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Why young consumers choose second-hand clothes: Insights from long-term orientation and personal values

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Abstract: This study investigates determinants of young consumers' purchase intention of second-hand clothes. Drawing on the value-attitude-behavior theory, this study develops and verifies a model that examines the hierarchical relationships between long-term orientation, personal values and consumer attitude toward second-hand clothes and their impacts on consumer purchases. Using sample data from 335 Generation Z consumers in Hanoi, results of partial structural equation modeling suggest that the positive effect of long-term orientation on consumers' attitude toward second-hand clothes and intention to purchase these products flow through altruistic and biospheric values. In contrast, long-term orientation negatively influences egoistic value, which in turn weakens consumer attitude toward second-hand clothing products. The findings offer implications for theory and practice.

Keywords: Altruistic value, biospheric value, egoistic value, second-hand, young consumers.

1. Introduction

Second-hand buying, once primarily linked to those with limited financial means, has now become popular across various consumer segments, including wealthier individuals. This trend aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 12, "Responsible consumption and production", promoting responsible consumption and production to reduce environmental impact (Koay et al., 2022). Previous studies have concentrated on second-hand clothes (SHC) purchases due to the fashion industry's environmental impact, extending the life cycle of clothing by reusing existing pieces (Koay et al., 2022).

In Vietnam, second-hand clothing, commonly referred to as "Sida clothes", has been

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a familiar concept since the 1980s. The term "Sida" originates from the "Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency", which supported the donation of used clothing to Vietnam between the 1980s and 1990s. Despite the discontinuation of the program, Vietnamese consumers continue to use the term "Sida clothes" to describe pre-owned clothing, regardless of their source (Lam & Watkins, 2022). The Vietnamese SHC market has grown significantly, driven by shifting consumer preferences, environmental awareness, and economic factors, particularly among Generation Z consumers (Hoang et al., 2022). Vietnam's second-hand market is expected to reach $5 billion by 2026, which is a substantial increase from its value of $1.1 billion in 2022 (Tuoitrenews, 2022). Generation Z, known for their sustainability focus, presents a crucial demographic influencing sustainable fashion trends. Despite the economic and environmental advantages of SHC purchases, research in Vietnam has primarily focused on rational factors using the theory of planned behavior, lacking explorations into how personal values impact consumers' purchase intention of SHC products (Hoang et al., 2022; Nguyen et al., 2024).

Current research on values influencing purchases of SHC has primarily centered on consumption values, neglecting personal values (Kim et al., 2021). Gilal et al. (2024) synthesized 105 studies on second-hand consumption, recommending a focus on how various value types influence consumer behavior toward second-hand products. Values represent lasting beliefs about desirable behaviors and outcomes for individuals and society, shaping preferences and guiding behavior. Individuals prioritize different values, leading to diverse behavioral choices. The interplay of values and their significance forms unique behavioral patterns. Previous studies have shown that personal values, specifically altruistic value (ALV), biospheric value (BIO), and egoistic value (EGO), play a crucial role in sustainable fashion consumption (Hong et al., 2024), highlighting their relevance to the SHC purchases.

Another gap in the literature is the scarcity of studies on the impact of cultural factors on consumer choices (Gilal et al., 2024). Culture significantly shapes consumer behavior and has been used to explain purchasing trends for eco-friendly products, particularly in developed markets (Sreen et al., 2018). Hofstede and Bond (1984) described culture as shared mental programming distinguishing one group from another. Existing research has demonstrated the predictability of cultural values to consumers' green consumption behavior (Kim, 2011). However, Hofstede and Bond's framework falls short in capturing individual-level value structures, focusing on country-level cultural values (Fischer & Poortinga, 2012). Future research can explore integrating individual-level value dimensions within cultural contexts to better understand personal values and the interplay between individual and societal value systems (Lee et al., 2022).

