

Factors Affecting the Rise of Online Thrift Stores in Kathmandu Valley

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Abstract

This study examines the factors affecting the rise of online thrift stores in Kathmandu Valley. Consumer behavior and motivation is the dependent variable. The selected independent variables are social media, sustainable fashion, product information, affordability, and vintage items. The primary source of data is used to assess the opinions of respondents regarding social media, sustainable fashion, product information, affordability, and vintage items. The study is based on primary data of 120 respondents. To achieve the purpose of the study, structured questionnaire is prepared. The correlation and multiple regression models are estimated to test the significance and importance of factors affecting the rise of online thrift stores in Kathmandu Valley.

The study showed a positive impact of social media on consumer behavior and motivation. It indicates that higher the use of social media, higher would be consumer behavior and motivation. Similarly, the study showed a positive impact of sustainable fashion on consumer behavior and motivation. It indicates that use of sustainable fashion leads to change in consumer behavior and motivation. Likewise, the study showed a positive impact of product information on consumer behavior and motivation. It indicates that reliable product information leads to change in consumer behavior and motivation. Further, the study showed a positive impact of affordability on consumer behavior and motivation. It indicates that affordable price of product motivate consumer to purchase the products. In addition, the study also showed a positive impact of vintage items on consumer behavior and motivation. It indicates that increase in vintage items leads to change in consumer behavior and motivation.

Keywords: social media, sustainable fashion, product information, affordability, vintage items, consumer behavior and motivation

1. Introduction

An online thrift store is a sort of e-commerce website which offers used or secondhand products at a discount. These shops often have a wide selection of goods, including apparel, accessories, furniture, electronics, and home furnishings. These websites frequently accept donations or consignments of good-quality goods from people or organizations. Lauren

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Sherwood (2013) stated that online thrift stores were a great way to shop for secondhand clothing and accessories without having to physically visit a thrift store. The study noted that these stores were especially convenient for people who didn't have the time or patience to dig through racks of clothing in a physical store. Kosinski and Stephens (2017) examined the consumer motivations for online thrift store shopping. The study found that consumers who are motivated by environmental concerns are more likely to be female and have higher levels of education. Similarly, Eichhorn and Rohn (2019) analyzed the impact of consumer environmental values and attitudes on the purchase of secondhand clothing online. The study found that consumers who have stronger environmental values and attitudes were more likely to purchase secondhand clothing online. Additionally, the study found that consumers who perceived social norms as supportive of secondhand clothing were also more likely to make such purchases. Likewise, Lee and Kim (2020) assessed the influence of social media on the intention to purchase second-hand clothing online. The study found that social media have positive influence on the intention to purchase second-hand clothing online, and that this effect is partially mediated by attitudes towards secondhand clothing and perceived behavioral control.

Shalзад (2022) assessed the current issues and attitudes of customers towards online shopping. The study found that the factors financial risk and delivery risk have no significant impact on consumers' online shopping. Similarly, Kim and Park (2018) examined the factors influencing online thrift store patronage intentions: An empirical investigation. The study found that factors influencing online thrift depending on the consumer's age and gender. Similarly, Liu *et al* (2020) analyzed the motivations and barriers for online secondhand apparel shopping. The study identified several motivations for online secondhand apparel shopping, including cost savings, uniqueness, and sustainability. The study also found that perceived risks, lack of trust, and lack of sensory experience are barriers to online secondhand apparel shopping. Further, Lu *et al.* (2021) assessed the understanding role of social influence in online thrift store shopping. The study found that social influence has a significant positive effect on consumers' attitudes towards online thrift stores and their intentions to shop there. The study also found that the most influential sources of social influence are family and friends, followed by online reviews and recommendations from social media influencers. Kim and Park (2020) examined the exploring the factors affecting online thrift store loyalty: An empirical study. The study found the perceived use, trust,

satisfaction, and social influence were positively related to loyalty, while perceived risk was negatively related to loyalty. The study also found that trust played a mediating role in the relationship between perceived usefulness and loyalty.

