

Effect of Fashion Adoption on Consumers' Behaviour Towards Second-Hand Clothes in Nakuru Town, Kenya

Racheal Mukuhi Njuguna¹, Prof. Violet Mugalavai², Dr. Catherine Sempele³

¹Student, University of Eldoret

^{2,3}Lecturer, University of Eldoret

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ABSTRACT

Consumer behavior is portrayed by people when planning, purchasing and using goods and services and the better fashion designers understand consumer behavior, the more likely they become successful in the market. The study determined the effects of fashion adoption on consumer behaviour towards second-hand clothes in Nakuru town, Kenya. This study adopted a descriptive research design and targeted 803 traders selling second-hand clothes in the Nasher market based in Nakuru town. The study used Yamane's (1967) formula to determine the sample size where 267 respondents were randomly sampled to participate in the study. Data was collected using questionnaires. Questionnaires were filled on site. Data was analyzed with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences software version 25. Both descriptive (frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (multiple regression) was carried out. Descriptive results showed that respondents agreed that fashion adoption had an effect on consumers' behaviour towards second-hand clothes in Nakuru town, Kenya. Additionally, fashion adoption ($\beta = 0.156$, $p = 0.011$) affected consumers' behaviour towards second-hand clothes positively and significantly. Fashion adoption significantly influences consumer behavior toward second-hand clothing in Nakuru, with consumers altering garments to align with trends and personal style. The study recommends promoting fashion adoption through tailoring hubs, upcycling workshops, and influencers to enhance sustainable and trend-conscious consumption practices.

Keywords: Consumer behaviour, fashion suitability, second-hand clothes

INTRODUCTION

Second-hand clothing refer to garments that are pre-owned, previously worn, or used by someone else before being resold, donated, or passed on for reuse. These items are typically sold through thrift stores, online platforms, or charity organizations, offering an affordable alternative to new clothing. The global market for second-hand clothing has significantly grown, driven by factors such as environmental sustainability, economic constraints, and fashion trends (Hassan, 2021). In recent years, second-hand clothing has gained popularity due to the growing awareness of environmental issues. The fashion industry is one of the most polluting sectors globally, and buying second-hand clothing is seen as a sustainable choice that helps reduce waste and carbon emissions (Patel & Muneer, 2022). Additionally, second-hand clothing is often more affordable, making it an attractive option for individuals facing financial constraints (Ochieng, 2020). Furthermore, with the rise of digital platforms such as Depop and Poshmark, the resale of second-hand clothing has become more accessible, broadening its appeal (Koech & Nyamweya, 2023).

Globally, second-hand clothing has become a significant industry, with countries across the world embracing this sustainable and affordable alternative to new garments. In countries like the United States, second-hand clothing markets have flourished due to platforms such as ThredUp and Poshmark, which allow consumers to buy and sell used clothes (Anderson & Smith, 2021). The popularity of these platforms has been further fueled by the growing awareness of the environmental impact of fast fashion (Patel & Muneer, 2022). In Europe, particularly in the United Kingdom, second-hand clothing is thriving, with charity shops like Oxfam and the British Heart Foundation being popular destinations for pre-owned garments. According to Jones (2023), these

charity shops are not only affordable but also offer a means for consumers to support social causes while reducing waste.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, second-hand clothing, often referred to as "mitumba," plays a significant role in economies like Nigeria and South Africa. These garments, imported from Western countries, are sold at affordable prices and meet the growing demand for cost-effective fashion. In Nigeria, second-hand clothing is popular due to its affordability, as it allows consumers to purchase quality items at a fraction of the cost of new clothes (Adebayo & Oladejo, 2021). Major cities like Lagos and Abuja have thriving second-hand clothing markets, providing numerous economic opportunities for traders and entrepreneurs (Eze, 2022). South Africa also has a robust second-hand clothing market, where both low-income communities and environmentally conscious consumers turn to resale options. According to Moeti (2023), the demand for second-hand clothing in South Africa is driven by both economic factors and a growing interest in sustainable fashion. Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban are major hubs where second-hand markets have flourished, further boosted by digital platforms like Gumtree and Facebook Marketplace, which allow people to buy and sell used clothes easily.

