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# Second glance: exploring consumer shifts to thrift shopping and perception of second-hand fashion

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## Abstract

**Purpose** The increasing consumer interest in second-hand fashion is reshaping the retail landscape, yet concerns about perceived risks and value continue to influence purchasing behaviors. While existing research highlights sustainability and affordability as key drivers of thrift shopping, the impact of perceived risks (functional and social) on customer switching behavior remains underexplored. This study examines how consumer perceptions of second-hand clothing influence their decision to switch from new to used fashion, integrating theories of perceived risk and customer switching behavior. By addressing this gap, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the barriers and motivations behind second-hand clothing adoption.

**Design/methodology/approach** This study employs a **mixed-method approach** to comprehensively analyze consumer switching behavior toward second-hand clothing. The **qualitative phase** includes in-depth interviews with an industry expert and 20 hand clothing consumers, providing nuanced insights into motivations and perceived barriers. The **quantitative phase** consists of an online survey with **290 respondents**, statistically examining the relationships between perceived risks and switching behavior using correlation analysis and reliability testing. By integrating both qualitative and quantitative insights, this study ensures a holistic understanding of the factors influencing second-hand clothing adoption.

**Findings** Analysis of the data using SPSS revealed that customers' perceptions significantly affect their switching behavior concerning second-hand clothes.

**Originality/value** This research contributes to the understanding of the dynamics between customer perception and market behavior in the context of second-hand clothing, highlighting the role of perceived risk in consumer decision-making processes.

**Keywords** Customer switching behavior, Perception, Perceived risk, Second-hand clothes, Perceived value

## Introduction

In recent years, the global fashion industry has witnessed a significant shift toward second-hand clothing consumption, driven by changing consumer values, environmental concerns, and economic factors. According to the [65] Resale Report, the US second-hand market is projected to grow by 127%, reaching \$82 billion by 2026, reflecting the rising acceptance of thrift shopping and circular fashion. This shift is influenced

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by an increasing awareness of sustainability, the desire for unique and affordable fashion, and the economic challenges that make second-hand alternatives more appealing [32].

The fashion industry is a major contributor to environmental degradation, accounting for 10% of global carbon emissions while depleting natural resources and polluting waterways [50]. It is estimated that 85% of discarded clothing ends up in landfills annually, raising concerns about waste and overproduction [61]. As a result, consumers and policymakers are shifting toward more sustainable fashion choices, including the adoption of second-hand clothing as a means of reducing environmental impact [19, 38, 47]. Recent studies indicate that second-hand shopping not only reduces waste but also contributes to the extension of garment lifecycles, making it a viable alternative to fast fashion [23, 49, 57].

Despite these benefits, consumer perceptions remain a key barrier to second-hand clothing adoption. Many individuals associate thrift shopping with hygiene concerns, product quality risks, and social stigma [45]. According to Hur and Cassidy [36], consumer attitudes toward second-hand garments are influenced by perceived value and risk, which play a crucial role in adoption behavior. While some consumers appreciate the affordability and uniqueness of second-hand items, others hesitate due to concerns about cleanliness, outdated styles, and negative social perceptions [56].

Brand switching in the fashion industry is commonly driven by factors such as competitive pricing, brand reputation, and product attributes [25]. However, even highly satisfied customers may switch brands due to the availability of multiple competing options [6]. This study explores how functional risk (e.g., concerns about product durability and hygiene) and social risk (e.g., fear of judgment or status loss) impact customer switching behavior in the context of second-hand fashion. While previous studies have examined sustainability and ethical motivations, limited research has investigated how perceived risks influence switching behavior in second-hand clothing markets, particularly in emerging economies [30, 37, 41].

This study seeks to examine the key factors influencing consumer adoption of second-hand clothing, particularly in Egypt, where second-hand shopping is still evolving. By identifying the barriers that deter consumers from purchasing pre-owned garments, this research contributes to sustainability efforts, circular economy initiatives, and market expansion strategies for second-hand retailers. Understanding how consumer perceptions shape switching behavior can provide valuable insights for both retailers and policymakers, enabling them to

develop targeted strategies to normalize second-hand shopping and enhance market acceptance.

This study aims to answer the following research questions:

- Is there a relationship between functional risk and customer switching behavior?
- Is there a relationship between social risk and customer switching behavior?

By addressing these questions, the study contributes to a deeper theoretical understanding of consumer behavior in second-hand fashion markets while offering practical recommendations for businesses and policymakers seeking to overcome adoption barriers and promote sustainable consumption.

This study is grounded in two key theories that explain consumer behavior and decision-making:

**Perceived risk theory (PRT):** This theory, introduced by Bauer [8], suggests that consumers evaluate risks before making purchasing decisions, particularly in uncertain environments. In the context of second-hand clothing, functional risk (quality, durability, and hygiene concerns) and social risk (perceived judgment from peers) align with the dimensions of perceived risk, influencing customer switching behavior [4, 68].

**Theory of planned behavior (TPB):** Developed by Ajzen [2], Ajzen [3], TPB posits that consumer behavior is shaped by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. This theory is relevant to our study, as consumer attitudes toward second-hand clothing, social influences, and perceived control over their purchase choices impact their likelihood of switching to pre-owned fashion [20, 59].

By integrating these theories, this study examines how perceived risks shape switching behavior, contributing to both consumer behavior research and sustainability studies in fashion retailing.

### Perception of second-hand clothes

Mental factors like perception influence people's buying intentions and decisions [34]. The environment can trigger the urge to buy through sensory inputs such as touch, hearing, taste, smell, and vision [18].

Individuals interpret these sensory cues based on their own subjective experiences [55]. Various factors impact purchasing decisions; high perceived value and low risk are particularly appealing to buyers. Thus, companies

focus on highlighting consumer benefits and minimizing risks [36].

Perception is dynamic and shaped by personal factors like lifestyle, age, education, and income. Additionally, how a product or service is presented, brand recognition, company reputation, and its relevance to the consumer all influence perception [22].

Two key aspects of second-hand shopping are perceived value and risk, which will be discussed later. Nowadays, second-hand clothing is often associated with charities and non-profits [67], with people donating items they no longer need to charitable organizations or those in need [18].

The culture of sustainable clothing is relatively new [58]. Selling clothes that no longer fit and buying new ones is widely accepted, but encouraging people to choose second-hand garments over new ones remains a challenge, as personal beliefs shape their future-oriented views [40].

Thrifting, the practice of buying second-hand goods, emerged in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries due to mass production during the Industrial Revolution. Second-hand clothing offers value that allows consumers to form their own opinions. Historically, consumer culture has led to significant clothing waste. The 1920s and the 1998 Asian financial crises boosted thrifting by providing affordable and diverse apparel options while addressing environmental concerns [60]. Financial, social, emotional, and environmental factors contribute to the positive perception of second-hand clothes [64]. However, various risks can create doubts and negatively impact opinions. Individual factors influence the perceived product, financial, and social risks associated with using second-hand clothing [45].

#### **Perceived value**

Many scholars regard perceived value as a crucial metric in corporate marketing [13]. It is a focal point in various marketing research subfields, as it can reveal consumer preferences and purchasing intentions [13], helping companies distinguish themselves from competitors. The importance of perceived value lies in how individuals assess a product or service by balancing costs and benefits. Customers determine perceived value based on the net benefit they perceive relative to the cost [64].

Customers seek specific values and benefits in products, and these motivations influence their choices based on their characteristics. According to perceived value can be assessed in two ways: a unidimensional focus, where perceived value is an overall measure of customer functionality for a specific good or service, and a multidimensional focus, which includes considerations of cost, performance, advantages, trade-offs, and

hedonistic motivations. The latter method provides a comprehensive view of value as a cognitive concept. Numerous marketing research studies emphasize and discuss perceived value [13].