Zhou *et al.* (2020) analyzed the effect of product presentation on online secondhand clothing purchase intention: The moderating role of perceived product authenticity. The study found that product presentation, including product images and descriptions, have significant and positive effect on purchase intention, and that perceived product authenticity moderated this relationship. Likewise, Kim and Kim (2021) assessed the impact of sustainability on the intention to purchase secondhand clothing: A cross-cultural comparison between the United States and Korea. The study found that sustainability has a stronger positive effect on purchase intention in Korea than in the United States, and that consumers in both countries were more likely to purchase secondhand clothing if they perceived it as fashionable and of good quality. Further, Kim *et al.* (2021) examined the impact of social media on consumer behavior in the context of online thrift stores. The study found that social media have positive effect on consumers' attitudes towards online thrift stores and their purchase intention, and that this effect was mediated by perceived usefulness and trust. The study also identified several factors that influence consumers' attitudes towards social media, including social influence, perceived risk, and perceived usefulness.

Kim and Lee (2021) analyzed the effects of product category and perceived risk on consumer intention to purchase secondhand luxury fashion online. The study found that consumers were more likely to purchase secondhand luxury fashion online if they perceived it as less risky, and that this effect was stronger for accessories than for apparel. The study also found that consumers' perceived risk was influenced by factors such as product condition, authenticity, and seller reputation. Kim and Park (2021) assessed the understanding consumers' perceived value and purchase intention in online thrift stores: An empirical study. The study found that perceived value, including functional, emotional, and social value, had a significant positive effect on purchase intention. The study also identified several factors that influence consumers' perceived value, such as website quality, product variety, and seller reputation. Bai *et al.* (2008) found the impact of product information on consumer perception. The study found that the product information has a direct and positive impact on consumer perception. While the influence of product information on purchase intentions exists, consumer perception

does significantly mediate this effect. Guo et al. (2012) observed the factors influencing consumer perception towards online shopping in China. The study showed that security, convenience, reputation of the company, product information, guarantees and fair price have positive influence on consumer perception from the aspect of online shopping environment in China.

In context of Nepal, Sharma *et al* (2019) examined the factors affecting online shopping behavior of Nepalese consumers: A study on online apparel shopping. The study found that perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, website design, and trust had a significant positive effect on purchase intention. The study also identified several barriers to online apparel shopping, such as lack of trust, concerns about product quality, and lack of access to reliable payment method. Ojha and Bhattarai (2021) analyzed the exploring consumer behavior towards online thrift stores in Nepal. The study found that consumers were motivated by factors such as cost savings, unique finds, and environmental concerns, and that they used various strategies to mitigate perceived risks, such as checking seller ratings and reading product descriptions carefully. The study also identified several barriers to online thrift store shopping, including concerns about product quality, fit, and authenticity. Adhikari and Singh (2021) examined an empirical investigation of factors affecting purchase intention in online secondhand clothing stores in Nepal. The study found that the factors that influence Nepalese consumers' purchase intention in online secondhand clothing stores are perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, trust, and social influence. The study also identified several demographic variables, such as age and gender which influenced consumers' attitudes towards online secondhand clothing shopping.

The above discussion shows that empirical evidences vary greatly across the studies on the factors affecting the rise of online thrift stores. Though there are above mentioned empirical evidences in the context of other countries and in Nepal, no such findings using more recent data exist in the context of Nepal. Therefore, in order to support one view or the other, this study has been conducted.

The major objective of the study is to examine the factors affecting the rise of online thrift stores in Kathmandu Valley. Specifically, it examines the relationship of social media, sustainable fashion, product information, affordability, and vintage items with consumer behavior and motivation in Kathmandu Valley.

The remainder of this study is organized as follows: section two describes the sample, data, and methodology. Section three presents the

empirical results and final section draws the conclusion.

2. Methodological aspects

The study is based on the primary data. The data were gathered from 120 respondents through questionnaire. The study employed convenience sampling method. The respondents' views were collected on social media, sustainable fashion, product information, affordability, vintage items and customer behavior and motivation. This study is based on descriptive as well as causal comparative research designs.