These research gaps highlight the need to understand the combined influence of personal and cultural values on Generation Z consumers' purchase intention (PI) of second-hand clothing. Drawing on the value-attitude-behavior theory, this study develops and verifies a model that aims to address two research questions:

(1) How does long-term orientation (LTO) affect consumers' personal values (i.e., altruistic value, biospheric value, and egoistic value)?

(2) How do these personal values contribute to consumer's attitude toward SHC (ATT), which leads to purchase intention (PI) of these products?

By doing so, this study makes two key contributions to the understanding factors affecting SHC purchase intention in Vietnam. First, while existing research on green purchases draws on various theoretical frameworks, few studies combine LTO and personal values in a unified model. Our research offers fresh insights into how LTO initiates a chain of effects leading to PI of SHC. Second, by testing this research model empirically, we provide valuable evidence for researchers, marketing managers, and SHC retailers seeking to promote these products to Generation Z consumers.

2. Theoretical framework and development of the hypothesis development

2.1. Value-attitude-behavior model

The value-attitude-behavior (VAB) model, introduced by Homer and Kahle (1988) suggests that values impact attitude, which subsequently influence behavior. Values represent individuals' core motivations ranked hierarchically (Sagiv & Schwartz, 2022). The

theory of planned behavior (TPB) asserts that attitude drives behavior, with behavioral intention being a key predictor of actual behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In this study, purchase intention toward SHC serves as a proxy for actual behavior within the VAB framework. The VAB model highlights attitude as a mediator between value cognition and behavior. Environmental attitude can be general (judgments on environmental issues) or specific (evaluations of eco-friendly products or behaviors) (Hoang et al., 2022). Studies in pro-environmental behavior indicate that environmental attitudes significantly impact behavior directly (Nguyen et al., 2017; Sreen et al., 2018). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_1: Attitude toward second-hand clothes (ATT) is positively related to PI.

2.2. Personal values

Schwartz (1977) introduced the Human value theory, outlining ten core values arranged in a circular structure that influence individual behaviors. Building on this, Stern et al. (1999) categorized environmental values into altruistic (concern for human welfare), bio-spheric (emphasis on environmental and biosphere quality), and egoistic (focus on personal outcomes). Prior research on SHC purchase intention has mainly focused on consumption values while these personal values play a significant role in shaping sustainable fashion consumption patterns (Hong et al., 2024).

Research indicates that individuals with ALV tend to exhibit heightened environmental awareness and a belief in the positive societal impact of their pro-environmental behaviors (Lee et al., 2014). Studies by Soyez (2012) and Nguyen et al. (2017) confirm that altruistic motivations positively influence attitude toward eco-friendly product purchases. Furthermore, BIO has been consistently linked to environmentally conscious attitudes and behaviors (Imaningsih et al., 2023). Conversely, individuals motivated by EGO prioritize personal gains over environmental concerns, leading to lower environmental awareness and selective pro-environmental actions based on personal benefits (Steg et al., 2014; Stern & Dietz, 1994). Egoistically-oriented consumers may avoid second-hand products due to status and image concerns. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H_{2a}: ALV is positively related to ATT.

H_{2b}: BIO is positively related to ATT.

H_{2c}: EGO is negatively related to ATT.

2.3. Long-term orientations

Culture, represented by value orientations, has been studied in green consumption using Hofstede's five cultural dimensions: power distance, collectivism (COL), uncertainty avoidance, masculinity, and LTO (Hofstede & Bond, 1984). Among these, COL and LTO are crucial determinants in understanding pro-environmental behaviour (Leonidou & Skarmeas, 2014). This research focuses on long-term orientations as the primary cultural value in the context of SHC buying for two main reasons. First, while COL's role is consistently observed in green products' research across cultures, LTO requires further investigation due to inconsistent findings (Sreen et al., 2018). Second, LTO emphasizes virtues oriented toward future rewards, such as preservation and thrift, reflecting a pragmatic, future-oriented perspective rather than a conventional or short-term view (Hofstede & Bond, 1984). In Vietnam, Le et al. (2024) reveal an increase in green products consumption, with customers tending to choose green products due to sustainable values concerning environmental impact and personal responsibility. Consequently, LTO offers a more comprehensive lens than COL through which to examine second-hand buying behavior, as it encapsulates values related to sustainability.