Rational consumers benefit from the high prices of new clothing and the affordability of second-hand clothes [9], which also appeal to nostalgia and fashion trends. Moreover, the growing environmental and eco-friendly movements attract individuals motivated to make a positive impact [74]. Additionally, using unique items from second-hand sources can confer social status or acceptance [40].

Perceived value (PV) plays a crucial role in revealing customers' service preferences and purchase intentions. Continuous innovation is essential for maintaining a competitive advantage [13]. PV's importance lies in how customers assess the utility of products or services. Customers' purchase decisions are influenced by their evaluations of value [42]. PV is defined as "the overall assessment of a product's usefulness based on customers' perceptions of its attributes and what it offers" [42]. It encompasses factors such as quality and cost, influencing how customers evaluate products. Konuk [42] argues that excessively high product costs can diminish PV. Studies of consumer behavior consistently demonstrate that PV significantly impacts purchase intentions.

*Social value* Social value refers to a product or service's ability to align a person with a particular social class or enhance their social standing [15], often referred to as "prestige" [31]. In fashion, social value is derived from positive feedback and the status gained within social circles. This satisfaction is contingent upon the image one projects [40].

Second-hand clothing can stimulate interactions among family and friends by generating interest in rare, unique, limited edition, or vintage items not typically found in stores [18]. Moreover, wearing such clothing can enhance social status by reflecting a commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility [40].

*Price value* Price value refers to the savings achieved by purchasing from a low-cost provider, which can significantly influence price-sensitive markets [64]. For many consumers, especially those prioritizing affordability, low cost is the primary factor when selecting a brand. Second-hand clothes hold an advantage here as thrift shoppers seek fair and affordable prices. Interestingly, even affluent individuals are drawn to second-hand garments for their uniqueness and cost-effectiveness [18]. Tangpattanakit [64] defines price perceived value as an economic benefit that not only reduces costs but also provides additional advantages.

**Emotional value** Emotional value refers to the positive feelings or affective emotions that customers derive from a product or service, as described by Tangpattanakit [64]. It encompasses the satisfaction and happiness customers experience while shopping for or using particular products, contributing to hedonic consumption. Hedonic consumption focuses on the emotional aspects of product design, pleasure, and joy, rather than solely on product quality and functional features [40]. This emotional appeal can significantly influence purchasing decisions, making customers happy and satisfied with their choices.

Machado et al. [47] discuss “treasure seeking,” which is closely related to hedonic consumption. It involves the thrill of discovering unique design elements or products that provide great satisfaction. The originality and distinctiveness of second-hand clothing can add emotional value to the purchase, especially items that are unique or limited edition. Additionally, purchasing vintage items can evoke nostalgia and a sense of authenticity [18].

Customer happiness with a product is heavily influenced by their emotional state. According to Jaruporn [64], consumer experience theory highlights the powerful impact of emotional responses on the buying process. Customers may view a product as a means to achieve a goal or to indulge in positive emotions, shaping their purchasing decisions [72]. Understanding the emotional and practical meanings that customers associate with products is crucial in shaping their consumer experience and driving their actions [64].

**Environmental value** Environmental value refers to the direct connection between human needs and environmental concerns [40]. This connection motivates customers to favor eco-friendly products. Sustainable clothing is one such product that appeals to environmentally conscious consumers. Customers appreciate industries and companies that demonstrate a commitment to environmental sustainability [61].

Second-hand garments play a significant role in promoting sustainability through recycling and waste reduction. This supports the concept of circular fashion, where second-hand items help conserve virgin materials that would otherwise be used to produce new clothing. Embracing second-hand clothing encourages sustainable consumption practices and contributes to environmental conservation efforts.

**Perceived quality** According to Jaruporn [64], perceived quality is determined by a customer’s assessment of a product’s perceived quality and intended effectiveness, rather than its actual quality. Customers’ perceptions of product quality can be influenced by various factors,

both intrinsic (such as the product’s features, durability, consistency, and ease of maintenance) and extrinsic (such as brand name, brand reputation, retailer’s image, store ambiance, and product origin).

Annie & Nancy [71] studied how Generation Z consumers perceive second-hand clothing. They found that these consumers value the uniqueness and individuality of second-hand clothes, appreciating the opportunity to acquire items not typically found in retail stores. The condition and cleanliness of second-hand garments significantly influence their perceived quality, and consumers prefer to purchase them from well-curated retailers.

#### **Perceived risk**

Customers perceive more risk when they anticipate potential losses. Perceived risk, as defined by Shaizatulaqma et al. [39], involves negative expectations regarding uncertain and variable product outcomes. Both Lang and Zhang [45] and Shaizatulaqma et al. [39] agree that perceived risk significantly influences purchasing decisions, affecting both outcomes and decision-making quality. Research indicates that risk perception can impede customer decision-making processes [69].

For instance, in the context of ride-sharing services, risk perception refers to the likelihood of customers experiencing losses or real consequences while using these platforms to achieve their goals [69]. The potential drawbacks associated with adopting new products or services heighten perceived risk, a critical concept in consumer behavior [69]. This perception of risk—defined as the type and extent of uncertainties or consequences encountered by customers in making specific purchase decisions—has been extensively studied in consumer behavior research [37, 69].

**Social risk** A person or organization may encounter “social risk” due to factors such as social norms, cultural expectations, and public perception [44]. Lang [44] and Shaizatulaqma et al. [39] define social risk as the perception of product quality that could lead to disapproval from family, coworkers, or the community. They emphasize that social risk involves receiving negative feedback when purchasing goods that are socially significant, especially from close relationships.

One significant challenge projected is the social apprehension surrounding the use of pre-owned clothing. Acceptance of second-hand or repaired garments depends heavily on societal approval and the traditional belief in the necessity of acquiring new items [45]. Concerns about personal image also hinder the acceptance of second-hand clothing, as wearing reused items may diminish their perceived newness in society.

Anxiety about potentially compromising social status or personal image by wearing sustainable clothing can arise, with concerns about being perceived as unable to afford high-end goods or as falling behind fashion trends [44].

Moreover, studies indicate that social risk encompasses the risk of receiving negative feedback within one's social circles due to the perceived offensiveness or unsuitability of a product.

**Financial risk** According to Sunita et al. [37] and Lang [44], financial risk pertains to concerns about potential financial losses associated with online purchases, where consumers fear they might not get their money's worth. Sunita et al. [37] further define financial risk as the possibility of losing money if a product fails to meet expectations or is deemed not worth the cost. This risk perception is heightened by the unique nature and limited production of sustainable garments compared to mass-produced conventional clothing [40]. Sustainable clothing often comes at a higher price point than regular garments due to its perceived value.

This perception can make the cost of sustainable clothing appear prohibitive, leading consumers to potentially pay twice as much or more for new products. Sunita et al. [37] underscore that financial risk remains a significant concern, particularly when consumers lack confidence in the product's performance relative to its price. Buyers often evaluate a product's utility against its cost, considering the advantages of price value—the benefit a product provides by reducing predicted short- and long-term expenses [64]. Numerous academic and consumer studies support the notion that customers use pricing as an external cue to judge quality [64]. While price and quality value are distinct concepts [64], anticipated utility theory demonstrates how market pricing influences perceived value.