The model

The model used in this study assumes that consumer behavior and motivation depends upon rise of online thrift stores. The dependent variable selected for the study is consumer behavior and motivation. Similarly, the selected independent variables are social media, sustainable fashion, product information, affordability and vintage items. Therefore, the model takes the following form:

$$CBM = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SM + \beta_2 SF + \beta_3 PI + \beta_4 A + \beta_5 VI + e$$

Where,

CBM= Consumer behavior and motivation

SM= Social media

SF = Sustainable fashion

PI = Product information

A = Affordability

VI = Vintage items

Social media was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly agree and 5 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include "I use social media to discover and purchase clothes from online thrift stores", "I have shared my own online thrift store purchase in social media" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.941$).

Sustainable fashion was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly agree and 5 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include "I consider myself to be environmentally conscious when it comes to fashion", "I have purchased clothes from online thrift stores before" and so on. The

reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.996$)

Product information was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly agree and 5 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include "I am satisfied information given about the products on the internet", "I am satisfied with buying products on the basis of information available in online website" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.994$).

Affordability was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly agree and 5 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include "I consider affordability is one of the advantages of online thrift stores", "Online thrift shopping can be a great way to save money" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.992$).

Vintage fashion offers was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondent were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly agree and 5 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include "I usually get vintage items in thrift stores", "Online thrift stores is very good platform to hunt vintage items" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.986$).

Consumer behavior and motivation; offers was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly agree and 5 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include "I feel less guilty while shopping from online thrift stores", "I find myself environmentally responsible while shopping from thrift stores" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.987$).

The following section describes the independent variables used in this study along with the hypothesis formulation.

Social media

Social media provides consumers with a platform to share their experiences, opinions, and recommendations with others, which can influence their purchase decisions (Liang and Turban, 2011). Aaker and Smithresearch (2012) found that brands with higher social media engagement have a higher level of customer loyalty and advocacy. Likewise, Godey *et al.* (2016) revealed that the influence of social media marketing activities on brand

awareness and brand image has a positive impact on consumer behavior. Similarly, Sharma and Rehman (2012) found a positive information about a product or a brand available on the social media has a significant influence on consumers' purchase behavior. Moreover, Social media has also influenced consumer behavior from information acquisition to post-purchase behavior such as dissatisfaction statements or behaviors (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H₁: There is a positive relationship between social media and consumer behavior and motivation.

Sustainable fashion

Sustainable fashion is a movement and process of fostering change to fashion products and the fashion system towards greater ecological integrity and social justice (Fletcher, 2014). Kim and Damhorst (2018) found that consumers' perceptions of sustainable fashion positively influence their purchase intention. Likewise, Rana and Paul (2017) revealed that consumers' attitudes toward eco-friendly apparel positively influence their purchase intention. Similarly, Naz and Hussain (2019) found that consumers' attitudes toward sustainable fashion positively influence their purchase behavior. Moreover, Park and Lee (2019) found that sustainable fashion consumption can have a positive impact on consumer behavior by increasing awareness and concern for environmental and social issues. Bhardwaj and Fairhurst (2010) found that sustainable fashion consumption have positive impact on consumer behavior by promoting a sense of social identity and status. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H₂: There is a positive relationship between sustainable fashion and consumer behavior and motivation.

Product information

Product information can be defined as the data or attributes that are communicated about a product and that are used by customers to evaluate the product's quality, value, and appropriateness for their needs (Hines and Bruce, 2007). Leventhal and Kahneman (1983) found that providing more product information increases consumer motivation to purchase a product. Likewise, Bettman and Park (1980) revealed that providing more product information improves the quality of consumer decisions. Similarly, Kim and Kim (2010) found that consumers with higher levels of product knowledge and involvement are more motivated to use product information. Moreover, Lwin and Williams (2007) stated that consumers with higher levels of self-

confidence are more motivated to seek out and use product information. Further, Haque and Alam (2019) found that online product information can have positive impact on consumer behavior by increasing trust and credibility. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H₃: There is a positive relationship between product information and consumer behavior and motivation.

