

THE ROLE OF ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH AND THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR IN SHAPING THRIFT SHOPPING INTENTIONS AMONG GENERATION Z

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ABSTRACT

This research is motivated by the rising popularity of thrift shopping among Generation Z on social media. Grounded in the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), this quantitative study examines the influence of electronic word of mouth (eWOM), attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control on thrift shopping intention, alongside the mediating role of attitude. Data were collected from 170 respondents in Jabodetabek using convenience sampling and analysed via PLS-SEM. The findings indicate that all proposed relationships are positive and significant. eWOM significantly influences attitude, which successfully mediates the link between eWOM and shopping intention. Among TPB constructs, perceived behavioural control exerts the strongest effect, suggesting Gen Z shops more when feeling capable and confident. Conversely, subjective norm shows the weakest effect. Consequently, thrift businesses should strengthen consumer confidence and encourage positive eWOM through engaging social media content.

Keywords: *Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM), Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), Attitude, Thrift Shopping Intention, Generation Z*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh popularitas belanja pakaian bekas (*thrifting*) di kalangan Generasi Z di media sosial. Menggunakan *Theory of Planned Behaviour* (TPB), studi kuantitatif ini menganalisis pengaruh *electronic word of mouth* (eWOM), sikap, norma subjektif, dan kontrol perilaku persepsian terhadap niat beli, serta peran mediasi sikap. Data dikumpulkan dari 170 responden di Jabodetabek melalui teknik *convenience sampling* dan dianalisis menggunakan PLS-SEM. Hasil menunjukkan seluruh hubungan berpengaruh positif dan signifikan. eWOM terbukti memengaruhi sikap, dan sikap berhasil memediasi hubungan eWOM terhadap niat beli. Di antara konstruk TPB, kontrol perilaku persepsian memiliki pengaruh terkuat, mengindikasikan bahwa Gen Z cenderung berbelanja *thrift* saat merasa mampu dan percaya diri. Sebaliknya, norma subjektif memiliki pengaruh terlemah. Implikasinya, pelaku bisnis *thrift* harus memperkuat kepercayaan diri konsumen dan mendorong eWOM positif melalui konten media sosial.

Kata Kunci: *Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM), Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), Sikap, Niat Belanja Thrift, Generasi Z*

Introduction

The global fast fashion industry generates severe environmental degradation by contributing approximately 10% of global carbon emissions (Maiti, 2025). Sustainable alternatives like thrift shopping offer a viable solution to mitigate this ecological damage (Ferraro et al., 2020). Indonesian Generation Z individuals actively drive this eco-conscious shift, with nearly half of the youth population participating in secondhand apparel consumption (Juliana et al., 2024). This specific cohort heavily utilizes digital platforms like Instagram and TikTok to evaluate lifestyle trends (Sugiarti, 2020). Consequently, electronic word of mouth (eWOM) functions as a primary catalyst that shapes contemporary consumer interactions (Marcellino & Pardede, 2023).

Current Indonesian market literature presents a critical theoretical limitation regarding sustainable consumer behavior. Extant studies frequently apply the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to secondhand fashion without considering digital communication channels (Igamo et al., 2024). Researchers continuously overlook eWOM as the initial psychological trigger that alters consumer mindsets (Nuraini & Fikriah, 2025). This oversight creates a distinct empirical gap concerning the strategic link between digital peer interactions and core psychological traits.

Academic literature currently fails to clarify how digital recommendations alter internal attitudes before transforming into actual purchasing decisions.

This study directly resolves the empirical limitation by integrating digital communication into the traditional TPB model. The primary objective centers on evaluating the concurrent impacts of eWOM, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on thrift shopping intentions among Generation Z in Jabodetabek. This research explicitly determines whether internal attitudes efficiently transform digital recommendations into final consumer choices. The structural framework successfully merges communication science with consumer psychology to provide a holistic perspective on modern sustainable fashion trends.