**Functional risk** Functional or performance risk, also known as product failure risk, arises when a product fails to fulfill its intended function. This risk is particularly pertinent for sustainable products due to their unconventional design, manufacturing, and distribution processes, as noted by Kim et al. [40]. Recycled items, in particular, may face uncertainty and potential rejection from consumers.

Concerns regarding product hygiene also contribute to functional risk, especially in the context of second-hand clothing obtained through swapping or recycling. There is apprehension that these garments may have been previously worn by someone with a contagious illness or skin condition, potentially exposing subsequent users to health risks. Additionally, there is a perception that used garments may have a shorter lifespan and lower quality

due to prior use, which influences consumer attitudes toward reusing products, particularly clothing touched by others [44].

#### **Customer switching behavior**

Ghasrodashti [43] and Sherif and Hamed [28] define customer switching behavior as the process where consumers switch to a competitor's product or service based on their preferences during the purchasing journey. This behavior involves changing suppliers and has been extensively studied in both microeconomics and marketing [70]. Research has explored various factors influencing consumer decisions to switch between products, services, businesses, and brands [70].

Businesses often prioritize retaining existing customers and attracting new ones from competitors. They may intentionally create barriers, such as complexity or contractual obligations, to discourage customers from switching providers. Psychological, socioeconomic, and economic factors play significant roles in consumer decision-making, including perceived risks, uncertainty about new service providers, loss of established relationships, and cost considerations [6].

Customer switching behavior can be categorized into favorable and unfavorable types based on these factors [6]. In competitive markets with abundant choices, consumers may switch brands easily, seeking superior prices, quality, or reputation from alternative brands [43]. Loyalty to a single brand has become increasingly challenging to maintain, with frequent brand switching affecting both company revenues and market share negatively [25].

#### **Factors affecting switching intention**

**Price** Price is identified as the primary driver in brand switching, influencing consumer decision-making significantly [43]. It plays a crucial role in shaping brand loyalty, with consumers often switching brands due to perceived unfair pricing practices [28]. In the context of global economic challenges, the affordability and fairness of circular products can serve as compelling reasons for consumers to switch from traditional brands. The power of competitive pricing can prompt consumers to abandon loyal brands in favor of better deals and attractive pricing strategies.

Promotions and discounts are particularly effective in attracting deal-sensitive customers, who are actively seeking the best value for their money [25]. Conversely, price-sensitive shoppers may switch brands in pursuit of more affordable options or better deals elsewhere. This dynamic illustrates how price sensitivity can drive consumer behavior and influence brand switching patterns in competitive markets.

**Trust and reputation** Trust, as defined by Sherif and Hamed [28], is consumers' perception of a company's honesty and reliability. It reflects confidence in the integrity and performance of a product or service provider.

Reputation, on the other hand, encompasses a company's credibility, reliability, and honesty, often built through positive customer experiences and feedback [5, 28]. The reputation of eco-friendly and sustainable products can significantly influence consumer decisions to switch brands. A strong reputation not only fosters long-term customer relationships but also enhances brand loyalty by simplifying the process of switching to alternative products.

Consumers are naturally drawn to products and services offered by trustworthy and reputable businesses. Therefore, maintaining and enhancing consumer trust through effective relationship management is crucial for fostering loyalty and repeat business. According to Sherif and Hamed [28], a positive reputation plays a pivotal role in building customer loyalty and commitment to a brand.

**Convenience** Inconveniences such as location, operating hours, and extended service wait times can lead customers to switch providers, categorized into three main factors: geographical accessibility, scheduling challenges, and lengthy service delivery waits [28]. The location of a business supplier significantly influences consumer behavior, as customers prefer convenient access to services and amenities.

Factors such as long wait times for services or inconvenient locations and operating hours directly impact consumer satisfaction and their propensity to switch providers. While pricing remains a major driver in consumer switching behavior across different markets, perceived unfair pricing relative to the value offered by the service also plays a critical role in prompting customers to switch providers [28].

#### **Relationship between perception and customer switching behavior**

Customer perception encompasses their view of a company's products, image, and value, shaped by peer recommendations, word of mouth (positive or negative), past experiences, reputation, and advertising efforts [22]. Perception plays a crucial role in shaping brand image, which in turn influences customer behavior.

Customers often switch brands due to various reasons such as incentives, promotions, dissatisfaction with products or services, or a desire to explore alternatives with a better reputation. The impression customers have of a brand directly impacts their decision to switch. If their expectations are not met, they may opt for more appealing alternatives [53, 70].

Furthermore, customer perception forms a feedback loop with brand switching behavior. Positive perceptions enhance brand loyalty, while negative experiences can swiftly lead to customer defection to competitors. This underscores the importance of managing customer perceptions effectively to maintain loyalty and minimize churn.

#### **Relationship between perceived value and customer switching behavior**

Customer perceived value is crucial in linking customer satisfaction and switching behavior, bridging consumer buying behavior and cognitive decision-making processes [54]. It encompasses consumer needs and values, considering factors such as cost, perceived benefits, emotional attachment, and social advantages [54]. This perception significantly influences consumer behavior, affecting their intention to purchase and likelihood of repeat business.

Studies consistently show a positive correlation between perceived value and consumer switching behavior. Customers tend to seek maximum value from their product or service provider, especially when presented with multiple alternatives. High-quality products and brand values enhance customer loyalty, whereas perceived discrepancies in value can lead to dissatisfaction and subsequent brand switching [14]. Maintaining alignment between customer expectations and perceived value is therefore critical in fostering customer loyalty and reducing churn.

#### **Relationship between perceived risk and customer switching behavior**

Gan and Wang [27] highlight that perceived risk in online shopping websites stems from doubts about the purchase outcome and the potential consequences of making a poor choice. This perception significantly impacts consumer behavior, including switching decisions, service quality satisfaction, and purchasing intentions. Chang et al. [16] also emphasize that internet users' risk perception directly influences their satisfaction and buying behaviors.

Specifically, Gan and Wang [27] found that perceived risk reduces consumer trust in mobile payment systems and negatively affects customer behavior when product quality falls short of expectations. The correlation between risk perception and switching behavior underscores consumers' tendency to seek safer alternatives when they perceive higher risks associated with a product or service [1]. Factors influencing risk perception include functional/product, financial, and social risks, where concerns about product performance, financial loss, or social status can prompt customers to

opt for lower-risk alternatives [14]. This relationship highlights the critical role of managing perceived risks to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty.

From the previous part we can hypothesize the following hypotheses:

1. Perceived functional risk of second-hand clothes affects customer switching behavior.
2. Perceived social risk of second-hand clothes affects customer switching behavior.

Figure 1 represents the research proposed model.

### Research methods

**Qualitative research:** Researchers use qualitative methods to study group motivations or perspectives. Qualitative methods are also used in research initiatives to test hypotheses. A qualitative method can use a disorganized, somewhat organized, or organized data collection procedure. Focus groups, one-on-one interviews, and observations can collect data for those methods [48].

**Quantitative research:** Researchers use this method to analyze topics quantitatively, collecting data on customer behavior. This strategy helps discover research variable trends [48]. This study employs a mixed-method approach to gain a comprehensive understanding of consumer switching behavior toward second-hand clothing. The rationale for using this approach is as follows:

#### 1. Justification for the mixed-method approach:

- o Combining qualitative and quantitative insights allows for a more holistic analysis of consumer behavior. While surveys provide generalizable patterns, interviews uncover deep, contextual motivations [10].
- o This method addresses the limitations of purely quantitative approaches, which may overlook subjective perceptions and emotional drivers of switching behavior [12].
- o Previous studies on second-hand fashion have primarily relied on either quantitative consumer

surveys or qualitative thematic studies [37, 41]. Our approach integrates both to bridge this gap and to improve the robustness of findings.