Studies indicate that both cultural and personal values influence green purchasing behavior, with these relationships varying across countries due to cultural and socioeconomic differences (Jebarajakirthy et al., 2024; Sreen et al., 2018). While culture shapes individual thoughts and practices, cultural values can differ significantly among individuals within the same culture (Nguyen et al., 2017), potentially influencing the development of personal values within a society (Kim, 2011). Rohan (2000) has demonstrated a causal relationship between cultural values and personal values when people develop their personal values based on their perception of collective cultural judgments about optimal ways of living.

Based on the VAB model, this study aims to investigate the direct influence of LTO from Hofstede's work (1980) on the personal values set (ALV, BIO, EGO) proposed by Stern et al. (1993), which has not been attempted previously. Given that consumers with a long-term perspective are likely to be concerned about social and environmental well-being (Sreen et

al., 2018), we expect LTO to play a crucial role in shaping altruistic and biospheric value. Long-term oriented consumers tend to sacrifice their self-interest to preserve future resources. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H_{3a}: LTO is positively related to ALV.
H_{3b}: LTO is positively related to BIO.
H_{3c}: LTO is negatively related to EGO.

Figure 1 depicts the research framework and hypothetical relationships between variables.

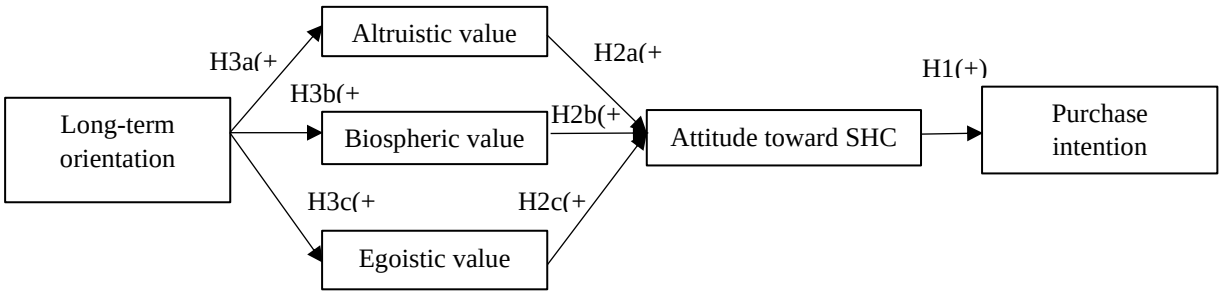

Figure 1: The proposed research framework
Source: Authors' suggestion.

3. Research method

3.1. Measurement

The measurement items for this study were adapted from established research. The scales measuring ALV, BIO, and EGO (four items each) were drawn from Stern et al. (1999) and Liang et al. (2022). LTO was measured using five items adapted from Sreen et al. (2018). ATT and PI (three items each) were referenced from Hoang et al. (2022). All items are measured with a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The personal values employed a scale ranging from 1 = "opposed to my value" to 7 = "extremely important". The survey questionnaire, initially developed in English, was translated into Vietnamese using the forward-backward translation technique to ensure linguistic equivalence and contextual suitability (Le et al., 2025). Two pre-test rounds were conducted to verify questionnaire content and face validity. Initially, feedback was gathered from two fashion marketing managers and two marketing researchers. Then, a pilot test involving 50 Generation Z consumers of SHC assessed the contextual relevance of the constructs. Minor adjustments were made to the questionnaire layout and wording to enhance its clarity.