Affordability

Affordability can be defined as the extent to which a product or service can be obtained at a price that is reasonable or within the customer's budget (Joy *et al.*, 2012). Kent and Allen (1994) found that lower prices can increase consumer motivation to purchase a product, especially when the product is perceived as important or necessary. Likewise, Dolan and Simonson (1996) revealed found that lower prices can lead to increased motivation to purchase a product, but only up to a certain point, when prices are too low, consumers may perceive the product as low quality and be less likely to purchase it. Similarly, Hsu and Chen (2013) found that lower prices have a positive impact on consumer behavior, including increased purchase intention, willingness to pay, and overall satisfaction. Moreover, Rosenthal and Rosnow (1975) found that lower prices can increase consumer motivation to purchase a product, but only when consumers perceive the product as high quality. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H₄: There is a positive relationship between affordability and consumer behavior and motivation.

Vintage items

Vintage items are clothing and accessories that are at least 20 years old, but less than 100 years old that have demonstrated enduring aesthetic and/or cultural value and that are collected and preserved for their historic significance or marketability (Lepore and Brown, 2017). Ivanova and Webster (2017) found that vintage items can have positive impact on consumer behavior by providing a unique and individualized style. Likewise, Kim and Damhorst (2019) revealed that vintage fashion consumption motives have positively influence consumer behavior and increase purchase intention for vintage items. Similarly, Jauregui and Tynan (2017) found that vintage item have positive impact on consumer behavior by providing opportunities for self-expression and creativity and contributing to a sense of community among vintage enthusiasts. Further, Chan and Huang (2019) found that vintage fashion consumption enhance consumers' social identity and that vintage

items can serve as a means of expressing one’s personality and individuality. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H₅: There is a positive relationship between vintage items and consumer behavior and motivation.

3. Results and discussion

Correlation analysis

On analysis of data, correlation analysis has been undertaken first and for this purpose, Kendall’s Tau correlation coefficients along with mean and standard deviation has been computed and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Kendall’s Tau correlation coefficients matrix

This table presents the Kendall’s Tau correlation coefficients between dependent and independents variables. The dependent variable is CBM (Consumer behavior and motivation). The independent variables are SM (Social media), SF (Sustainable fashion), PI (Product information), A (Affordability), and VI (Vintage items).

Variables	Mean	S.D.	CBM	SM	SF	PI	A	VI
CB	3.85	0.438	1					
SM	3.79	0.426	0.383**	1				
SF	3.86	0.513	0.409**	0.457**	1			
PI	3.84	0.517	0.414**	0.344**	0.281**	1		
A	3.92	0.456	0.356**	0.320**	0.370**	0.298**	1	
VI	3.91	0.464	0.473**	0.384**	0.401**	0.314**	0.319**	1

Note: The asterisk signs (**) and (*) indicate that the results are significant at one percent and five percent levels, respectively.

Table 1 shows the Kendall’s Tau correlation coefficient of dependent and independent variables for firm performance. The study shows that social media is positively correlated to consumer behavior and motivation. It indicates that higher the use of social media, higher would be consumer behavior and motivation. Similarly, the study shows that sustainable fashion is positively correlated to consumer behavior and motivation. It indicates that use of sustainable fashion leads to change in consumer behavior and motivation. Likewise, product information is positively correlated to consumer behavior and motivation. It indicates that reliable product information leads to change in consumer behavior and motivation. Further, affordability is positively correlated to consumer behavior and motivation. It indicates that affordable

price of product motivate consumer to purchase the products. In addition, the study also shows vintage items are positively correlated to consumer behavior and motivation. It indicates that increase in vintage items leads to change in consumer behavior and motivation.

Regression analysis

Having indicated the Kendall’s Tau correlation coefficients, the regression analysis has been carried out and the results are presented in Table 2. More specifically, it shows the regression results of social media, sustainable fashion, product information, affordability and vintage items on consumer behavior and motivation of online thrift stores in Kathmandu valley.