#### 2. Comparison with alternative methods:

- o Experimental design was considered but was not suitable due to the natural consumer decision-making process in second-hand fashion, which cannot be effectively controlled in a lab setting.
- o Purely qualitative research would not provide the statistical correlation needed to analyze switching behavior trends, making mixed methods the best fit.

#### 3. Advantages of the selected methods:

- o Qualitative (In-depth Interviews): Helps in exploring underlying motivations and psychological barriers to switching behavior.
- o Quantitative (Survey Analysis using SPSS): Allows for statistical testing of hypotheses and identification of significant patterns among respondents.
- o Model fitness indicators, including Cronbach's alpha reliability tests, Spearman correlation, and Chi-square tests, further validate the methodology (see Sect. "Statistical Analysis").

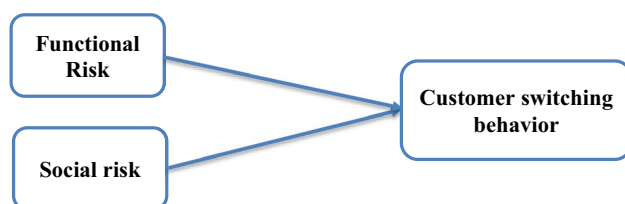
Thus, by integrating both qualitative narratives and quantitative statistical validation, this study ensures a well-rounded and reliable understanding of switching behavior in second-hand fashion.

### Qualitative research

We used qualitative methods to explore subjective experiences and consumer sentiments regarding second-hand clothing. The in-depth interviews allowed us to examine consumer attitudes, barriers to adoption, and the underlying motivations driving their choices. This method was particularly useful for capturing personal narratives that would be difficult to quantify.

### Exploratory research

Exploratory research provides insights into the phenomenon. Additionally, this helps researchers determine their problem statement. Additionally, assist determine whether the hypotheses tested are related and their effects on each other and uses a research article to examine a novel idea, topic, phenomenon, or trend. Discussing novel topics without prior study data can be harmful [24, 62, 62].



**Fig. 1** The Proposed Model

**Data collection methods used:**

Qualitative research methods like in-depth interviews provide in-depth knowledge about a topic. Open-ended questions are asked in one-on-one interviews to examine the participant's thoughts, experiences, viewpoints, and opinions [33, 51]. This method is effective for understanding complex events and personal experiences.

To analyze the qualitative data, we employed thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's [11] six-step framework: (1) familiarization with data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the report. The interview transcripts were carefully reviewed, and recurring patterns were identified to develop key themes related to consumer motivations, perceptions, and barriers to second-hand shopping.

To ensure the validity of our qualitative findings, triangulation was used by comparing insights from interviews with survey results. Additionally, member checking was conducted by sharing summarized themes with selected interviewees to verify the accuracy and credibility of interpretations.

We interviewed 21 people—one expert and 20 customers—in depth for our study. The space thrift shop sales manager provided managerial and operational insights. The customers were second-hand clothing buyers, providing a consumer perspective.

**Participant selection:**

- **Expert interview:** The expert was selected based on her role as the sales manager of the “The Space” thrift shop, ensuring she had extensive knowledge and experience relevant to our study.
- **Customer interviews:** Customers were selected using purposive sampling to ensure they had experience with purchasing second-hand clothes. This sampling method is effective for targeting individuals who can provide rich, relevant information [35, 52].

**Interview process**

- **Setting and timing:** Interviews were conducted in a quiet, comfortable environment to facilitate open and honest communication. Each interview lasted approximately 60 min.
- **Interview guide:** An interview guide with open-ended questions was developed based on our research objectives. This guide ensured consistency across interviews while allowing flexibility for probing deeper into specific areas of interest [29].

Before conducting the actual interviews, the guide was pre-tested with two individuals who fit the participant profile to assess the clarity and relevance of the questions. Their feedback led to minor refinements, ensuring that the questions were well-structured, comprehensible, and aligned with the study's objectives.

**Sample characteristics**

Samples consist of both male and female participants, aged 19–35 years old, residing primarily in Sheikh Zayed and October. This age range was specifically selected because younger generations are more likely to be early adopters of sustainable consumption behaviors, including thrift shopping. Their shopping habits are influenced by environmental awareness, economic constraints, and fashion trends, making them a key group for analyzing perceptions and switching behaviors related to second-hand clothing. We interviewed 20 customers and 1 expert.

**Exploratory research findings**

*Findings of expert* Finding an in-depth interview with an expert: Expert name: Aya Hassan with the store staff. Expert occupation: Sales manager at the space thrift shop in Maadi.

When asked about the benefits of purchasing second-hand clothing, Aya Hassan emphasized the importance of recycling for environmental preservation. She explained, “Recycling can preserve the environment because it saves the environment from the harmful wastes and emissions that can harm the climate and environment in addition to the savings in money especially in the current economic crisis.”

To ensure the quality of second-hand clothes, Aya Hassan advised customers to inspect the appearance of the clothes. She mentioned, “Customers can check the appearance of clothes, clean, ironed, or washed. We wash these clothes after testing if they are not sold.”

Aya Hassan identified several common misconceptions about recycled clothes:

- “Not cleaned”
- “Used”
- “Evidence of poverty”

She added, “Second-hand clothes were not a popular idea as now.”

Discussing recent changes in the industry, Aya Hassan noted, “The concept of second hand has been developed. Now people are accepting this idea of sustainability and buying used clothes. Globalization and cultural openness

help to make this idea acceptable. Thrifting is a common trend in Europe and America more than Egypt.”

For finding unique and high-quality thrifted clothes, Aya Hassan suggested, “It depends on the place. For example, in The Space, we care that we choose the things we take and see the details of the clothes and make sure of its good quality. So, customers can depend on credible stores.”

Regarding the care of second-hand clothing, Aya Hassan recommended, “Natural materials such as pure cotton or linen will last as long as possible and will not be affected by washing, unlike synthetic fabrics such as polyester. At The Space, we care only about accepting good and practical materials.”

Aya Hassan highlighted the environmental benefits of purchasing second-hand clothing: “Recycling can preserve the environment because it saves the environment from the harmful wastes and emissions that can harm the climate and environment in addition to the savings in money especially in the current economic crisis.”

On ethical considerations, Aya Hassan shared, “In The Space, we have several rules. The most important is that the person who wants to sell something with us must buy something from us with the second hand to be convinced of the idea and support it. The store’s goal is to preserve the environment and not profit physically only.”

Aya Hassan concluded with advice on finding second-hand clothing that fits personal style and needs: “The main distinguishing factors are that the thrift shop has different tastes and sizes of everything in one piece, but it is carefully selected in a wide variety.”

*Finding an in-depth interview with the 20 customers* Most customers agreed they would recommend second-hand clothes to friends and family. One customer stated, “I always tell my friends and family to check out thrift shops. You can find some real gems at a fraction of the cost.”

All customers noted that second-hand clothes are significantly cheaper than new ones. As one customer put it, “Second-hand clothes are sometimes half the price or even less. I’ve found high-end items that are very cheap because they lose their brand value.”

Customers had varied opinions on the sustainability and quality of second-hand clothes. One remarked, “They are environmentally friendly and sustainable,” while another added, “They are cheaper and often better quality.” Some were hesitant, saying, “I don’t like them, but if they are in good condition, I might consider it.”

Word of mouth played a significant role in shaping perceptions of second-hand clothes. One customer mentioned, “Hearing from others who have had positive experiences encourages me to buy second-hand.”