Theoretical Review

Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM)

Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) define electronic word of mouth (eWOM) as any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company via the internet. Digital communication channels like TikTok advertisements, Instagram posts, and online user reviews facilitate the rapid dissemination of these peer recommendations across social networks

(Naufal et al., 2025; Sariawty et al., 2021). Contemporary consumers frequently utilize digital platforms to exchange outfit ideas, showcase secondhand clothing discoveries, and evaluate product durability before committing to a purchase (Naufal et al., 2025). This peer-to-peer digital interaction plays a critical role in establishing consumer confidence and developing a favorable brand image within competitive fashion marketplaces (Sariawty et al., 2021). Peer opinions, user testimonials, and digital advice circulating within online fashion communities actively transform how young buyers perceive product utility (Kim & Kim, 2021).

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

Ajzen (1991) posits that the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) predicts individual behavioral intention through three primary constructs, which include attitude toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Academic researchers frequently implement this psychological framework to evaluate consumer willingness to complete transactions in various retail settings (Igamo et al., 2024). Internal psychological evaluations and external social expectations work simultaneously to determine the behavioral tendencies of a consumer (Nuraini & Fikriah, 2025). Individual calculations regarding the outcome of an action collaborate with the perceived

desires of significant others to shape personal commitment levels (Kim & Kim, 2021). Comprehensive structural analysis utilizing the TPB framework successfully explains the empirical dynamics of changing consumer decision-making processes (Simamora & Djamaludin, 2020).

Thrift Shopping Intentions

Thrift shopping intention represents the direct willingness and psychological inclination of a consumer to purchase pre-owned apparel that retains aesthetic and economic value (Ferraro et al., 2020). This specific consumer interest has experienced a massive surge in popularity due to escalating environmental awareness among younger demographics (Juliana et al., 2024). Multiple empirical investigations confirm that secondhand apparel purchase intentions depend heavily on product quality perceptions, social media visual appeal, and moral community standards (Naufal et al., 2025; Nuraini & Fikriah, 2025). Modern buyers no longer view this activity as a mere financial compromise but rather as an explicit statement of personal identity and sustainable lifestyle choices (Alvin & Choandi, 2020). Analyzing this particular purchase intention provides crucial insights into the broader transition of consumer behavior toward an eco-friendly fashion ecosystem (Maiti, 2025).

Methodology

Research Method

This study utilizes explanatory research to examine and explain the causal relationships between the specified variables. The quantitative approach heavily relies on statistical methods to test the pre-formulated hypotheses empirically (Given, 2008). Structural Equation Modeling operated through SmartPLS software assists in measuring the predictive correlations within the conceptual framework (Sarstedt et al., 2019). The empirical findings eventually confirm whether the independent variables directly generate the expected psychological outcomes among the targeted consumers.

Data Types and Sources

This investigation incorporates both primary and secondary data utilizing qualitative and quantitative formats to substantiate the findings. Primary data represents original numerical and descriptive information collected directly from respondents through structured online surveys (Saunders et al., 2023). Secondary data involves pre-existing non-numerical information obtained from academic literature and industry reports to provide background context. The combined compilation of these diverse data formats ensures a high level of factual accuracy and statistical relevance throughout the study.

Population and Sampling

The research population encompasses adolescents and young adults aged 18 to 28 in the Jabodetabek region who actively engage with eWOM content regarding thrift shopping (Sugiyono, 2013). This study applies a non-probability convenience sampling technique due to the unknown exact size of the target generation (Shukla, 2023). The selection process targets accessible individuals who voluntarily participate upon encountering the digital survey invitation (Golzar et al., 2022). Following established statistical size guidelines, a final sample of 170 qualified respondents completed the data collection process to ensure structural validity (Memon et al., 2020).

Data Processing and Analysis

The data processing mechanism contains three progressive stages, which include editing, coding, and tabulating the questionnaire responses (Yakin, 2023). The editing phase removes inconsistent or incomplete answers to guarantee data integrity and consistency before further evaluation. The coding phase assigns numerical values to the categorized options to facilitate computer-based software computation. Finally, Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) evaluates the outer measurement model and the inner structural model simultaneously (Sarstedt et al., 2019).

