Customer Perspective Towards Secondhand Clothing and Its Impact on Customer's Loyalty: The Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction

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Abstract:
This research explores how customer perception of critical, hedonic, economic, and virtuosity could affect their satisfaction and ultimately lead to repurchase intentions. Many businesses are working on converting themselves into sustainable businesses to contribute to the circular economy. Green marketing is a method that business owners can use to help their businesses become sustainable. A quantitative Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) approach was used to investigate the relationship among the variables modeled. This study covered 125 respondents as primary data resources. Questionnaires designed on a 1-5 Likert scale were used to collect the data. The results show that critical and hedonic aspects insignificantly influence customer satisfaction when wearing thrift fashion.
Meanwhile, economics and virtuosity positively influence customer satisfaction when they wear thrift fashion. Customer satisfaction positively impacts and mediates the influence of loyalty, which is one of the other indicators. The study contributes to understanding customer behavior toward secondhand products to develop strategies for enhancing customer satisfaction toward loyalty.

Keywords: secondhand, thrifting, perception, satisfaction, loyalty

1.   Introduction

Thrift fashion is increasingly popular [1]. This phenomenon is displayed on digital platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and others. Marketers, alone or using influencers, display products by live streaming in their digital thrift stores. The emergence of thrifted fashion accommodates the desires of people who want to appear fashionable on a limited budget. It allows fashion lovers to stay stylish without spending much money because the items purchased are often much more affordable [2]. In addition to being economical, thrifted fashion offers the opportunity to find unique and vintage clothing that is not easily found in conventional clothing stores [3]. Thrifted fashion may also contain nostalgic value from these used clothes, considering that these clothes can tell stories or represent past trends.

Thrift fashion is environmentally friendly because it reduces textile waste. Producing new textiles in the fashion industry consumes energy and water, which causes fabric manufacturing to be landfill disposal from the previous customer, which generates tremendous environmental and resource challenges [4]. The vast volumes of fashion apparel led customers to quickly purchase, wear, and discard that clothing [5]. Such a phenomenon drives excessive consumption in the fashion industry, known as fast fashion. Experts encourage customers to purchase thrifted fashion clothing since it costs less and reduces fashion waste produced by fashion industries [6]. As a result, customers have become more aware of efforts to protect the environment. Human concern for the importance of environmental preservation has led to a "reusing things" lifestyle, which has become one of the solutions to environmental problems and is now known as thrifting. Therefore, this eco-friendly movement contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on Responsible Consumption and Production [7]. For many people, buying secondhand clothes is now not just about appearance but also about voicing desires and social responsibility in fashion.

Customers would buy fashion clothing instead of renting it if the cost is the same [8]. Thrift fashion is the solution; customers' perceptions encourage purchasing secondhand clothing. That should be considered since customers do not want to borrow others' clothing but want to own it. Some thrift fashion stores are available to popular fashion brands and designer products [9]. Those branded products are becoming the

purpose and reason why people buy secondhand clothing. By shopping in thrifted stores, customers can buy unaffordable clothing at a reasonable deal price [8]. Therefore, valuable clothing with a low cost that brings out satisfaction from each customer will be the key drivers for encouraging customers to repurchase and consume secondhand clothing through thrift stores [10]. Middle-up-class customers cherish the uniqueness and value of thrifted fashion, ignoring the old perception that those products are for lower-class people with low incomes who cannot afford full-price apparel [11]. Thrift shopping is a shopping lifestyle that supports and protects environmental sustainability. However, there are still some more factors that push customers to buy secondhand fashion products.

Previous studies revealed several factors that affect thrifted fashion purchases to evoke customer satisfaction. Customers will be satisfied if they receive what they want. Customers are more interested in buying secondhand clothing if they are more affordable and have the potential for high self-expression [12]. Koay et al. (2023) found that secondhand clothing customers or non-customers depend on some risks like aesthetic, financial, social, psychological, and sanitary risks [13]. Other factors that play an important role in evoking satisfaction in customers are originality [14], desire to be unique [15], and social status [16]. Their originality makes them unique and has a higher social status, especially with those branded thrifted fashion. Therefore, customers want to hunt for and find luxury clothing, which has caused secondhand shopping to become a luxury trend in the fashion world.