Another said, “It definitely helps me accept the idea and makes me more likely to try it.”

Customers had diverse preferences for styles and trends in second-hand clothing. One stated, “I look for basics, jeans, vintage pieces, and hoodies,” while another mentioned, “I’m always on the lookout for evening dresses.” Some customers said they don’t have specific styles they look for.

Customers highlighted several perceived values of second-hand clothing. One said, “It’s more environmentally friendly and beneficial to the environment,” while another noted, “It’s a great price for decent quality.” Others emphasized social contribution, with one customer saying, “It helps those who cannot afford new clothes.”

Customers cited various motivations for switching to second-hand clothing. One mentioned, “It’s easier to find trendy and cheap clothes,” while another said, “I can save money and it’s better for the environment.” Proper cleaning and restoration processes were also important, with one customer stating, “I appreciate that they are cleaned and restored properly.”

Some customers felt a sense of social belonging through supporting sustainable products. One remarked, “Switching to sustainable products is somewhat a lifestyle,” while another added, “Yes, I feel like I belong to a certain group because I support sustainability.”

Customers agreed that the availability of second-hand clothes positively impacts their switching behavior. One customer noted, “It’s more sustainable and decreases the negative impact on the environment,” and another added, “It saves a lot of resources and has a good influence.”

Customers had different approaches to ensuring the cleanliness and safety of second-hand clothes. One stated, “I wash them very thoroughly when I first receive them,” while another said, “It depends on the place selling them. Some shops ensure they are clean and safe.”

Customers had mixed opinions about social risks. One remarked, “There is no risk for me because it makes me happy and comfortable,” while another said, “I don’t think so. Used clothes can be unique and fashionable.”

Customers had varying feelings about nostalgia associated with second-hand clothing. One stated, “It depends on the piece you’re wearing,” while another mentioned, “I’m not the type of person who gets nostalgic about clothes.”

### **Quantitative research**

The quantitative survey method was used to statistically analyze the prevalence of various perceptions and behaviors among consumers. By gathering responses from 290 participants, we were able to assess correlations between perceived risks, perceived value, and switching

behavior. This approach facilitated data-driven conclusions that complemented our qualitative insights.

#### **Data collection method**

**Questionnaire** Dalati & Marx Gómez [21] defined a questionnaire as a series of questions or ideas used to collect data from individuals or groups. This method is used for collecting quantitative or qualitative data for surveys and social science research. In-person interviews, online surveys, and written questionnaires are all options. A questionnaire carefully collects data on certain respondents or variables. A questionnaire may cover demographics, attitudes, opinions, behaviors, preferences, and experiences. Researchers carefully write questions to ensure clarity, objectivity, and relevance to study goals. This study method helps interpret, share, and connect datasets. A method defines the relationships between questionnaires, questions, and replies. The survey is essential to data collection because it opens replies. We circulated the Google Forms questionnaire over WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook.

Structured questionnaires are designed to collect specific data from participants in an ordered manner. A methodical framework with closed-ended questions that require respondents to choose from a limited range of prepared responses is used [66]. Structured questionnaire questions are designed to be simple and understandable. This questionnaire provides data uniformity, processing convenience, and respondent comparability. Since responses can be recorded and statistically analyzed, it helps researchers acquire quantitative data faster.

Social science and survey evaluations of attitudes, views, and perceptions often use Likert scales. It consists of statements or questions where respondents rate their approval or disapproval over five or seven points. The scale is normally “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. Researchers can analyze data by giving a number to each response option. Likert scales formalize subjective concepts for comparison and statistical study. They are popular for assessing attitudes and perspectives in various industries due to their simplicity and adaptability [63].

Ordinal scales rate objects or variables by feature or quality. On an ordinal scale, component values indicate their relative order or location, but the difference between them may not be measured or recognized. When asked to rate their overall satisfaction with an item on a scale of “very dissatisfied,” “somewhat dissatisfied,” “neutral,” “somewhat satisfied,” and “very satisfied,” the sequence of answers shows the level of satisfaction, but the numerical difference between each response option is not always equal or quantifiable [73].

**Pilot testing** This research used a small sample to pilot test the questionnaire to ensure that all statements are clear and respondents have no trouble responding to it. The researchers distributed 13 English questionnaires to 7 females and 6 guys aged 21–25. Respondents filled out questionnaires in 5–8 min. No comments were made because the remarks were clear and unmodified.

#### **Population and sampling**

**Research population** The research sample included individuals who are aware of second-hand clothing and have an interest in purchasing or switching to second-hand fashion. The target age group of 19–35 years was chosen due to their high likelihood of engaging in sustainable practices and second-hand shopping. Younger consumers, particularly Millennials and Generation Z, are known for their increasing preference for eco-friendly and budget-conscious consumption, making them a crucial demographic for understanding the factors influencing second-hand clothing adoption.

**Sampling type** The sample used in this research was a (non-probabilistic) convenience sampling method, as the researchers contacted their social communities and friends to complete the online questionnaire. While this approach allowed for efficient data collection, we acknowledge that it may introduce sampling bias, as participants were not randomly selected. As a result, the findings may not be fully generalizable to the broader population. Future studies could employ probabilistic sampling techniques to enhance external validity.

**Sample size** The sample size involved 290 respondents who successfully filled out the online questionnaire.

#### **Data collection process**

The researchers gathered a total of 290 respondents by distributing their questionnaire on various social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp groups, and Instagram using Google Form.

To ensure transparency and clarity, the data collection process is detailed as follows in Table 1

Data collection was conducted ethically, ensuring **informed consent** from all participants. Survey responses were anonymized, and interview transcripts were analyzed using **thematic analysis** for qualitative insights.

#### **Data coding & verification entry**

The researchers utilized a particular measurement program referred to as the “Statistical Package for the Social Sciences” or “SPSS 26.” SPSS is a versatile and

**Table 1** Data Collection Overview

Data Collection Method	Details
Qualitative Interviews	21 in-depth interviews (1 expert, 20 consumers)
Interview Setting	Conducted in a quiet setting (The Space thrift shop & online via Zoom)
Interview Duration	Approx. 60 min per interview
Interview Date Range	Conducted between March 15–April 10, 2024
Quantitative Survey	290 respondents via Google Forms
Survey Distribution	Shared via WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook groups
Survey Duration	Average response time: 7–10 min
Pilot Testing	Conducted with 13 respondents (7 female, 6 male)
Survey Timeframe	March 20–April 5, 2024
Participant Age Group	19–35 years old (Millennials & Gen Z)

robust application capable of executing various statistical tasks, widely employed across different fields. The study, involving 290 respondents, was carried out through an online questionnaire. This study was conducted on 290 respondents and was conducted through an online questionnaire. The researchers used various statistical methods to analyze the data and test the hypotheses:

- **Cronbach’s alpha** was used to measure the internal consistency and reliability of the survey constructs, ensuring that the items measuring functional risk, social risk, and switching behavior were statistically reliable.
- **Spearman’s correlation** was chosen to examine the relationships between perceived risks (functional and social) and switching behavior, as it is appropriate for ordinal data and nonparametric distributions.
- **The Chi-square test of independence** was applied to assess whether an association exists between functional/social risks and customer switching behavior, allowing us to determine whether these variables are statistically dependent.
- **Descriptive statistics** were used to summarize participant demographics and key survey responses, providing an overview of consumer attitudes toward second-hand clothing.

These statistical tests were selected to ensure a robust and multi-faceted analysis of the relationship between perceived risks and switching behavior.