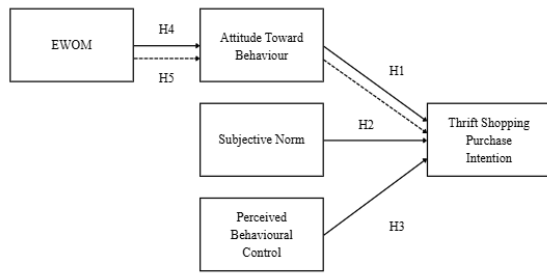


Figure 1. Research Hypothesis

The following hypotheses are proposed and tested in this study:

- H1: There is a positive and significant relationship between attitude towards behaviour and intention to purchase thrift clothing.
- H2: There is a positive and significant relationship between subjective norm and intention to purchase thrift clothing.
- H3: There is a positive and significant relationship between perceived behavioural control and intention to purchase thrift clothing.
- H4: There is a positive and significant relationship between electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and attitudes towards behaviour.
- H5: Attitudes toward behaviour mediates the influence of Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) on purchase intention toward thrift clothing

Result and Discussion

This chapter presents the empirical results of the structural equation modeling

executed through SmartPLS to evaluate the factors influencing thrift clothing purchase intentions among Generation Z in the Jabodetabek region. The data analysis progresses systematically through a two-stage evaluation framework encompassing the measurement model (outer model) to ensure instrument reliability and validity, followed by the structural model (inner model) to test the hypothesized causal relationships. By evaluating indicators such as outer loadings, composite reliability, and average variance extracted alongside path coefficients, this analysis directly addresses how digital peer communication and individual socio-psychological traits shape modern sustainable consumption. The sequential testing framework and statistical outcomes are detailed in the charts and tables below.

Table 1. Indicator Reliability Test

Item	Attitude Toward Behaviour (ATB)	Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM)	Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)	Purchase Intention (PI)	Subjective Norm (SN)
ATB1	0.675				
ATB2	0.673				
ATB3	0.782				
ATB4	0.829				
EWOM1		0.705			
EWOM2		0.689			
EWOM3		0.799			
EWOM4		0.736			
PBC1			0.732		
PBC2			0.735		
PBC3			0.737		
PI1				0.812	
PI2				0.829	
PI3				0.740	
SN1					0.702
SN2					0.781
SN3					0.819
SN4					0.728

Source: Data Processing, 2026

Table 2. Internal Consistency Reliability

Test

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)
Attitude Toward Behaviour (ATB)	0.732	0.762	0.830
Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM)	0.713	0.718	0.823
Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)	0.575	0.574	0.779
Purchase Intention (PI)	0.707	0.711	0.837
Subjective Norm (SN)	0.757	0.764	0.844

Source: Data Processing, 2026

Table 3. Convergent Validity Test

	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Attitude Toward Behaviour (ATB)	0.551
Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM)	0.538
Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)	0.540
Purchase Intention (PI)	0.631
Subjective Norm (SN)	0.576

Source: Data Processing, 2026

Table 4. Discriminant Validity Test

	Attitude Toward Behaviour (ATB)	Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM)	Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)	Purchase Intention (PI)	Subjective Norm (SN)
Attitude Toward Behaviour (ATB)					
Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM)	0.522				
Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)	0.524	0.615			
Purchase Intention (PI)	0.807	0.604	0.843		
Subjective Norm (SN)	0.692	0.433	0.679	0.744	

Source: Data Processing, 2026

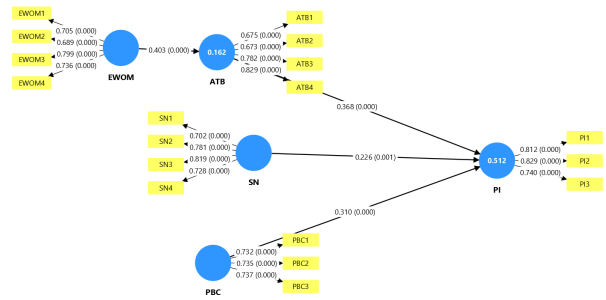


Figure 2. Research Hypotheses

Result

Table 5. Path Coefficient Test

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (ST)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Attitude Toward Behaviour (ATB) → Purchase Intention (PI)	0.368	0.366	0.069	5.338	0.000
Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM) → Attitude Toward Behaviour (ATB)	0.403	0.416	0.079	5.086	0.000
Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC) → Purchase Intention (PI)	0.310	0.313	0.072	4.338	0.000
Subjective Norm (SN) → Purchase Intention (PI)	0.226	0.226	0.069	3.280	0.001
Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM) → Purchase Intention (PI)	0.148	0.153	0.043	3.435	0.001

