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The Influence of Sustainability Awareness: The Role of Subjective Norm and Perceived Behavior Control as Intervening Variables on Sustainable Fashion Purchasing Behavior through Thrifting as an Alternative Solution to Fast Fashion in Indonesia (Case Study of All Parts of Jakarta)

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of sustainability awareness on sustainable fashion purchasing behavior, with subjective norm and perceived behavior control as mediating variables. Primary data were collected from 158 respondents who are thrifting product consumers in Jakarta. Data were analyzed using partial least square (PLS) structural equation modeling. The results show that both subjective norm and perceived behavior control significantly mediate the relationship between sustainability awareness and purchasing behavior. This indicates that sustainability awareness alone does not directly lead to sustainable purchasing, but is strengthened through social influence and consumers' perceived control. The findings contribute theoretically by extending the application of the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework in sustainable fashion consumption and practically by offering insights for policymakers, thrift business actors, and sustainability advocates.

Keywords: Sustainability Awareness; Subjective Norm; Perceived Behavior Control; Purchasing Behavior; Thrifting.

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INTRODUCTION

The fashion industry is one of the most resource-intensive and polluting industries in the world. According to the Boston Consulting Group, in 2015, the global apparel industry consumed 79 billion cubic meters of water, generated 1.715 million tons of CO₂ emissions, and produced 92 million tons of waste. Cotton cultivation, for instance, requires approximately 2,700 liters of water to produce a single cotton T-shirt, equivalent to the amount of water a person drinks over a three-year period. Moreover, the textile industry is the second-largest consumer of water globally, and processes such as dyeing and finishing contribute to nearly 20% of industrial water pollution (Niinimäki et al., 2020). Polyester, one of the most widely used fabrics, takes about 200 years to decompose, releasing greenhouse gases such as methane during degradation (Bick et al., 2018).

The environmental impact of the fashion industry is also reflected in global emissions. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the fashion industry contributes nearly 10% of global carbon emissions. If unchecked, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change predicts that textile-related emissions could increase by 60% by 2030. In Indonesia, the fashion sector is a key contributor to the creative economy, accounting for 18.01% of revenue and contributing significantly to exports. However, this rapid growth has also fueled the rise of fast fashion, which promotes excessive production, rapid consumption cycles, and ultimately results in large amounts of textile waste (CNBC Indonesia, 2019).

In response, thrifting the practice of purchasing second-hand clothing has emerged as an alternative solution. Thrifting not only reduces textile waste but also promotes reuse and recycling. The trend has gained popularity in Indonesia, especially among younger generations, as it offers high-quality products at affordable prices. More importantly, thrifting aligns with sustainable consumption practices by extending product life cycles and reducing the demand for new fast fashion production. While previously associated with low-income communities, thrifting has now become a socially accepted and even fashionable choice, supported by changing consumer values and sustainability movements (Khamim, 2023; Zahro, 2022).

This study seeks to investigate how sustainability awareness, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control interact to shape sustainable purchasing behavior in the Indonesian context. Specifically, it addresses whether sustainability awareness alone is sufficient to change consumer behavior or whether it must be reinforced by social and psychological factors. Given the rising popularity of thrifting in Jakarta and the urgent need to mitigate the negative impacts of fast fashion, this research provides both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it extends the application of the SOR framework in consumer behavior research. Practically, it offers insights for policymakers, thrift retailers, and sustainability advocates in promoting sustainable consumption practices and reducing fashion-related environmental burdens.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) Theory

The SOR theory, first introduced by Hovland (1953), provides a framework for explaining how external stimuli influence internal psychological states, which then drive behavioral responses. In this model, the Stimulus can take the form of environmental cues such as sustainability campaigns, marketing communication, or broader ecological issues like climate change. The Organism represents the internal processes of consumers, which in this

study are operationalized through subjective norms and perceived behavioral control. Finally, the Response is reflected in sustainable purchasing behavior, such as choosing thrifted clothing over fast fashion alternatives. By applying the SOR theory, this study captures how sustainability awareness as a stimulus is processed internally and eventually translated into real consumer actions.

2.2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

This study is also aligned with three Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that serve as global calls to action for sustainability, with clear roles for different actors such as consumers, the public, and public figures (influencers) in supporting them:

1. **SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth):** Thrifting supports sustainable economic growth by encouraging small businesses and creative entrepreneurs. Consumers play a role through purchasing, society through acceptance of thrifting culture, and influencers by promoting it as a positive social and economic practice.
2. **SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production):** Thrifting encourages sustainable consumption and production patterns. Consumers reduce waste by buying used clothes, people build collective awareness, while influencers strengthen the legitimacy of thrifting as an environmentally friendly lifestyle.
3. **SDG 13 (Climate Action):** Thrifting lowers the carbon footprint of the fashion industry. Consumers contribute through shopping choices, the community through changes in collective behavior, and influencers by mobilizing the masses and increasing awareness of the impact of fast fashion.