**Statistical analysis**

A P-value is used to measure the significance of your results in respect to the null hypothesis while doing a statistical test. The null hypothesis asserts that there is no link between the two variables under consideration (one variable does not affect the other). It claims that the results are related to chance and are insignificant in terms of supporting the hypothesis under consideration. As a result, the null hypothesis suggests that whatever you are attempting to show did not occur. If the null hypothesis is found to be false, the alternative hypothesis is what you would believe. According to the alternative hypothesis, the independent variable did impact the dependent variable, and the results are significant in terms of supporting the theory under consideration [7].

The degree of statistical significance is frequently stated as a p-value ranging from 0 to 1. The lower the p-value, the greater the evidence that the null hypothesis should be rejected [7].

A P-value of less than 0.05 (usually  $\leq 0.05$ ) is considered statistically significant. It provides significant evidence against the null hypothesis, since there is less than a 5% chance the null hypothesis is right (and the results are random). As a result, we reject the null hypothesis in favor of the alternative hypothesis [7].

However, if the p-value is less than your limit of significance (usually  $P < 0.05$ ), you can reject the null hypothesis, but this does not imply that the alternative hypothesis is true with a 95% likelihood [7].

To validate the reliability and consistency of the statistical model used in this study, Table 2 represents model fitness indicators that were applied:

These tests confirm that the model used is statistically valid and reliable, ensuring that the relationships examined in this study are not due to random chance but reflect actual consumer behavior trends.

**Table 2** Model Fitness Indicators

Model Fitness Test	Result	Interpretation
Cronbach’s Alpha (Reliability Test)	0.745 (Functional Risk), 0.869 (Social Risk)	Values above 0.7 indicate strong internal consistency [26]
Spearman’s Correlation	–0.617 (Functional Risk), –0.594 (Social Risk)	Indicates moderate-to-strong negative correlation [17]
Chi-square Test of Independence	$p < 0.001$ (Both Variables)	Confirms significant dependence of switching behavior on perceived risks

**Results**

**Hypotheses testing and analysis**

**Demographic characteristics**

According to Table 2 representing the analyses of the demographic characteristics, this sample unit shows the results of a total of 290 respondents which have the majority of females with a percentage of 59.0% (171) and that's because females are more helpful than males and

also because their interest in purchasing clothes is higher than males. The majority of respondents are less than 30 years old with a percentage of 96.9 1% with a dominant 281 of the respondents and with a dominant 79.7% of the respondents who are currently university students. This also shows that the occupation of the majority of respondents is the unemployed with a percentage 71.4%. Also, it shows that the monthly income of the majority of respondents is the option which refers to less than 3000 with a percentage 50.7% as most of the respondents are university students (Table 3).

**Table 3** Demographic Characteristics

Demographic characteristics	Frequency	Percentage	
Gender	Female	171	59.0%
	Male	119	41.0%
Total		290	100%
Age	Less than 20 years old	106	36.6
	20 to 30 years old	175	60.3
	30 to less than 40 years old	4	1.4
	40 to less than 50 years old	1	0.3
	50 years old and above	4	1.4
Education	Bachelor degree or equivalent holder	36	12.4
	High school students	10	3.4
	Postgraduate degree holder	13	4.5
	University student	231	79.7
Monthly income	Less than 3000 LE	147	50.7%
	3000 LE to less than 6000 LE	74	25.5%
	6000 LE to less than 9000 LE	34	11.7%
	9000 LE and above	35	12.1%
Occupation	Unemployed	207	71.4%
	Business owner	31	10.7%
	Private sector employee	37	12.8%
	Public sector employee	15	5.2%
Total		290	100%

**Testing hypothesis 1**

**H1:** There is a relationship between functional risk and customer switching behavior.

According to Table 4 that is representative of the impact of functional risk of second-hand clothes and the customer switching behavior of most of the respondents, of 290 respondents, the majority have agreed with the statements. Also, the highest mean was 4.00 and it indicated that the average individuals agree that people have concerns about hygiene and cleanliness of second-hand clothes.

According to Table 5, the six statements measuring the agreement toward the impact of functional risk

**Table 5** Reliability statistics of statements measuring functional risk

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.745	6

**Table 4** Perceived functional risk of second-hand clothes affects customer switching behavior

Functional risk	(5) Strongly agree	(4) Agree	(3) Neutral	(2) Disagree	(1) Strongly disagree	Mean	Standard Deviation
1—I worry that second hand clothes may be of lower quality compared to new clothes	(75) 25.9%	(104) 35.9%	(77) 26.6%	(26) 9.0%	(8) 2.8%	3.73	1.031
2—I have concerns about purchasing clothes that may be used before	(79) 27.2%	(106) 36.6%	(65) 22.4%	(28) 9.7%	(12) 4.1%	3.73	1.089
3—I worry that second hand clothes may have hidden defects	(86) 29.7%	(124) 42.8%	(58) 20.0%	(20) 6.9%	(2) 0.7%	3.94	0.913
4—I have concerns about hygiene and cleanliness of second-hand clothes	(108) 37.2%	(101) 34.8%	(58) 20.0%	(18) 6.2%	(5) 1.7%	4.00	0.990
5—I worry that second hand clothes might not be fashionable	(49) 16.9%	(66) 22.8%	(72) 24.8%	(70) 24.1%	(33) 11.4%	3.10	1.263
6—I worry about the availability of my size in second hand clothes	(74) 25.5%	(82) 28.3%	(74) 25.5%	(45) 15.5%	(15) 5.2%	3.53	1.177

**Table 6** Switching behavior to second-hand clothes

Customer switching behavior	(5) Strongly agree	(4) Agree	(3) Neutral	(2) Disagree	(1) Strongly disagree	Mean	Standard Deviation
1—I can switch to second hand clothes as it's cheaper than new items	(164) 59.9%	(66) 24.1%	(41) 15.0%	(2) 0.7%	(1) 0.4%	3.83	1.006
2—I will switch to buying second hand clothes to save money	(137) 60.0%	(79) 28.8%	(41) 15.0%	(12) 4.4%	(5) 1.8%	3.66	0.987
3—I believe that second hand clothes improve sustainability	(138) 60.4%	(80) 29.2%	(41) 16.0%	(11) 4.0%	(4) 1.6%	3.77	0.928
4—I trust the quality of second-hand clothes	(117) 42.7%	(83) 30.3%	(53) 19.3%	(15) 5.5%	(6) 2.2%	3.41	1.059
5—Second hand clothes stores are Available to be reached	(103) 37.6%	(89) 32.5	(57) 20.8%	(20) 7.3%	(5) 1.8%	3.47	1.094
6—The availability of a variety of Second-hand clothes options are convenient	(117) 42.7%	(86) 31.4%	(52) 19.0%	(16) 5.8%	(0) 0	3.53	1.056
7—The process of searching for specific items among second hand clothes are time efficient	(120) 43.8%	(87) 31.8%	(55) 20.1%	(9) 3.3%	(3) 1.1%	3.38	1.156

**Table 7** Reliability statistics of statements measuring for customer's switching behavior

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.805	7

on customer switching behavior had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.745. Cronbach's alpha values above 0.7 are generally considered acceptable, indicating reliable internal consistency for the measured items [26]. This suggests that the functional risk construct was measured consistently across respondents, ensuring the reliability of our findings.

According to Table 6 that is representative of the impact of agreement toward the impact of functional risk toward the brand switching behavior, the majority of the respondents strongly agreed with the statements. Also, the highest mean was 3.83. Also, the standard deviation is low which means that the sample is representative and homogenous.

According to Table 7, the seven statements that were measuring the agreement toward the impact of functional risk toward the brand and the customer switching behavior had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.805 which is above 0.7 and that means that the statements are highly reliable.