Table 2

Estimated regression results of social media, sustainable fashion, product information, affordability and vintage items on consumer behavior and motivation

The results are based on 138 observations using linear regression model. The model is $CBM = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SM + \beta_2 SF + \beta_3 PI + \beta_4 A + \beta_5 VI + e$ where the dependent variable is CBM (Consumer behavior and motivation). The independent variables are SM (Social media), SF (Sustainable fashion), PI (Product information), A (Affordability), and VI (Vintage items).

Models	Intercepts	Regression coefficients of					Adj. R_bar2	SEE	F-value
		SM	SF	PI	A	VI			
1	1.417 (5.022)**	0.641 (8.667)**					0.384	0.344	75.116
2	1.866 (7.648)**		0.514 (8.194)**				0.357	0.351	67.138
3	1.885 (7.831)**			0.511 (8.225)**			0.359	0.350	67.657
4	1.507 (5.527)**				0.597 (8.644)**		0.382	0.344	74.711
5	1.220 (5.084)**					0.673 (11.032)**	0.504	0.308	121.698
6	1.217 (4.410)**	0.408 (4.191)**	0.281 (3.465)**				0.436	0.329	47.063
7	0.864 (3.213)**	0.271 (2.824)**	0.222 (2.902)**	0.287 (4.414)**			0.513	0.305	42.827
8	0.659 (2.396)*	0.224 (2.548)*	0.148 (1.851)	0.224 (3.269)**	0.215 (2.513)*		0.535	0.299	35.170
9	0.360 (1.399)	0.109 (1.212)	0.045 (0.595)	0.153 (2.407)*	0.208 (2.665)*	0.383 (5.016)**	0.615	0.271	39.079

Notes:

- i. Figures in parenthesis are t-values
- ii. The asterisk signs (**) and (*) indicate that the results are significant at one percent and five percent level respectively.
- iii. Consumer behavior and motivation is dependent variable.

The regression result shows that the beta coefficients for social media

are positive with consumer behavior and motivation. It indicates that social media has a positive impact on consumer behavior and motivation. This finding is consistent to the findings of Aaker and Smithresearch (2012). Likewise, the beta coefficients for sustainable fashion are positive with consumer behavior and motivation. It indicates that sustainable fashion has a positive impact on consumer behavior and motivation. This finding is consistent with the findings Kim and Damhorst (2018). In addition, the beta coefficients for product information are positive with consumer behavior and motivation. It indicates that product information has a positive impact on consumer behavior and motivation. This finding is consistent with the findings of Dolan and Simonson (1996). Further, the beta coefficient for affordability is positive with consumer behavior and motivation. It indicates that affordability has a positive impact on consumer behavior and motivation. This finding is consistent with the findings of Ivanova and Webster (2017). Moreover, the beta coefficient for vintage items are positive with consumer behavior and motivation. It indicates that vintage items has a positive impact on consumer behavior and motivation. This finding is consistent with the findings of Kim and Damhorst (2019).

4. Summary and conclusion

Online thrift stores are digital platforms that allow consumers to buy and sell secondhand clothing and accessories. They offer a sustainable and affordable option for fashion consumption, which aligns with sustainability and circularity goals. Consumers are motivated to shop at online thrift stores due to factors such as cost savings, sustainability concerns, unique finds, and perceived value. They also use strategies such as checking seller ratings and reading product descriptions carefully to ensure that they are getting high-quality items. Online thrift stores have the potential to disrupt the traditional retail industry by offering a more affordable and sustainable option for fashion consumption, promoting circularity and reducing waste.

This study attempts to examine the factors of consumer behavior and motivation on online thrift stores within Kathmandu Valley. The study is based on primary data of 120 respondents.

The major conclusion of this study is that social media, sustainable fashion, product information, affordability and vintage items have positive impact on consumer behavior and motivation. The study also concludes that vintage items followed by social media is the most influencing factor that explains the buying behavior and motivation among online consumers of Kathmandu Valley.

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