3.2. Sampling and data collection

Due to the lack of a sampling frame, non-probability purposive sampling was used. Respondents consisted of Vietnamese citizens born between 1997 and 2012, showing interest in SHC. In line with prior relevant studies, Hanoi was chosen as the research location based on its residents' higher incomes and inclination toward sustainable lifestyles (Bui & Vu, 2019; Le et al., 2025). Paper questionnaires were distributed to customers with the assistance of shopkeepers after they entered second-hand clothing shops. The research team leveraged personal networks to engage five second-hand store owners in data collection at second-hand markets on Luong Dinh Cua and Dang Van Ngu streets. Every fourth customer was invited to participate in the research. Respondents were first asked the screening questions (i.e., birth year between 1997 and 2012 and interest in SHC products). Then, they were verbally informed about the research purpose, and their participation was entirely voluntary. Their anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy were guaranteed. Completion of the survey was taken as informed consent.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics

Sample	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	12-17 years old	40	11.94
	18-21 years old	84	25.07
	22-24 years old	211	62.99
	Total	**335**	**100**
Gender	Female	171	51.04
	Male	164	48.96
	Total	**335**	**100**
Source of spending for clothing	Parents' subsidy	47	14.03
	Personal incomes	189	56.41
	Both	99	29.55
	Total	**335**	**100**

Source: Authors' analysis.

A total of 389 responses were obtained between August and October 2024. Among these, 335 valid responses were retained for analysis. As suggested by Hair et al. (2010), the minimum sample size should be ten times the number of items. Given that this study has 24 items, the effective sample size of 335 is

appropriate. Table 1 presents the details of the respondents' demographic details.

4. Results

4.1. Common method bias

A full collinearity test was performed to examine common method bias. A model is unaffected by common method bias if the inner variance inflation factor (VIF) values are 3.3 or below (Kock, 2015). Table 4 shows that all VIF values of the inner model were below 3.3, indicating the sample data is not affected by common method bias. In addition, the results of a Harman's one factor test revealed the first factor accounted for only 37.3% of variance, falling below the 50% threshold (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The results of these tests demonstrated an absence of common method bias in this study.

4.2. Assessment of the measurement model

The results show that factor loadings for all items ranged from 0.813 to 0.953, except for one item measuring EGO, which had a factor loading below 0.50 and was removed from further analysis. Results in Table 2 indicate the Cronbach's alpha values for all variables were above 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019) and all composite reliability (CR) values were greater than 0.70, confirming good internal consistency and reliability of the scales. Average variance extracted (AVE) values for all variables surpassed 0.50, satisfying convergent validity requirements (Hair et al., 2019).

As shown in Table 3, the measurement scales demonstrated discriminant validity, with the square root of AVE values exceeding bivariate correlations (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Additionally, all HTMT values were below 0.85, providing further evidence of discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 2: Constructs with items and reliability and validity

Constructs	Outer loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
LOT		0.898	0.925	0.710
LOT1	0.845			
LOT2	0.855			
LOT3	0.837			
LOT4	0.863			
LOT5	0.813			
ALV		0.892	0.924	0.753
ALV1	0.889			
ALV2	0.855			
ALV3	0.873			
ALV4	0.854			
BIO		0.883	0.919	0.740
BIO1	0.859			
BIO2	0.845			
BIO3	0.848			
BIO4	0.888			
EGO		0.867	0.909	0.715
EGO1	0.842			
EGO2	0.832			
EGO3	0.858			
EGO4	0.850			
ATT		0.948	0.966	0.906
ATT1	0.953			
ATT2	0.949			
ATT3	0.953			
PI		0.852	0.909	0.769
PI1	0.895			
PI2	0.886			
PI3	0.851			

Source: Authors' analysis.