In Kenya, second-hand clothing plays a significant role in the country's economy, particularly in urban areas like Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kisumu. These clothes, primarily imported from Western countries, are sold at affordable prices, making them accessible to a large segment of the population (Mwangi & Ochieng, 2021). The popularity of second-hand clothing in Kenya has grown due to its affordability, as many Kenyans cannot afford new clothes due to economic constraints (Karanja & Wambua, 2022). The second-hand clothing market is not only important for consumers but also for the livelihoods of many small-scale traders. According to Kamau (2023), over 2 million Kenyans depend on the second-hand clothing sector, either directly as vendors or indirectly through various support services such as sorting and packaging. This thriving informal sector is crucial for poverty alleviation and job creation.

Fashion adoption of second-hand clothing is influenced by factors such as fit, garment condition, style relevance, and individual preferences. Well-selected pre-owned items can align with current fashion trends while offering distinctive, vintage-inspired looks that differ from mass-produced apparel (Jones & Miller, 2021). Consumers are increasingly adopting second-hand fashion due to its affordability and contribution to sustainability through reduced textile waste and environmental impact. However, adoption also depends on careful evaluation of quality, cleanliness, and durability (Williams & Anderson, 2023). When these factors are considered, second-hand clothing becomes a practical and stylish option that supports both personal expression and responsible fashion consumption.

The fashion industry significantly influences consumer behavior, shaping perceptions, preferences, and purchasing decisions. In recent years, the second-hand clothing (mitumba) market has experienced substantial growth in Kenya, particularly in urban centers such as Nakuru Town. Despite the affordability and sustainability benefits of second-hand clothes, consumer perceptions regarding their fashion-ability, quality, and desirability remain a key concern. While some consumers embrace second-hand clothing due to affordability and uniqueness, others associate it with lower quality and outdated fashion trends (Wambugu & Musyoka, 2016) and thus the need for the current study.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

A study on the factors affecting consumers' willingness to adopt clothing rentals was done by Tsai and Hsu (2018). The study targeted consumers in Taiwan and gathered data from 328 valid respondents using an online questionnaire. The researchers employed Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to analyze the relationships between various influencing factors and consumers' willingness to participate in clothing rental services. The study found that compatibility, personal innovativeness, and subjective norms significantly influenced consumers' willingness to accept clothing rentals. However, perceived ease of use and external influence had no significant impact. Clothing rental platforms should focus on enhancing compatibility with consumers' lifestyles and promoting personal innovativeness. Additionally, efforts should be made to leverage subjective norms to influence consumers' willingness to accept clothing rentals.

Nistor (2019) carried out a study on young consumers' fashion brand adoption preferences. The study targeted students in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, with a sample size of over 500 participants. Data were collected through an online survey and focus group discussions. The data were analyzed using mixed methodology. The study found that more than half of the students had a preferred fashion brand, mostly fast fashion brands. However, compared to other cues, the brand of the apparel was less important for the students. The most brand-sensitive individuals were those who were fashion-involved, early adopters of trends, and less price-sensitive. The study recommended that marketers should target fashion-involved and trend-sensitive individuals to enhance brand adoption. Additionally, efforts should be made to balance brand appeal with other factors like price and style.

Singh et al. (2019) researched challenges and opportunities for scaling up up-cycling of textile in the UK. The study was done by conducting a title search based on the search terms up-cycling and up-cycle. This resulted in an initial set of 213 articles. Articles of relevance to this study were then selected manually. The process resulted in 21 articles for further review. The results identified potential actors for the success of up-cycling businesses, key challenges and success factors, causal linkages among the challenges and success factors, key system mechanisms, and interventions for scaling up textile businesses.