The circular economy is a model that uses resources effectively and minimizes the waste produced to protect the environment; therefore, it would benefit the economy socially [17]. Kant Hvass in 2015, investigated how reselling some products produced by fashion companies could help them adapt their business models closer to sustainability [18]. Through that finding, business owners started to apply them by reselling secondhand clothing so that that clothing may have a second life. Thrifting was a lifestyle done by the lower-class economy societies, so thrifting still carries the stigma of poverty before the thrifting trend [19]. However, this stigma has evolved into a conscious effort toward sustainability by the influence of human concern for environmental sustainability, coinciding with the trend of thrifting fashion [20].

Referring to these various phenomena, this study develops several hypotheses. Using thrifted fashion can reduce excessive consumption through more intelligent purchases, extending product life with reuse, recycling, and reduction. People aware of the importance of preserving the environment may consider this when choosing their fashion products. Awareness of environmental sustainability is a critical aspect in making decisions [21], [8], [22], [23], [24]. Thus, the decision to use thrifted fashion will give them satisfaction.

H1: Critical aspects of thrifting positively influence customer satisfaction.

Various styles of clothing are a way to express oneself. Stylish, unique, and creative styles are one way to express their identity visually. From the aspect of hedonism, choosing branded fashion is often a choice to actualize oneself because branded goods contain prestige attributes. Thrifted fashion facilitates the need for self-actualization by wearing branded fashion products at affordable prices and getting satisfaction.

H2: Hedonic aspects of thrifting positively influence customer satisfaction.

The thrifted fashion business is increasingly mushrooming, meaning many customers look for used clothes in various platform stores. Several sellers on the platform sell used clothes (thrift) at low prices ranging from tens to hundreds of thousands of rupiah. Low prices, good quality, and brand are the attractions for customers who buy used clothes, mainly from abroad. Starting from this idea, it can be hypothesized:

H3: The economic aspects of thrifting positively influence customer satisfaction.

Environmental problems have become a global issue, one of which is the excessive accumulation of waste (especially plastic). The increasing amount of waste in modern life is seen very rapidly, negatively impacting the environment in various forms, such as disease and natural disasters. Various efforts have been made to reduce plastic use, namely by using the 3R method of recycling, reuse, and reduce. Therefore, using

used goods, including thrifted fashion, is wise. Wise behavior can provide satisfaction for those who do it. Raharja and Indati (2019) show that policy variables make an effective contribution to satisfaction [25].

H4: Customer's perceptions of the virtuosity aspects of thrifting positively influence their level of customer satisfaction.

Customer loyalty is beneficial for the company. One way for companies to increase customer loyalty is to fulfill satisfaction. Many studies have stated this. Customer loyalty is not formed quickly but through a learning process based on experience. When customers get something according to expectations, a repeat purchase will occur. This means that customer loyalty has been created. The relationship between satisfaction and loyalty is when customers reach the highest level of satisfaction, which creates a strong emotional bond and long-term commitment to the company's brand [26]. This study hypothesizes

H5: Customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between customers' perceptions of the critical, hedonic, economic, and virtuosity aspects of thrifting towards customer loyalty in thrifted fashion repurchase intentions.

2. Method

This research was conducted in Indonesia, namely Java, which includes Central Java, West Java, East Java, and outside Java. Overall, it covers 125 respondents who mostly live in Central Java. Specifically, this study targets respondents aged 17 years and over, adults who can already determine their preferences, use social media, and have bought and worn thrifted clothes. This specialization is intended to obtain flexible respondents and determine the type of fashion to be purchased according to one's style.

Table 1: Respondents Profile

	Demographics Variables	%
Gender	Female	64.00
	Male	36.00
Age	0-19 years old	3.20
	20-29 years old	77.60
	30-40 years old	7.20
	> 40 years old	12.00
Occupation	Private Employee	12.80
	College Students	76.00
	School Students	0.80
	Entrepreneur	3.20
	Housewife	7.20
Residency	West Java	10.40
	Central Java	83.20

	East Java	3.20
	Outer Java	3.20
Education	Elementary	0.80
	High School	59.20
	3-Year Diploma	4.00
	Bachelor	36.00
Income per Month	< Rp. 1.000.000	41.60
	Rp. 1.000.000 – Rp. 3.500.000	36.80
	Rp. 3.500.001 – Rp. 5.500.000	13.60
	> Rp. 5.500.000	8.00