The correlation coefficient in Table 8 is  $-0.617$ , which indicates a moderate-to-strong inverse relationship between functional risk and customer switching behavior. Correlation values between  $\pm 0.3$  and  $\pm 0.5$  are generally considered moderate, while values above  $\pm 0.5$  suggest a strong relationship [17]. Since the  $p$ -value is less than 0.05, this relationship is statistically significant, confirming that higher perceived functional risks are

**Table 8** Spearman correlation between functional risk toward the second-hand clothes and the customers switching behavior

	Functional risk toward the second-hand clothes and the customer switching behavior
Correlation Coefficient	$-0.617$
$P$ -value	0.000
N	274

associated with lower willingness to switch to second-hand clothing. There is a moderate relationship between the functional risk toward the second-hand clothes and the customer switching behavior.

There is a negative relationship between functional risk and customer switching behavior which equals  $-0.617$ .

**Testing hypothesis 2**

**H2:** There is a relationship between social risk on customer switching behavior.

According to Table 9, there's an impact of social risk on customer switching behavior, as the majority of the respondents are neutral with the statements. However, the highest mean was 3.44 indicating that the average sample were neutral in turns of self-conscious purchasing second-hand clothes and that the customers feel self-conscious when purchasing second-hand clothes. Moreover, the statement's standard deviation is low which indicates that the sample is representative and homogenous.

According to Table 10, the four statements measuring the impact of social risk on customer switching behavior

**Table 9** Measuring the impact of social risk on customer switching behavior

Social risk	(5) Strongly agree	(4) Agree	(3) Neutral	(2) Disagree	(1) Strongly disagree	Mean	Standard Deviation
1—I feel self-conscious when purchasing second hand clothes	(59) 29.3%	(90) 31.0%	(79) 27.2%	(45) 15.5%	(17) 5.9%	3.44	1.149
2—I'm concerned that others may judge me negatively when purchasing second hand clothes	(47) 16.2%	(77) 26.6%	(70) 24.1%	(71) 24.5%	(25) 8.6%	3.17	1.216
3—I worry that purchasing second hand clothes may impact me negatively	(53) 18.3%	(70) 24.1%	(66) 22.8%	(68) 23.4%	(33) 11.4%	3.14	1.283
4—I worry about feeling socially unacceptable while purchasing second hand clothes	(45) 15.5%	(79) 27.2%	(60) 20.7%	(69) 23.8%	(37) 12.8%	3.09	1.280

**Table 10** Reliability statistics of statements measuring for social risk

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.869	4

**Table 11** Spearman correlation between social risk programs toward the customer switching behavior

	Social risk toward the customer switching behavior
Correlation coefficient	-0.594
P-value	0.000
N	274

had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.869. Since Cronbach's alpha values above 0.7 indicate acceptable reliability, and values above 0.8 suggest strong internal consistency, these results confirm that our survey items effectively captured the intended construct [26]. This supports the robustness of our measurement approach.

The correlation coefficient in Table 11 is -0.594, indicating a moderate-to-strong negative correlation between social risk and customer switching behavior. According to Cohen's [17] correlation classification, values between ±0.1 and ±0.3 indicate a weak correlation, values between ±0.3 and ±0.5 suggest a moderate correlation, and values above ±0.5 represent a strong correlation. This means that as social risk perception increases, customer switching behavior decreases, and the relationship is statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).

There is a negative relationship between social risk and customer switching behavior which equals -0.617.

Chi-square test of independence: as shown in Table 12, the Chi-square test of independence is used to understand whether there is a relationship between qualitative independent and dependent variables or not. Since the variables were Likert ordinal scale and

**Table 12** Chi-square test of independence for the variables from the customer switching

	Value	df	P-value
Functional Risk	169.344	64	.000
Social Risk	167.408	52	.000

no observed frequency of the cell was less than five, the Chi-square test of independence is appropriate for further analysis. Observing Table 6.3.4, customer switching is significantly dependent on the functional and social risk at 99% confidence level. Chi-square test of independence does not take into consideration the impact of all variables on the customers switching behavior simultaneously.

**Limitations of data analysis**

While the statistical analyses provide meaningful insights into the relationship between perceived risks and customer switching behavior, certain limitations should be acknowledged. First, the use of convenience sampling may introduce selection bias, as participants were primarily drawn from the researchers' social circles, limiting the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. Second, the sample size ( $N=290$ ), while sufficient for detecting significant relationships, may not fully capture the diversity of consumer perspectives across different demographics. Finally, while self-reported data offer valuable insights, they may be subject to social desirability bias, where participants provide responses, they perceive as socially acceptable rather than reflecting their true behaviors. Future studies could address these limitations by employing random sampling methods and larger, more representative samples to enhance external validity.

**Research discussion**

Table 13 shows the discussion of the results.

**Table 13** Discussion of Results

Hypotheses	Previous Literature	Results	Discussion
There is a relationship between functional risks of second-hand clothes and customer's switching behavior	Customers who switch brands are more likely to move to different items or brands when they meet dangers related to second-hand clothing, such as poor quality, uneven size, sanitation issues, tight return policies, or a lack of reliability. Customers become less confident and satisfied as a result of these risks, which drives them to look for more dependable and satisfying solutions. So, there's significant impact between product risk of second-hand clothes and customer switching behavior. In the second-hand clothes industry, sellers can reduce switching behavior and increase customer loyalty by addressing these risks and offering a great customer experience [46]	This study employed a mixed-method approach to analyze the impact of perceived functional and social risks on customer switching behavior. Quantitative survey results identified a significant negative impact of functional risk on switching behavior, while qualitative insights reinforced the role of consumer trust in second-hand fashion	The results that the researchers came out with was found in the previous literature review, which means that there's a significant impact between functional risk of second-hand clothes and customer switching behavior. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is accepted
There is a relationship between social risks of second-hand clothes and customer's switching behavior	Social risks include things like peer perception, image issues, and social shame related to wearing and purchasing used clothing. Customers may be more likely to convert to new clothing or brands that meet social expectations if they believe there is a significant chance of receiving unfavorable feedback or that their social standing would be harmed when they buy used clothing. But if sustainable fashion becomes more popular and views change, consumers who value individuality and the environment might embrace used clothing, which could decrease the chance that they would change their behavior due to social hazards (Zhou, et al., 2022)	Previous research that highlights perceived risk as a key determinant in consumer switching behavior [46]. However, unlike past studies that focus primarily on hygiene concerns as the main driver of risk perception [40], our research emphasizes that peer perception and social norms significantly influence switching decisions [49]. These results suggest that trust-building strategies, such as transparency in product descriptions and social endorsement by influencers, could mitigate consumer concerns regarding second-hand clothing	The results that the researchers came out with was found in the previous literature review, which means that there's a relationship and impact between social risk of second-hand clothes and customer switching behavior. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is accepted

**Conclusion**

In this study we talked about the impact of social risk and functional risk on customers switching behavior toward thrift shops and second-hand clothes. Firstly, we talked about the impact of social risk on customers switching behavior and we found that consumers who value individuality and the environment might embrace used clothing, which could decrease the chance that they would change their behavior. Secondly, we talked about the impact of functional risk on customers switching behavior and we found that customers who switch brands are more likely to move to different items or brands when they meet dangers related to second-hand clothing, such as poor quality, uneven size, sanitation issues, tight return policies, or a lack of reliability.