A study examining the implication of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) on upskilling-, reskilling, and deskilling of Human resource management was done by Esan (2022). The study adopted a systematic review of relevant literature on the various issues in the research. The study critically analyzed 38 relevant research journals, articles, publications, opinions, and editorials on human resource management demand in the fourth industrial revolution era. The study revealed that 4IR technologies, such as AI and robotics, could accomplish jobs more effectively than humans, leading to deskilling. The study recommended that organizations invest in training and development programs to up-skill and reskill HR personnel, regular skills assessments to identify obsolete skills, implementing training programs that meet the changing needs of the job, and developing a comprehensive workforce development strategy to consider alternative approaches to job design that prioritize the development of new skills and knowledge.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive research design. This design aims to systematically describe and analyze the characteristics, behaviors, or phenomena of a particular population or phenomenon (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). It focuses on providing a comprehensive snapshot or summary of the subject under study, without manipulating variables or establishing causality (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). This design is valuable for exploring patterns, trends, and relationships within a population or phenomenon, providing insights that can inform decision-making and further research endeavors. This design served as a foundation for more in-depth research contributing valuable insights on the perceived effects of fashion design on consumers' behaviour towards second-hand clothes in Nakuru town, Kenya.

Target Population

The target population is the specific group of individuals or elements that a researcher aims to study and make inferences about (Zikmund et al., 2012). It represents the larger population to which the study's findings are intended to apply, guiding the selection of participants or sampling strategy in research studies. This study targeted 803 traders (County Storey Management System) selling second-hand clothes in Nasher market based in Nakuru town. The study also targeted primary, secondary and tertiary consumers.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

The sampling procedure is the method used to select a subset of individuals or elements from a larger population for inclusion in a research study while sample size is the number of participants or elements included in the sample (Rahi, 2017). The sampling frame for this study consisted of all 803 registered traders operating within Nasher Market in Nakuru Town, specifically those involved in the sale of second-hand clothes. This list was obtained from the County Storey Management System, which maintains updated records

of licensed and active traders within the market. The sampling frame provided the necessary population from which the sample was drawn and ensured that every trader had an equal chance of selection.

Sampled respondents were obtained using Yamane's (1967) formula.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = Sample size

N = Sum of population figure of 803

E = Maximum limit of tolerable error (0.05)

Hence, $n = \frac{803}{1 + (803 \times 0.0025)} = 267$

$$1 + (803 \times 0.0025) = 267$$

From the full list of 803 traders, a simple random sampling technique was used to select participants. This approach ensured randomness and minimized selection bias, thereby enhancing the representativeness of the study sample. The final respondents were those traders who were selected from the sampling frame and agreed to participate in the study.

Research Instruments

Questionnaires were used in collecting primary data. Questionnaires allow for standardized data collection, enabling comparisons and statistical analysis. Additionally, questionnaires can be completed anonymously, encouraging respondents to provide honest and candid responses (Gall & Borg, 2014). To ensure uniformity of data responses, closed-ended questions were used. The questions were constructed with the help of Likert scale. The questionnaire had two sections: A) Demographics of the respondents and B) Perceived effects of fashion design on consumer behaviour towards second-hand clothes questions.

Focus group discussions were conducted on the primary, secondary and tertiary consumers. A total of three FGDs were conducted, one for each consumer category, with 6 to 8 participants in each group. Participants were purposively selected based on their willingness to participate, familiarity with second-hand clothing in the market, and their relevance to the study's objectives. Each FGD lasted approximately 30 to 40 minutes and was guided by a semi-structured discussion guide covering fashion suitability, fashion adoption, design knowledge, fashion elements and consumer behaviours. The discussions yielded qualitative data that provided deeper insights into consumer behavior, perceptions, and decision-making processes. This data complemented the quantitative findings by offering context, identifying emerging trends, and highlighting consumer sentiments that would not have been easily captured through structured questionnaires. The FGDs thus contributed to a more holistic understanding of the second-hand clothing market and informed interpretation of the study's overall findings.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was done with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were carried out. Descriptive analysis involved the generation of summary statistics such as frequencies and percentages, means and standard deviations. Inferential statistics involved multiple regression, where the relationship between the study variables was established. Data was presented using graphs and tables.