Source: Primary data processed

This research uses primary data. This study used convenience sampling as the sampling technique using a questionnaire approach. The questionnaires were designed using Google Forms and distributed through social media such as Line, Instagram, and WhatsApp. The data is the respondents' perceptions related to the indicators arranged in the questionnaire statements. To be processed according to the study objectives, the respondents' responses to the statements are quantified using a 1-5 Likert scale approach (Strongly Disagree - Strongly Agree). The questionnaire includes 31 statements. Considering the value of the loading factor, all statement items are declared valid with a P-value of 0.000 and r statistics of more than 0.05. Thus, all statement items designed in the questionnaire can be used for further processing.

A quantitative inferential Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) approach was used to address that issue. It examines the essence of the relationship that was proposed. The SmartPLS 3.0 statistics package tool was used to process the SEM model, as presented in Figure 1. It was chosen because SmartPLS 3.0 is compatible enough to test the relationship between variables with small sample requirements and can test formative and reflective SEM models with different indicator measurement scales in a model.
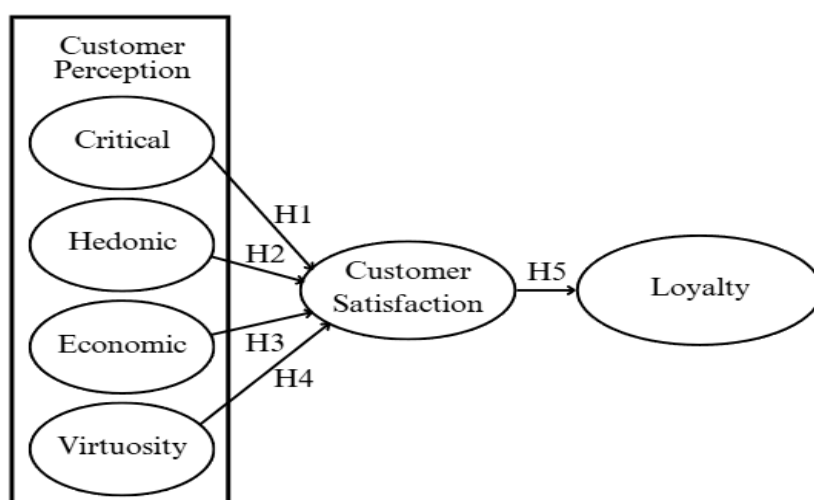

Figure 1: Model Specification

Table 2: Variables Measurement

Variables	Indicators	Source
Critical (X1)	Ecological Concern (X1.1)	[21], [8], [22], [23], [24]
	Local Economy (X1.2)	
	To conserve natural resources (X1.3)	
	Reducing Fashion Waste (X1.4)	
	Recycling Movement (X1.5)	
Hedonic (X2)	New and Trendy Items (X2.1)	[27][28]
	Unique Items (X2.2)	
	Styling Fashion (X2.3)	
	Branded Products (X2.4)	
	New Model Outfit (X2.5)	
Economic (X3)	Cheap Price (X3.1)	[22], [28]
	Stylish yet affordable fashion (X3.2)	
	Saving money and allocating for other needs (X3.3)	
	Aware of the actual retail prices of branded products but cheaper in thrift shops (X3.4)	
	Locating and bargaining for the price of the desired clothing (X3.5)	
Virtuosity (X4)	Thrifting as a hobby (X4.1)	[29], [30]
	Thrift shopping with a friend (X4.2)	
	Enjoy thrifting with others who do thrift shopping, too (X4.3)	
	Like unique fashion (X4.4)	
	Thrift shopping is fun (X4.5)	
Customer Satisfaction (M)	Repurchasing when adding new products (M1.1)	[31][32]
	The thrift shopping experience was beyond satisfying (M1.2)	
	Products fulfill wants and needs (M1.3)	
	Thrilled with thrift shop purchases (M1.4)	
	Suggesting a thrift shop to friends and relatives (M1.5)	
Loyalty (Y)	Have worn the clothes from thrift shop many times (Y1.1)	[32][33]
	Consistently satisfied with the quality and style of clothing from thrift shops (Y1.2)	
	Repurchase Thrifted Products (Y1.3)	
	Thrift shop products suit personal needs (Y1.4)	
	Purchasing thrift shop items plays a role in environmental sustainability (Y1.5)	
	Sharing secondhand discoveries with others (Y1.6)	

