains a challenge (ThredUp, 2022). It also reflects the broader rise of omnichannel retailing, which has increased consumer expectations for seamless shopping experiences (Effective Retail Leader, 2025).

4 Conclusion & Recommendations

This study concludes that consumer buying behavior toward thrifed and branded items is strongly influenced by affordability, quality assurance, personal preferences, lifestyle, sustainability, authenticity, and shopping convenience. Thrifed items are increasingly valued for their affordability, uniqueness, environmental relevance, and self-expression, while branded items remain preferred for perceived quality, durability, reputation, and status. The findings further show that consumers, particularly younger respondents, are becoming more open to secondhand shopping because of practical, value-driven, and identity-based considerations. Although brand loyalty remains present, it does not prevent consumers from exploring thrifed alternatives when these offer acceptable quality, value, and convenience.

Based on the findings, greater awareness should be promoted regarding the value and benefits of thrift shopping, especially in terms of sustainability, affordability, and uniqueness. Since respondents strongly considered price, quality, and personal

style, future promotions or programs may focus on these factors to help consumers make better purchasing decisions. Businesses and platforms offering both thrifted and branded products may better serve diverse consumer preferences, while virtual thrift stores should continue improving online secondhand shopping because respondents considered them useful and time-saving. Retailers may also emphasize product quality, authenticity, convenience, and reliable information to strengthen consumer trust in both thrifted and branded markets.

The study provided useful insights into consumer buying behavior toward thrifted and branded items; however, it was conducted with a specific number of respondents from similar backgrounds. Future researchers may expand the study by involving larger groups from different locations, age groups, and income levels. Other variables may also be explored, including the role of web trends, social networking sites, and consumer attachment or affection toward specific items.

Compliance with ethical standards

The study was conducted in accordance with institutional ethical standards, with voluntary participation, informed consent, and confidentiality of respondents' information strictly observed. Ethical approval was secured where applicable, and all collected data were used solely for research purposes. The authors declare no conflict of interest, acknowledge all contributions to the study, and affirm responsibility for the accuracy, originality, and copyright ownership of the manuscript.

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