The regression model was as shown

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon_0$$

Where:

Y = Consumers' behaviour

β_0 = Constant

β_1 = Coefficients of fashion adoption

X_1 = Fashion adoption

ε_0 = Error term assumed to be a constant

RESULTS

Descriptive results

Consumers' Behaviour Towards Secondhand Clothes

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which fashion design affected consumers' behaviour towards second-hand clothes in Nakuru town, Kenya and the results are shown in Table 1. The findings revealed that the pricing of second -hand clothes influence consumers' decisions to purchase (Mean=3.78, std. dev=0.95). Findings further revealed that consumers prioritize affordability over brand or quality when buying second -hand clothes (Mean=3.82, std. dev=0.96). Additionally, results revealed that the desire to stay fashionable influences consumers' willingness to purchase second -hand clothing (Mean=4.07, std. dev=0.94). The descriptive results showed that consumers are more likely to purchase second -hand clothes if they align with current fashion trends (Mean=3.95, std. dev=0.89). The findings revealed that the ability to find unique, personalized items in the second -hand market affect consumer behavior (Mean=3.78, std. dev=1.02) and that the option to customize or alter second -hand clothes impact consumer satisfaction and purchase intentions (Mean=3.95, std. dev=1.01). The results showed that the respondents agreed that fashion design affected consumers' behaviour towards second-hand clothes in Nakuru town, Kenya since the overall mean score was 3.89 and a 0.96 standard deviation on a five-point Likert scale.

Findings from the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) supported the quantitative results by showing that fashion design greatly influences consumers' behaviour towards second-hand clothes in Nakuru. Participants explained that affordability was one of the main reasons consumers' preferred second-hand clothing, especially among low- and middle-income earners. Many respondents noted that second-hand clothes provide an opportunity to access trendy and stylish outfits at lower prices compared to new clothes sold in retail shops.

FGD participants further indicated that fashion trends strongly shape purchasing decisions, particularly among young consumers who desire to remain fashionable and socially relevant. Respondents observed that consumers are attracted to second-hand clothes that resemble current market trends and celebrity-inspired styles. Participants also revealed that uniqueness and the availability of rare clothing designs motivate many consumers to shop in second-hand markets because they can obtain personalized outfits not commonly found in mainstream stores.

In addition, discussants stated that customization and alteration of second-hand clothes increase customer satisfaction and encourage repeat purchases. Tailoring adjustments such as resizing, redesigning, and decoration were mentioned as common practices that improve the attractiveness of second-hand garments. Overall, FGD participants agreed that affordability, fashionability, uniqueness, and customization significantly influence consumer behaviour towards second-hand clothes in Nakuru town.

Table 1: Consumers' Behaviour towards Secondhand Clothes

Statements	Frequency and Percentages					Mean	SD
	SD	D	N	A	SA		
The pricing of second -hand clothes influence consumers' decisions to purchase	62.9%	146.9%	4120.1%	10049.0%	4321.1%	3.78	0.95
Consumers prioritize affordability over brand or quality when buying second -hand clothes	52.5%	178.3%	3416.7%	10250.0%	4622.5%	3.82	0.96
The desire to stay fashionable influences consumers' willingness to purchase second -hand clothing	31.5%	188.8%	115.4%	10250.0%	7034.3%	4.07	0.94
Consumers are more likely to purchase second -hand clothes if they align with current fashion trends	31.5%	167.8%	209.8%	11455.9%	5125.0%	3.95	0.89
The ability to find unique, personalized items in the second -hand market affect consumer behavior	83.9%	199.3%	2914.2%	10250.0%	4622.5%	3.78	1.02
The option to customize or alter second -hand clothes impact consumer satisfaction and purchase intentions	52.5%	157.4%	3416.7%	8240.2%	6833.3%	3.95	1.01
Overall mean score						3.89	0.96