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Result

3.1.1. Construct Validity and Reliability Test

Indicators are tested with convergent validity to measure indicators' reliability and ensure that those indicators are reliable enough to be a measure variable. Cronbach's Alpha value reflects a construct's reliability. The latent variable's construct is reliable if the Cronbach's alpha value is > 0.70. This study uses Average Variance Extracted (AVE) to ensure that each latent variable construct differs from the other construct. If the value of the AVE score is more than 0.5, the latency variable construct differs from the other constructs. A dimensionality test ensures that the measurement process can be done correctly without any problems. This test uses two measuring methods to check if each indicator is reliable: composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha. The test is considered reliable if both measurements have a cut-value of 0.7. The model in this study is considered reliable since it fulfills all of the validity and reliability requirements, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Validity and Reliability Test

	Cronbach's Alpha	*rho_A*	*Composite Reliability*	*Average Variance Extracted (AVE)*
Critical (X1)	0.903	0.914	0.928	0.723
Hedonic (X2)	0.749	0.768	0.828	0.494
Economic (X3)	0.851	0.859	0.894	0.629
Virtuosity (X4)	0.902	0.916	0.928	0.720
Customer Satisfaction (M)	0.889	0.892	0.919	0.694
Loyalty (Y)	0.883	0.892	0.912	0.635

Source: primary data, processed

Discriminant validity shown in Table 4 provides the results with the Fornell-Lacker criteria [34]. This correlation matrix shows that customer satisfaction (M) and loyalty (Y) exhibit a strong positive correlation. As a result, when customers are satisfied with thrifted fashion, it is more likely that they will repurchase the product and become loyal customers. The most potent cause of customer satisfaction is virtuosity, followed by economics. Research done by Machado found that there is an integration between three-dimensional customer motivations in buying secondhand fashion that is economical, critical, and hedonic, also added with virtuosity [35]. This test confirms that each study's variables are unique and represent separate constructs [36].

Table 4: Discriminant Validity

	Critical (X1)	Customer Satisfaction (M)	Economic (X3)	Hedonic (X2)	Loyalty (Y)	Virtuosity (X4)
Critical (X1)	0.850					
Customer Satisfaction (M)	0.533	0.833				
Economic (X3)	0.399	0.602	0.793			
Hedonic (X2)	0.553	0.594	0.608	0.703		
Loyalty (Y)	0.549	0.865	0.571	0.582	0.797	
Virtuosity (X4)	0.557	0.749	0.482	0.646	0.781	0.849

Source: primary data, processed

Table 5: The Coefficient of Determination (RSquare)