Table 3: PLS results of discriminant validity

Fornell - Larcker criterion						
Constructs	**ALV**	**ATT**	**BIO**	**EGO**	**LOT**	**PI**
ALV	**0.868**					
ATT	0.396	**0.952**				
BIO	0.499	0.448	**0.860**			
EGO	-0.407	-0.408	-0.410	**0.846**		
LOT	0.396	0.439	0.384	-0.388	**0.843**	
PI	0.480	0.363	0.407	-0.408	0.371	**0.877**
Heterotrait - Monotrait ratio (HTMT)						
ALV						
ATT	0.426					
BIO	0.557	0.487				
EGO	0.459	0.449	0.470			
LOT	0.429	0.472	0.423	0.437		
PI	0.539	0.398	0.466	0.473	0.419	

Source: Authors' analysis.

4.3. Assessment of the structural model

The model's results in Table 4 indicated that the effect of ATT on Generation Z consumers' intention to purchase SHC was empirically proven (β = 0.363, p < 0.001), supporting H_1. The analysis also confirmed that both ALV (β = 0.169, p < 0.01) and BIO (β = 0.270, p < 0.001) significantly affects ATT, supporting H_{2a} and H_{2b}. Furthermore, EGO (β = -0.229, p < 0.001) had a negative effect on ATT, supporting H_{2c}. Moreover, LTO has a significant influence on ALV (β = 0.396, p < 0.001), BIO (β = 0.384, p < 0.001), thereby supporting H_{3a} and H_{3b}. Moreover, the data validated H_{3c}, demonstrating a negative effect of LTO on EGO (β = -0.388, p < 0.001).

The adjusted R^2 values demonstrated that LTO accounted for 15.4% of the variance in ALV, 14.5% in BIO, and 14.8% in EGO. ALV, BIO, and EGO represented 27.4% of the variance in ATT. ATT amounted for 12.9% of the variance in PI. All these values surpassed the 10% threshold recommended by Hair et al. (2010) for marketing research. Subsequently, Q^2 values were computed using a blindfolding procedure to evaluate the model's predictive relevance. All the Q^2 values for ALC (0.111), BIO (0.106), EGO (0.105), ATT (0.249), and PI (0.097) were greater than 0, demonstrating significant predictability (Hair et al., 2019). As noted by Cohen (1988), our f^2 results revealed that ALT, BIO, and EGO had a small effect (i.e., < 0.15) on ATT. LTO had a medium effect (i.e., > 0.15) on three types of personal value. Similarly, ATT had a medium effect (i.e., > 0.15) on PI.

Table 4: Hypotheses result

Path	Path coefficient	p-value	f^2	Inner VIF	Hypotheses	Conclusions
ATT → PI	0.363	0.000	0.152	1.000	H1	Supported
ALV → ATT	0.169	0.009	0.028	1.425	H2a	Supported
BIO → ATT	0.270	0.000	0.071	1.430	H2b	Supported
EGO → ATT	-0.229	0.000	0.056	1.286	H2c	Supported
LOT → ALV	0.396	0.000	0.186	1.000	H3a	Supported
LOT → BIO	0.384	0.000	0.173	1.000	H3b	Supported
LOT → EGO	-0.388	0.000	0.177	1.000	H3c	Supported

Source: Authors' analysis.

5. Discussion and implications

5.1. Summary of key findings

The findings indicate that LTO positively influences ALV and BIO. This relationship may stem from the fact that LTO cultivates a perspective that prioritizes sustainability and future well-being, which resonates with altruistic and biospheric principles. Purchasing SHC embodies these values, as it supports social welfare and environmental preservation while mitigating the long-term consequences of consumption. These results align with previous research by Nguyen et al. (2017) and Sreen et al. (2018), who found that green consumption behavior often yields long-term environmental benefits rather than immediate gains, and the future-oriented consumers show greater environmental concern. Additionally, our findings extend the literature by integrating long-term orientation and personal values into a unified framework.

Second, LTO negatively impacts EGO. This negative relationship exists because individuals with a long-term perspective prioritize collective and future-oriented goals over self-centered motivations. As a result, those with a LTO are less likely to be driven by egoistic concerns and more likely to value the sustainability and ethical benefits of second-hand clothing. Thøgersen and Ölander (2002) showed that LTO can drive a number of sustainable consumptions, while EGO inhibits such behaviors. Our study extends these findings by confirming these relationships specifically in SHC purchases.