SD-Strongly disagree, D-Disagree, N-Neutral, A-Agree, SD-Strongly Agree, n-204

Effect of Fashion Adoption on Consumers' Behaviour

The study established the effect of fashion adoption on consumers' behaviour of second-hand clothes in Nakuru town, Kenya and the results are shown in Table 2. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent fashion adoption on consumers' behaviour towards second-hand clothes in Nakuru town, Kenya. The results showed that the statement 'I usually alter second-hand clothes to make them resemble higher-end or designer brands, even if they were originally from lower-priced brands' had Mean=3.82 and std. dev=0.63. The findings revealed that the statement 'When altering second-hand clothes, you focus on features that could increase the perceived value of the brand' had Mean=3.80, std. dev=0.64 and that the 'Sometimes you buy second-hand clothes with the intention of altering them to give them a more luxurious or high-fashion appearance' had Mean=3.85, std. dev=0.66. The findings revealed that the statement 'You prefer altering second-hand clothes to make them resemble luxury designs, such as adding designer-inspired details or using high-quality materials for customization' had Mean=3.77, std. dev=0.77. Findings further revealed that the statement 'Sometimes you alter second-hand clothes to follow or create new fashion trends, making them more fashionable' had Mean=3.96, std. dev=0.59. Additionally, results revealed that the statement 'When altering second-hand clothes, you focus on creating pieces that that make you stand out as a trendsetter' had Mean=3.80, std. dev=0.67. The results showed that the respondents agreed that fashion adoption affected consumers' behaviour towards second-hand clothes in Nakuru town, Kenya since the overall mean score was 3.83 and a 0.66 standard deviation on a five-point Likert scale.

From the focus group discussions, respondents noted that they commonly shorten hems, resize garments, and add decorations such as patches or embroidery to second-hand clothes in order to improve their appearance and suitability. Participants explained that they are motivated to alter second-hand clothing because it is more affordable and provides an opportunity to customize garments according to personal style and preferences. Discussants further indicated that altering second-hand clothes is viewed as a creative and rewarding process because it gives new life to pre-owned garments.

The participants also reported that they approach second-hand clothing alterations with greater care and imagination since such garments often require adjustments to enhance fitting and appearance. In addition, respondents stated that modifying second-hand clothes increases the perceived value of the garments by making them appear unique, fashionable, and more personalized. Participants further appreciated the sustainability aspect associated with reusing and redesigning second-hand clothing, noting that it contributes to reduced clothing waste and promotes environmentally responsible fashion practices. Overall, the focus group discussions revealed that customization, creativity, affordability, and sustainability significantly influence consumers' positive attitudes towards second-hand clothes in Nakuru.

Table 2: Extent Fashion Adoption Affects Consumers' behaviour

Statements	Frequency and Percentages					Mean	SD
	SD	D	N	A	SA		
I usually alter second-hand clothes to make them resemble higher-end or designer brands, even if they were originally from lower-priced brands		83.9%	3818.6%	14169.1%	178.3%	3.82	0.63
When altering second-hand clothes, you focus on features that could increase the perceived value of the brand		157.1%	2110.3%	15777.0%	115.4%	3.80	0.64
Sometimes you buy second-hand clothes with the intention of altering them to give them a more luxurious or high-fashion appearance		125.9%	2612.7%	14671.6%	209.8%	3.85	0.66
You prefer altering second-hand clothes to make them resemble luxury designs, such as adding designer-inspired details or using high-quality materials for customization		199.3%	3215.7%	13063.7%	2311.3%	3.77	0.77
Sometimes you alter second-hand clothes to follow or create new fashion trends, making them more fashionable		42.0%	2813.7%	14571.1%	2713.2%	3.96	0.59
When altering second-hand clothes, you focus on creating pieces that that make you stand out as a trendsetter		94.4%	4220.6%	13365.2%	209.8%	3.80	0.67
Overall mean score						3.83	0.66

SD-Strongly disagree, D-Disagree, N-Neutral, A-Agree, SD-Strongly Agree, n-204

Regression analysis

Results in Table 3 show that fashion adoption exhibited a positive and statistically significant relationship with consumers' behaviour towards second-hand clothes ($\beta = 0.156$, $p = 0.011$). This suggests that a one-unit increase in fashion adoption is likely to result in a 0.156-unit increase in consumers' behaviour towards second-hand clothes in Nakuru town, Kenya