	R Square Adjusted
Customer Satisfaction (M)	0.633
Loyalty (Y)	0.746

Source: primary data, processed

3.1.2. Path Coefficient

This study aims to identify whether critical, hedonic, economic, and virtuosity could affect customer loyalty, with customer satisfaction as the mediating variable. The analysis is illustrated as a path shown in Figure 3.1. This path diagram represents an investigation of how four dimensions, critical, hedonic, economic, and virtuosity, could grow customer satisfaction, thus becoming the process of repurchasing behavior until the customer becomes loyal. Six variables construct this study. Customer perception, such as critical, hedonic, economic, and virtuosity, acts as the independent variable. These independent variables will affect the dependent variable, which is loyalty. In this study, the independent and dependent variables are mediated by customer satisfaction as the mediating variable.
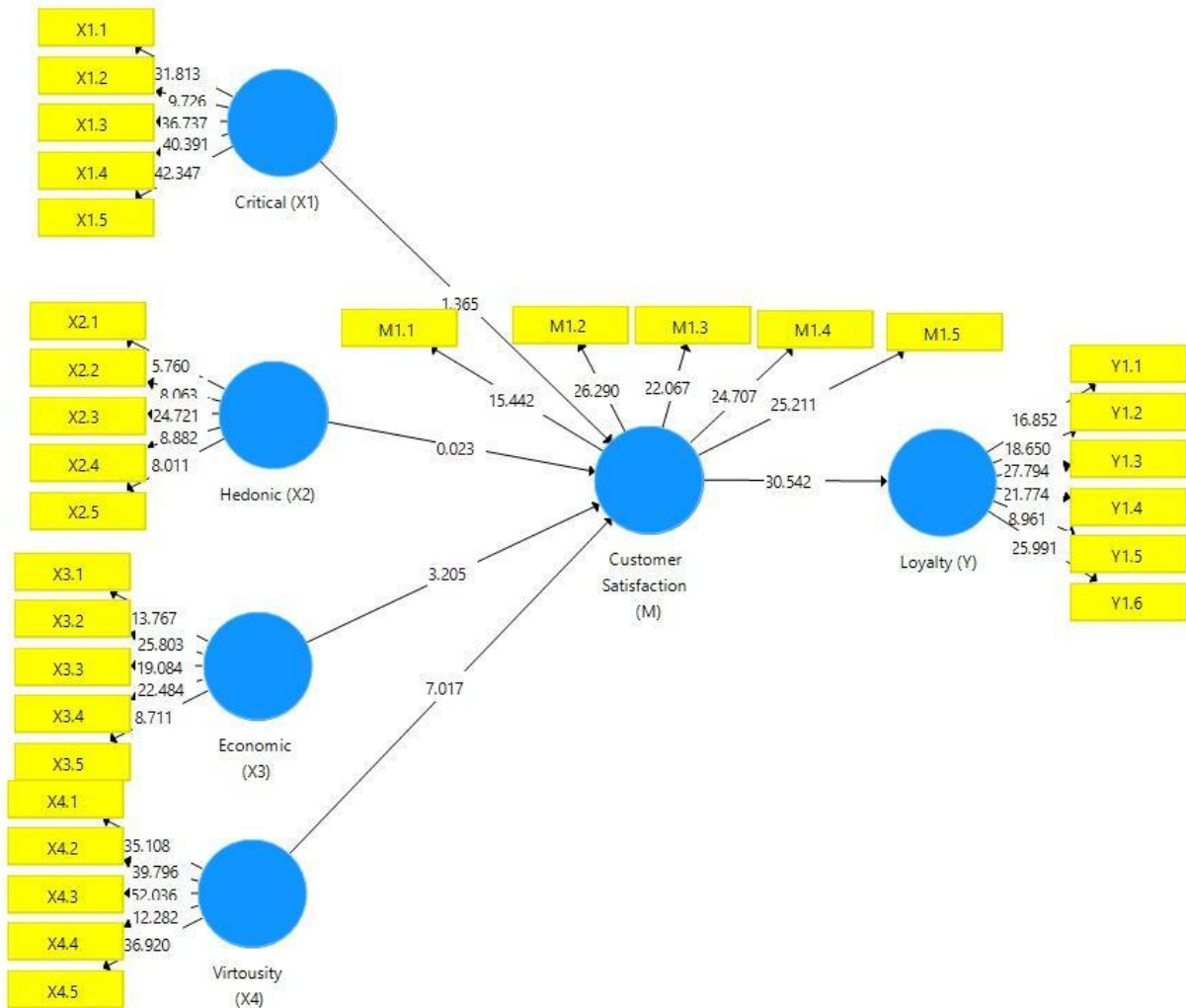
Figure 2: Path Diagrams
Source: primary data, processed

3.1.3. Hypothesis Test

There are five proposed hypotheses. Those hypotheses are (1) Customers' perceptions on the critical aspects of thrifting have a positive influence on their level of customer satisfaction; (2) Customer's perceptions on the hedonic aspects of thrifting have a positive influence on their level of customer satisfaction; (3) Customer's perceptions on the economic aspects of thrifting have a positive influence on their level of customer satisfaction; (4) Customer's perceptions on the virtuosity aspects of thrifting have a positive influence on their level of customer satisfaction; (5) Customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between customer's perceptions of the critical, hedonic, economic, and virtuosity aspects of thrifting towards customer loyalty in thrifted fashion repurchase intentions.