Source: Data Processing, 2026

Table 6. R Square Test

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Attitude Toward Behaviour (ATB)	0.162	0.157
Purchase Intention (PI)	0.512	0.503

Source: Data Processing, 2026

The empirical results of the structural model evaluation confirm that all five formulated hypotheses are statistically supported, validating the critical roles of individual socio-psychological traits and digital interactions. The path coefficient analysis demonstrates that attitude toward behavior exerts the strongest direct influence on Generation Z's thrift clothing purchase intention ($O = 0.368, T = 5.338, P = 0.000$), proving that favorable personal judgments regarding sustainability, affordability, and unique identity expression accelerate purchase drives. Perceived behavioral control also acts as a significant direct predictor ($O = 0.310, T = 4.338, P = 0.000$), indicating that increased ease of access, clear marketplace information, and manageable transactional barriers directly strengthen willingness to buy. Furthermore, subjective norms significantly motivate purchasing behavior ($O = 0.226, T = 3.280, P = 0.001$), establishing that social acceptance and peer validation from online communities heavily normalize secondhand consumption. These primary direct relationships actively reinforce prior empirical evidence regarding consumer behavior in secondhand markets, demonstrating that thrift shopping among young consumers is shaped by a multifaceted matrix of personal evaluation,

structural convenience, and localized social approval (Cuong, 2024; Elsharkawi & Sun, 2025; Wijaya & Harsoyo, 2025).

This study successfully extends the traditional framework by positioning electronic word of mouth (eWOM) as a robust communication antecedent that strongly shapes consumer mindsets ($O = 0.403, T = 5.086, P = 0.000$). Favorable user-generated content, online recommendations, and digital thrift reviews shared across TikTok or Instagram serve as informative cognitive inputs that destigmatize secondhand apparel and build positive behavioral beliefs. Crucially, the indirect effect analysis establishes that attitude toward behavior serves as a vital mediating mechanism between digital media exposure and actual commercial intent ($O = 0.148, T = 3.435, P = 0.001$), confirming that online reviews require internal cognitive processing and evaluative assimilation before triggering consumer intentions. This structural arrangement fully complies with the expectancy-value logic of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, where external information alters underlying belief structures to drive action (Ajzen, 2005). Supported by an R-square value of 0.512 for purchase intention and 0.162 for attitude, these integrated findings provide robust theoretical confirmation for the

extended model, proving that contemporary sustainable fashion choices are successfully transformed through the psychological bridge of attitudinal change (Bundu et al., 2024; Sandhu et al., 2021).

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study concludes that Generation Z's thrift clothing purchase intention in Jabodetabek is collectively driven by individual socio-psychological factors and digital communication. Empirical testing confirms that all five hypotheses are supported. Personal attitude serves as the primary direct catalyst, heavily fueled by environmental awareness and self-expression. Perceived behavioral control significantly reinforces this drive by reducing structural and informational barriers, while subjective norms exert a lesser yet steady social pressure through peer validation. Furthermore, electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) acts as a critical cognitive input that builds positive behavioral beliefs. Ultimately, attitude functions as a vital mediating bridge, translating digital marketplace reviews into solid commercial intent.

Theoretically, future researchers should expand this Theory of Planned Behaviour framework by integrating hidden variables like fashion involvement, perceived risk, or eco-lifestyle orientation to increase the model's predictive power.

Practically, thrift entrepreneurs and digital marketers must actively optimize user-generated eWOM on TikTok and Instagram while maximizing consumer behavioral control. This can be achieved by providing transparent pricing, highly accurate size guides, and verified quality curation to eliminate buying hesitation. Socially, educational institutions and communities should collaborate to launch targeted digital campaigns that promote thrift shopping as an accessible, impactful lifestyle choice for advancing circular fashion economies.

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