2.3. Sustainability Awareness

Sustainability awareness refers to the level of consumer knowledge and understanding of the environmental, economic, and social consequences of consumption choices. Previous research (Hilal, 2023; Nadyasworo et al., 2023) highlights that consumers with higher sustainability awareness are more likely to consider the broader impacts of their purchases. However, awareness alone is often insufficient to ensure sustainable purchasing decisions without mediating influences such as social pressure or perceived control.

2.4. Subjective Norm

Subjective norm is defined as the perceived social influence from family, peers, or society that guides individual decisions. In collectivist societies such as Indonesia, the role of subjective norms is particularly strong. Research by Siaputra and Isaac (2020) and Putra and Firdaus (2023) shows that consumers are more likely to engage in sustainable fashion consumption when significant others support or encourage such behavior. This suggests that social approval and cultural expectations serve as critical organism factors in the SOR model.

2.5. Perceived Behavioral Control

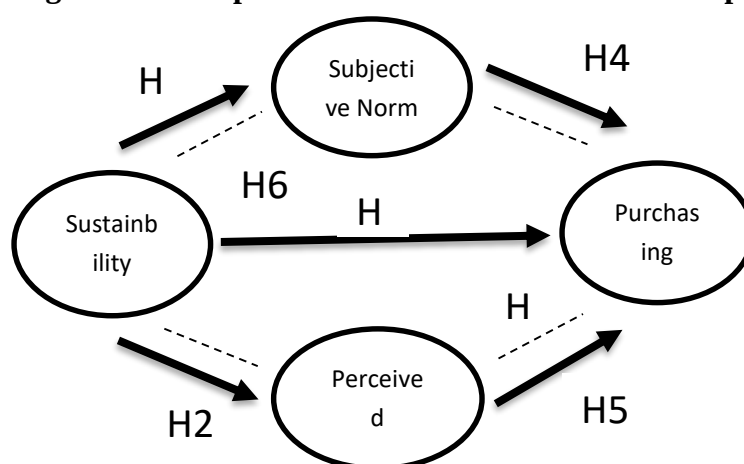
Perceived behavioral control (PBC) represents consumers' perceptions of their ability and resources to engage in sustainable practices. It includes financial capacity, product availability, and confidence in making sustainable choices. Research has consistently shown that PBC significantly influences purchasing intentions and actual behavior (Hamdiah, 2022; Vicente et al., 2021). In the context of thrifting, consumers with higher perceived control—such as ease of access to thrift shops or online platforms—are more likely to translate sustainability awareness into actual purchases.

2.6. Purchasing Behavior in Sustainable Fashion

Purchasing behavior refers to the actions and decision-making processes undertaken by consumers when buying fashion products. In the case of thrifting, purchasing behavior reflects both economic and sustainability considerations. Prior research has emphasized that purchasing behavior is not only determined by individual awareness but also shaped by cultural values, social acceptance, and consumer confidence (Zahro, 2022; Munawaroh, 2021).

2.7 Hypothesis & Research Model

Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Variable Relationships



METHOD

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design with a causal-explanatory approach to analyze the effect of sustainability awareness on sustainable purchasing behavior, mediated by subjective norm and perceived behavioral control. The quantitative approach was selected because it enables hypothesis testing and statistical measurement of variable relationships objectively (Sekaran dan Bougie, 2020).

3.2. Population and Sample

The population of this research consisted of consumers in Jakarta who have purchased thrifted fashion products. Jakarta was chosen because it represents a metropolitan city where fast fashion consumption is dominant but where the thrifting trend is also significantly growing. A purposive sampling technique was applied with criteria: (1) respondents must have purchased thrift fashion products at least once in the past year, and (2) aged 17 years or older.

The sample size was 158 respondents, meeting the minimum requirement for PLS-SEM analysis (Hair et al., 2019).