Third, among personal values, BIO contributes the most to attitude toward second-hand clothing, followed by altruistic value. This reflects growing environmental consciousness, particularly among Generation Z consumers aware of fast fashion's environmental impact (Calvo-Porral & Viejo-Fernández, 2024; Dabija et al., 2019). Conversely, EGO negatively impacts attitudes, as individuals prioritizing status often view second-hand fashion as undesirable, especially in Vietnamese culture where new clothing signifies social standing (Nguyen & Tambyah, 2011).

Fourth, the findings provide further evidence for the positive transition from ATT to Generation Z consumers' PI. This relationship, supported by the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), is strengthened by environmental consciousness and the normalization of thrifting

through social media platforms (Dabija et al., 2019; Henninger et al., 2016).

5.2. Theoretical implications

The findings of this study make several important contributions to the literature on circular fashion and consumer behavior. First, by proposing and validating a conceptual model using data collected from Vietnam, this study advances the understanding of SHC purchases in emerging markets. Given that sustainability is a more pressing issue in emerging countries, where most international fashion brands manufacture their products, this research provides valuable theoretical and empirical evidence for scholars and practitioners studying SHC consumption in these markets (Yang et al., 2017). Second, one important novelty of this study is its integration of cultural orientations and personal values in a unified model, extending the traditional VAB framework (Homer & Kahle, 1988). Third, by examining Generation Z consumers in Vietnam, this research enriches the literature on cohort-specific consumer behavior and offers insights into SHC consumption patterns among this demographic.

5.3. Managerial implications

Our research findings offer valuable implications for second-hand fashion retailers seeking to boost sales. First, since LTO fundamentally shapes personal values, retailers in Vietnam should emphasize the lasting quality and durability of their second-hand products by providing detailed information of each item's history, materials, and origins. Prior work by Lam and Watkins (2022) suggested that Vietnamese consumers are inspired by the history of pre-owned fashion.

Second, given that BIO is the strongest predictor of attitude toward second-hand fashion, Vietnamese retailers should prominently communicate the environmental benefits of their products, particularly focusing on waste reduction and lower carbon emissions. Retailers should also demonstrate their commitment to sustainability through practices such as using paper packaging. Additionally, consumers should be encouraged to better maintain their clothes properly so they can resell them through consignment models, supporting the circular fashion and sustainable development.

Moreover, recognizing the importance of ALV among Generation Z consumers in Vietnam, retailers should highlight the human stories behind their items, including previous ownership and the garment's journey. This approach creates emotional connections and demonstrates value beyond mere materiality. In addition, to build community and promote altruistic behavior, retailers can organize interactive events such as clothing swaps, upcycling workshops, and educational sessions about sustainable fashion. On the other hand, to counter negative impacts of EGO, they should frame second-hand shopping as an environmentally responsible choice that appeals to consumers prioritizing ethical values over material status.

6. Limitations and future research directions

This study has several limitations that open up multiple directions for future research. First, the reliance on quantitative survey data suggests the need for complementary qualitative methods, particularly in-depth interviews, to provide richer insights into consumer behavior regarding second-hand fashion. Second, the exclusive focus on fashion products limits the generalizability of findings to other second-hand markets such as automobiles or electronics. Future studies should validate the model across diverse product categories to enhance understanding of second-hand PI. Third, given that data collection was confined to Hanoi, the finding may not fully capture second-hand consumption patterns across Vietnam. Future research should be expanded to other regions to ensure broader representativeness. Fourth, generational differences may influence consumer preferences, with older consumers potentially prioritizing quality over uniqueness. A comparative analysis across age cohorts would illuminate these variations in consumer behavior. Finally, the model did not incorporate moderating variables. Future research could explore the role of factors such as perceived risks in moderating the relationships identified in the framework. This would provide valuable insights into the boundary conditions affecting second-hand purchase behavior.

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