This study begins with an assumption that customers' perceptions of thrifted fashion include critical, hedonic, economic, and virtuosity aspects. Customers will be satisfied with something if they get what they want, and these aspects could increase satisfaction among customers. Therefore, customers are satisfied if they receive what they expect from the product they purchase. Thus, the satisfaction will encourage customers to be loyal by repurchasing the products bought.

Table 6: Path Coefficient

	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	Decisions
Critical (X1) □ Customer Satisfaction (M)	0.112	1.365	0.173	Declined
Customer Satisfaction (M) □ Loyalty (Y)	0.865	30.542	0.000	Accepted
Economic (X3) □ Customer Satisfaction (M)	0.294	3.205	0.001	Accepted
Hedonic (X2) □ Customer Satisfaction (M)	0.002	0.023	0.982	Declined
Virtuosity (X4) □ Customer Satisfaction (M)	0.543	7.017	0.000	Accepted

Source: primary data, processed

Table 6 shows the result of hypothesis tests for various relationships between variables. The variables have a positive connection if the p-value is less than 0.05. However, if the p-value is more than 0.05, it is not statistically significant. Only half of the four independent variables have a positive relationship with the other variable. Economic and virtuosity positively influence customer satisfaction when they purchase thrifted fashion products. This may be caused by customers getting good quality or even branded products at a lower price. Other than economics, virtuosity positively affects customer satisfaction. Customers' acknowledgment of good products can help them find good products sold in thrift stores. Therefore, customers are satisfied with good products and services in thrift stores. As a result, customer satisfaction leads customers to become loyal by repurchasing the product.

On the contrary, critical and hedonic are not statistically significant to customer satisfaction. According to a study by Chitturi, critical and hedonic are significant to customer satisfaction [37]. However, this study observes how customers respond to thrifted fashion, so the theory from Chitturi does not apply in this study. Thrifted fashion can contribute to environmental conservation. However, customers do not consider saving the environment when buying thrifted products. As a result, they do not think they are contributing to saving the environment; they purchase thrifted fashion for another reason.

Table 7: Specific Indirect Effects

	Specific Indirect Effects	P Values
Critical (X1) -> Customer Satisfaction (M) -> Loyalty (Y)	0.097	0.177
Economic (X3) -> Customer Satisfaction (M) -> Loyalty (Y)	0.254	0.002
Hedonic (X2) -> Customer Satisfaction (M) -> Loyalty (Y)	0.002	0.982
Virtuosity (X4) -> Customer Satisfaction (M) -> Loyalty (Y)	0.470	0.000

Source: primary data, processed

3.2. Discussion

Previous studies discovered that customer perceptions such as critical, hedonic, economic, and virtuosity could affect customer satisfaction in consuming products. In this study, the data analysis shows that those customer perception indicators partially affect customer satisfaction. Therefore, there might be more indicators that can evoke satisfaction in customers buying secondhand clothing products. A customer's experience when they visit a store could impact their satisfaction. For example, the store's environmental characteristics, like music, layout, cleanliness, parking lot, and lighting, are crucial conditions that affect customer satisfaction [38]. Correspondingly, the previous study by Burman et al. (2013) found that young people, like college students, enjoy thrifting when they involve their family and friends in shopping for secondhand fashion [39]. Similar to the respondents' perceptions in this study, they agree that they enjoy shopping for thrifted fashion when they are doing it with their family or friends. This results from virtuosity, which is significant in growing satisfaction when customers shop thrift. Similarly to the existing literature, the correlation between economics and satisfaction in purchasing thrifted fashion is also reaffirmed in this study. Customers feel that thrifted fashion is a prospect to purchase more items for less money. Customer perception of materialism aligns with Guiot and Roux's (2010) pricing study on second-hand goods [40].