3.3. Data Analysis

The data source in this study is primary data collected directly from the respondents. The data collection method used in this study involves the distribution of questionnaires using Gform, which is shared with respondents through distribution on social media such as Instagram, WhatsApp and TikTok. Questionnaire is a primary data collection method by asking questions to respondents. To be answered and then analyzed the results. (Sekaran and Bougie, 2020). The Likert scale is used to measure data in current research. Provide five alternative solutions, each with a score.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

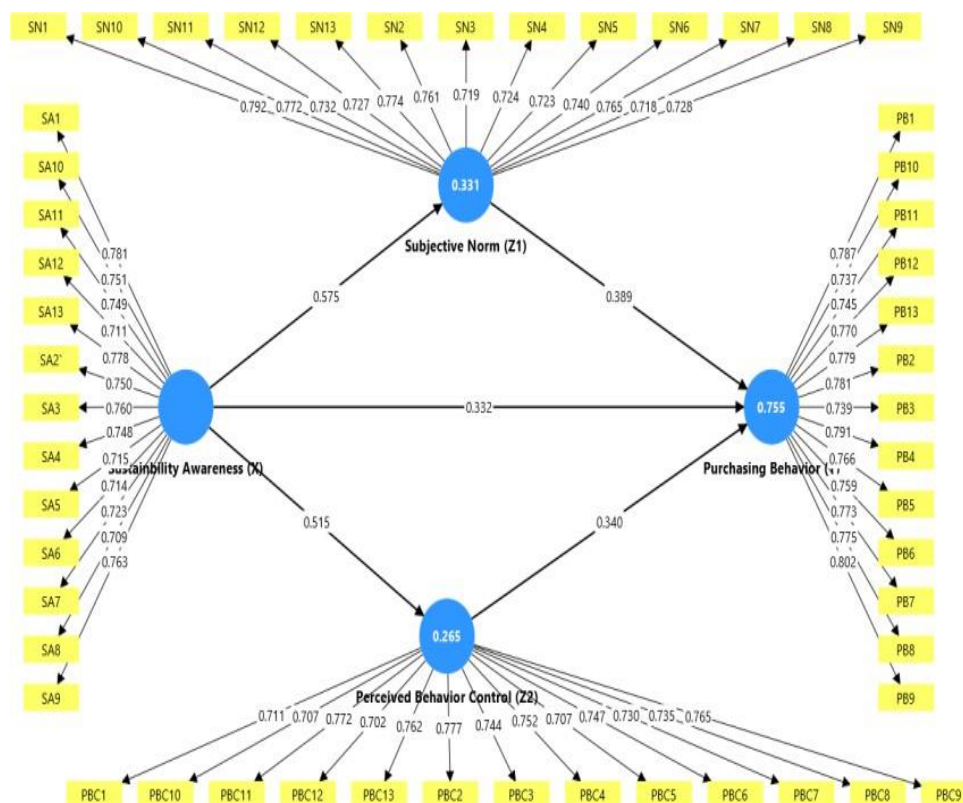
4.1 Results

According to the survey results, a total of 158 respondents participated in this study. The respondents were individuals in Jakarta who had purchased thrift fashion products. Their demographic profile is presented in the following table.

Table 1. Respondent Profile

Demographic Characteristic	Total	Percentage
Respondent Gender		
Male	95	60.1%
Famale	63	39.9%
Age		
10 – 18	24	15.2%
19 – 25	76	48.1%
26 – 45	50	31.6%
>46	8	5.1%
Job		
Student/Collegian	36	22.8%
Civil Servant/Pivide Employee	50	31.6%
Entrepreneur	39	24.7%
Freelance	21	13.3%
Other	12	7.6%

Figure 2. PLS Algorithm Results



All indicators have met the convergent validity, indicated by the loading factor value of each indicator that is above 0.70. This indicates that each indicator is able to represent its construct well and is valid for use in subsequent analysis.

Table 2. Uji Discriminant Validity (Fornell Larcker)

	Perceived Behavior Control (Z2)	Purchasing Behavior (Y)	Subjective Norm (Z1)	Sustainability Awareness (X)
Perceived Behavior Control (Z2)	0,740			
Purchasing Behavior (Y)	0,676	0,770		
Subjective Norm (Z1)	0,423	0,724	0,745	

Sustainability Awareness (X)	0,515	0,731	0,575	0,743
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In this model it meets the discriminant validity test with the Fornell–Larcker criterion because the square root value of AVE of each construct is higher than its correlation with other constructs.