Table 3: Regression results

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
(Constant)	.834	.348		2.396	.018
Fashion adoption	.156	.124	.098	1.256	.011

DISCUSSION

The statement "Sometimes you alter second-hand clothes to follow or create new fashion trends, making them more fashionable" received a mean score of 3.96 with a standard deviation of 0.59. This suggests that a majority of respondents in Nakuru Town, Kenya, agree with the idea of modifying second-hand clothes to enhance fashion suitability. The relatively high mean indicates a strong behavioral trend where consumers engage in customization or alteration of thrifted clothing to align with personal or contemporary fashion preferences. The low standard deviation demonstrates consistency in responses, indicating a shared consumer behavior across the sampled population.

These findings highlight an important dimension of second-hand clothing consumption: creativity and personalization. Consumers are not only passive recipients of fashion but active participants who shape and redefine it through do-it-yourself (DIY) practices. According to Niinimäki and Hassi (2020), such practices are a form of sustainable fashion engagement, allowing individuals to extend the life cycle of clothing while enhancing its aesthetic and emotional value. Similarly, McNeill and Moore (2022) emphasize that altering second-hand clothing is increasingly seen as a way of maintaining fashion relevance in a sustainable manner, especially among younger, urban consumers. In the context of Nakuru, where the second-hand market (commonly known as *mitumba*) thrives, altering clothing allows consumers to express individuality while adapting global fashion trends to local tastes. As noted by Camacho and Montavon (2021), this form of adaptive consumption is becoming more prominent in African urban centers, driven by increased access to fashion media and awareness of environmental issues.

The results indicate that fashion adoption has a positive and statistically significant influence on consumers' behavior towards second-hand clothes in Nakuru Town, Kenya ($\beta = 0.156$, $p = 0.011$). Although the beta coefficient is modest, its statistical significance suggests that as individuals become more inclined to adopt current fashion trends, they are more likely to engage in second-hand clothing consumption. This reflects the evolving perception of second-hand clothes from being a necessity driven by economic factors to a fashionable, trend-aligned choice.

This behavior aligns with the growing "fashion-forward thrift" culture, where consumers intentionally seek second-hand items that reflect popular trends (Park & Armstrong, 2019). In many urban settings, especially among youth and fashion-conscious individuals, adopting fashion trends through second-hand markets allows for style flexibility without the high costs associated with fast fashion (Turker & Altuntas, 2021). The slight increase in behavior per unit of fashion adoption also suggests that trend adoption is one of multiple factors influencing second-hand clothing choices, alongside sustainability, price, and uniqueness. In Nakuru's dynamic *mitumba* market, this finding highlights the role of trend sensitivity among consumers, pointing to opportunities for vendors to curate inventory that reflects current styles to attract more fashion-adopting shoppers.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Fashion adoption plays a positive and statistically significant role ($\beta = 0.156$, $p = 0.011$) in shaping consumer behavior toward second-hand clothing in Nakuru. Consumers frequently alter second-hand garments to follow or create fashion trends, reflecting a growing culture of DIY fashion and trend alignment. The findings indicate that many second-hand clothing consumers are trend-sensitive and use fashion adoption as a creative tool to maintain style relevance. This behavior illustrates the transformation of second-hand shopping from a purely economic activity to a fashionable and intentional consumer practice influenced by current trends.

The study recommends that efforts should be made to support and promote fashion adoption by offering resources and inspiration for trend-based clothing alterations. Community tailoring hubs or mobile upcycling workshops could teach consumers how to transform second-hand items to reflect modern trends. Fashion influencers or local designers can be engaged to showcase restyled outfits from second-hand clothing. In doing so, fashion adoption will become not just an individual initiative but a broader community-driven approach,

helping promote sustainable consumption patterns that align with fashion-conscious consumer values in Nakuru.

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