This study rejects hypotheses that critical aspects of the environment and policy positively affect satisfaction with wearing thrifted fashion. However, respondents in this study tend to agree that purchasing secondhand fashion products is an act to support environmental concerns by reusing products and reducing the depletion of waste from the fashion industry [41]. However, this critical reason is not strong enough to grow satisfaction in them when they purchase thrifted fashion products. These findings are similar to the previous study by Halicki et al. (2024) [42], which stated that environmental factors do not affect customers' intention to purchase secondhand fashion. This contradiction between these studies is caused by the differences in operationalizing thrifted fashion behavior. Some studies operationalized thrifted fashion behavior by customer intentions, attitudes, and previous thrifted fashion experiences. As mentioned in this paper, a customer's previous thrifted fashion purchase experience is used in this research. Customers know that purchasing a thrifted fashion product will help protect the environmental condition, but this is not the main reason they want to purchase secondhand clothing in thrift stores. Arnould and Bardhi gave the idea that secondhand clothes purchases happened because of utilitarian needs and hedonic aspects [30].

Evaluating the hypotheses that economic and virtuosity (X4) could significantly influence a customer's loyalty with customer satisfaction as the partial mediating variable. The situation is shown in the optimistic significance of economic customer perception on customer satisfaction toward loyalty and virtuosity customer perception on customer satisfaction toward loyalty. However, customer perceptions of critical and hedonic are not validated as an independent variable to be mediated by customer satisfaction toward loyalty. This study has proven that customer perceptions of economic and virtuosity influence loyalty toward thrifted fashion products.

In measuring the ability of the developed model, determination analysis is used to describe the variations of the dependent variable, which are customer satisfaction and loyalty. Table 5 shows that the adjusted R-square represents the coefficient of determination and the outcome of the determination test. The adjusted R-squared for customer satisfaction (M) is 0.633, meaning that 63.3% of the variance in customer satisfaction is explained by the independent variables, customer perceptions, including critical, hedonic, economic, and virtuosity. Next is loyalty, with an adjusted R-square of 0.746, which indicates that the independent variable in this study model could explain 74.6% of the variance in customer loyalty. However, the rest of the percentage shows that other variables outside this model could influence a customer to be satisfied and loyal toward thrifted fashion.

In this study, hedonic is not statistically significant. This may be caused by the different cultures in which the study is conducted. The hedonic in this study is the satisfaction when a customer wears a thrifted fashion. Customers may enjoy treasure hunting with their family and friends. Customers could also find branded products in thrift stores. However, deep inside them, they are unsatisfied with their secondhand branded fashion. This may also be caused by studying fashion, an instrument to show someone's social identity [43]. Therefore, this study agrees that customers purchase secondhand clothing because of utilitarian needs.

This study shows that customers are interested in purchasing secondhand clothing because of economic and virtuosity reasons. By purchasing secondhand products, they can get high-quality or branded clothing at an affordable price [44]. Many customers love it when they find unique products from the thrift store. This is why customers are satisfied with buying secondhand clothing in thrift stores. Hence, when customers are satisfied with their experience purchasing a product in a thrift store, they will return to that store and purchase another item there. If this happens many times, that customer can be called loyal. When many customers do that purchasing cycle and become loyal customers in thrifted fashion, they unfortunately, are contributing to support environmental sustainability.

4.   Conclusion and Recommendation

This study on customers' perceptions of thrifted fashion is statistically significant for customer satisfaction and loyalty. Two main factors strongly influence customer satisfaction and loyalty, which are economic and virtuosity. Customers will feel satisfied when they are able to receive high-quality or branded fashion products at an affordable price (economic). They are also satisfied when they have unique products that not many people have.

The critical aspect is the main reason why thrifted fashion is used for a green economy. However, this aspect could not strongly influence customer satisfaction. The hedonic aspect is not statistically significant in customer satisfaction when purchasing secondhand clothing. Customers could get branded and high-quality products through thrifting, though they knew that those products were secondhand and belonged to someone else. Therefore, this customer perception indicator could increase customer satisfaction. This satisfaction is an important variable that will encourage customers to repurchase thrifted fashion products.

Through this research, thrifted fashion stores could pay attention to customer perceptions' economic and virtuosity aspects. These aspects help find a suitable marketing strategy. Although low prices are the strength of thrifted fashion products, thrifted business owners should keep their products of high quality. This is an important aspect of growing satisfaction among customers. Business owners could also improve the store's atmosphere to make it more comfortable and enjoyable for customers. Further research could be done about the other customer perceptions that could significantly influence customer satisfaction toward thrifted fashion. The following research could also involve thrifted fashion owners and study the customer behavior in purchasing thrifted fashion from the business owner's point of view.

5.   Acknowledgment

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