Table 3. Construct Reliability and Validity

Variabel	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Perceived Behavior Control (Z2)	0,940	0,547
Purchasing Behavior (Y)	0,950	0,593
Subjective Norm (Z1)	0,942	0,555
Sustainability Awareness (X)	0,941	0,552

The results of the composite reliability test show a satisfactory value, namely all variables have been reliable because all latent variable values have a composite reliability value of more than 0.70, this means that the construct has good reliability or the questionnaire used as a tool in this study

Table 4. R Square Value

Variabel Endogen	R Square
Perceived Behavior Control (Z2)	0,265
Purchasing Behavior (Y)	0,755
Subjective Norm (Z1)	0,331

Table 5. F Square Value

Hubungan	F Square
Perceived Behavior Control (Z2) -> Purchasing Behavior (Y)	0,335
Subjective Norm (Z1) -> Purchasing Behavior (Y)	0,399
Sustainability Awareness (X) -> Perceived Behavior Control (Z2)	0,361

Sustainability Awareness (X) -> Purchasing Behavior (Y)	0,260
Sustainability Awareness (X) -> Subjective Norm (Z1)	0,495

Table 6. Q Square Value

Variabel	Q²predict
Perceived Behavior Control (Z2)	0,250
Purchasing Behavior (Y)	0,524
Subjective Norm (Z1)	0,317

Table 7. Direct Relationship Hypothesis Test

	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T_{value}	P_{value}
Perceived Behavior Control (Z2) - > Purchasing Behavior (Y)	0,340	0,339	0,061	5,621	0,000
Subjective Norm (Z1) - > Purchasing Behavior (Y)	0,389	0,389	0,045	8,621	0,000
Sustainability Awareness (X) - > Perceived Behavior Control (Z2)	0,515	0,522	0,052	9,932	0,000

Sustainability Awareness (X) - > Purchasing Sustainability	0,332	0,332	0,063	5,301	0,000
Awareness (X) - > Subjective Norm (Z1)	0,575	0,579	0,063	9,157	0,000

The relationship between Perceived Behavior Control and Purchasing Behavior has a p-value of 0.000 with a t-value of 5.621, while the Subjective Norm of Purchasing Behavior is also significant with a p-value of 0.000 and a t-value of 8.621. In addition, Sustainability Awareness had a significant influence on Perceived Behavior Control (p = 0.000; t = 9.932), against Purchasing Behavior (p = 0.000; t = 5.301), and against Subjective Norm (p = 0.000; t = 9.157). These results show that all direct relationship pathways in the model have a strong and significant influence.

Table 8. Mediation Relationship Hypothesis Test

	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	Tvalue	Pvalue	Jenis Mediasi
Sustainability Awareness (X) -> Subjective Norm (Z1) - > Purchasing Behavior (Y)	0,224	0,225	0,036	6,232	0,000	Partially Mediation
Sustainability Awareness (X) - > Perceived	0,175	0,176	0,032	5,511	0,000	

Behavior

Control (Z2) ->

Purchasing

Behavior (Y)

It can be seen that the variables Subjective Norm (Z1) and Perceived Behavior Control (Z2) significantly mediate the influence of Sustainability Awareness (X) on Purchasing Behavior (Y). This is indicated by a p-value of 0.000 in both mediation pathways, as well as t-values of 6.232 and 5.511, respectively, which are well above the minimum limit of 1.96

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the role of sustainability awareness, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control in shaping sustainable purchasing behavior within the context of thrifting in Jakarta, using the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework. The findings revealed that while sustainability awareness significantly influences subjective norm and perceived behavioral control, it does not directly lead to sustainable purchasing behavior. Instead, its effect is mediated by social influence and perceived ease of action, highlighting the importance of psychological and social factors in translating awareness into real consumer practices.

The results carry several theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the study confirms the relevance of the SOR framework in consumer behavior research, showing that external stimuli (awareness) require internal organism processes (subjective norm and perceived behavioral control) to generate responses (behavior). Practically, the findings suggest that increasing sustainability awareness alone is insufficient; businesses, policymakers, and advocates should focus on strengthening social norms and consumer confidence to foster greater adoption of thrifting and other sustainable practices.

To address the research problem, the key lies in multi-stakeholder collaboration. Thrift retailers can collaborate with influencers to normalize thrifting as a fashionable and eco-friendly choice. Policymakers should design campaigns and regulations that improve accessibility, affordability, and information transparency regarding sustainable fashion. Meanwhile, the public can reinforce thrifting culture through community support and shared practices, ensuring that sustainable behavior becomes a collective norm rather than an individual effort.

Finally, this study provides directions for future research. Scholars are encouraged to expand the model by including other variables such as environmental concern, lifestyle orientation, or cultural values to enrich the understanding of sustainable fashion consumption. Comparative studies across regions or countries could also shed light on cultural differences in adopting thrifting behavior. Furthermore, longitudinal research may reveal how sustainability awareness and behavior evolve over time as sustainability movements and policies continue to grow.

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