Next in the exploratory research researchers found that there is an impact between functional risk, social risk and customer switching behavior. Most of the customers agreed that they would recommend their friends and families to buy second-hand clothes. All customers agreed that second-hand clothes are way cheaper compared to normal ones, as most of them said sometimes it's half the price or way less, some said very cheap especially in the high-end cloth and product as it loses its brand value. Also, Customers' opinions and thoughts about second-handed cloths that they are environment friendly and sustainable, some said that's cheaper and better quality and others said they don't like or if they are in good condition, they will think about it. Some customers also said their opinions about socially

belonging to a certain group while supporting sustainable products, they said that as they are kind of a minority nowadays, switching to sustainable products is somewhat a lifestyle, and others said no because we live in a class society. Because people judge each other through their clothes, others said Yes, they do, they feel belonging to a certain group because they could get it, but they support sustainable products for those unable to afford normal ones.

We also talked about research methodology. We used a qualitative approach by using in-depth interviews while asking the experts and customers. We also used quantitative approach by using online questionnaires through google docs, social media platforms and WhatsApp. According to the demographics of this research, we found that there were 290 responses, and the majority were females. Also, the majority of the age was from 20 to 30 years old, and there were 175 responses between the 20's and the 30's. We also found that the majority in the education level were university students with 79.7%. In the income level, the majority were less than 3000 LE with 50.7%.

The purpose of this research was to determine the impact of customers' perception of second-hand clothes on their switching behavior. There are two hypotheses in this research.

According to the first hypothesis, there is a significant impact between functional risks of second-hand clothes and customer switching behavior. The correlation analysis proved that there's a negative significant impact between the variables of the hypothesis. Therefore, **hypothesis 1 is accepted.**

The second hypothesis stated that there is a negative relationship between social risk of second-hand clothes and customer switching behavior. The reliability test of the hypothesis proved that the statements measuring the hypothesis were highly reliable and consistent. Finally, the correlation analysis proved that there's a negative relationship between the variables of the hypothesis. Therefore, **hypothesis 2 is accepted.**

This research findings found that the relationship between functional risk and customer switching behavior was significant and existence of negative relationship while there was a negative relationship between social risk and customer switching behavior.

### Managerial implications

- 1) There is a negative perception toward second-hand clothes of being lower quality compared to new clothes which requiring too aware people more about the concept and it is not a necessary of being as a second hand to be with low quality. It's recommended to get credibility by two ways: Build a community around your brand that shares positive experiences with second-hand fashion. Encourage customers to share their finds and create a sense of belonging. In addition to collaborate with fashion influencers or bloggers who are open to wearing and promoting second-hand clothing. Their endorsement can have a significant impact on changing perceptions.
- 2) People have concerns from second-hand clothes hygiene which require an awareness campaign by second-hand clothes traders. They should introduce hygiene labels or tags on items to assure customers that the product is proper.
- 3) Low prices can be an incentive for people to switch to second-hand clothes because of the current economic crisis and high inflation rate which make regular clothes high priced. So, it's important to highlight attractive prices of second-hand clothes by advertising campaigns using social media platforms and fashion influencers.
- 4) It's important to highlight the beneficial impacts that could save the environment from being eco-friendly when depending on second-hand clothes. So, highlighting the environmental benefits of second-hand clothes, such as reduced waste and carbon emissions, customers may develop a greater understanding of the positive impact their purchasing decisions can have on the planet. This increased awareness can motivate them to switch from buying new clothes to purchasing second-hand ones.
- 5) Negative perception of second-hand clothes as low quality or outdated can attract individuals seeking unique and well-made items. This can be solved by showcasing the variety and quality of second-hand clothing available, emphasizing the potential for finding one-of-a-kind pieces that stand out. Unique selection of styles, designs, and vintage pieces that are not readily available in mainstream retail stores. By promoting the idea that second-hand clothes can help customers express their individuality and stand out from the crowd, their perception of second-hand garments as desirable fashion choices can be enhanced, leading to increased switching behavior.
- 6) People have social concerns when wearing second-hand clothes. So, leveraging the power of social media and influencers can play a significant role in enhancing the social perception of second-hand clothes. By showcasing stylish individuals wearing second-hand outfits and highlighting their positive experiences, customers may be more inclined to switch as they perceive second-hand clothing as trendy and socially acceptable.

- 7) There is a problem in the popularity of the second-hand concept in Egypt and it's hard to find second-hand clothes stores. So, Improving the accessibility and convenience of second-hand clothes can remove barriers to switching behavior. This can be achieved through online marketplaces, dedicated second-hand clothing stores, or collaborations with mainstream retailers, making it easier for customers to find and purchase second-hand items.

### Policy recommendations

To promote second-hand policy, measures should be implemented:

*Retailer Certification Programs:* Introducing standardized hygiene and quality assurance labels for second-hand clothing can improve consumer trust.

*Government Incentives:* Offering tax benefits or sustainability grants to retailers who promote eco-friendly second-hand fashion.

*Social media & Influencer Campaigns:* Collaborations with influencers and fashion bloggers to reshape public perception and highlight the benefits of thrift shopping [58].

*E-Commerce Transparency:* Second-hand marketplaces should provide detailed product descriptions, high-resolution images, and verified customer reviews to reduce uncertainty among buyers.

By integrating these policies, stakeholders can enhance the mainstream acceptance of second-hand clothing and create a more sustainable fashion industry.

### Research limitations

- 1) The researchers would depend on the English version of the questionnaire only and didn't distribute the Arabic questionnaire.
- 2) The researchers relied on a convenience sampling method for the quantitative phase, which may limit the generalizability of the findings due to potential sample bias. Since participants were primarily drawn from the researchers' social circles, the sample may not fully represent the broader population. Future research should consider employing random sampling techniques to enhance representativeness and external validity. Additionally, the questionnaire

was distributed mainly to university students, which poses an age limitation.

### Suggestions for further research

- 1) It is recommended to conduct a comparative study between second-hand clothes and regular clothes to measure perceived value and perceived risk on customer switching behavior.
- 5) It is recommended for further research to do the research in another culture with different cultural perceptions.
- 6) It is recommended to study the demographics variables as a moderator to which level of demographics that will have the strongest impact of the dependent variable customer switching behavior like age and gender.

### Appendix A: exploratory questions for customers

- 1) Do you recommend your friends and family to buy second-hand clothes?
- 2) How much cheaper second-hand clothes compared to the normal one?
- 3) What are your thoughts about buying second-hand clothes?
- 4) How does word of mouth affect your perception toward second-hand clothes?
- 5) What are styles or trends you are currently looking for in second-hand clothes?
- 6) What is the perceived value or the value you got from buying second-hand clothes?
- 7) What motivates you to switch to buying second-hand products?
- 8) Do you feel socially belonging to a certain group while supporting sustainable products? How?
- 9) How does the availability of second-hand clothes impact your switching behavior?
- 10) How does the availability of accepting wearing second-hand clothes and how do you ensure that they are clean and safe to wear?
- 11) Are there any social risks associated with wearing second-hand clothes, such as being perceived as unfashionable or low class?

- 12) Is there any sense of nostalgia, special meaning or sentimental value that comes with wearing second-hand clothes?

## Appendix B: exploratory questions for experts

- 1) What are the benefits of purchasing second-hand clothing?
- 2) How can someone ensure the quality of second-hand clothing before purchasing it?
- 3) What are some common misconceptions about second-hand clothing?
- 4) How has the market for second-hand clothing changed in recent years?
- 5) What are some tips for finding unique and high-quality second-hand clothing?
- 6) How can someone care for their second-hand clothing to make it last longer?
- 7) What are some of the environmental impacts of the fashion industry, and how does purchasing second-hand clothing help mitigate them?
- 8) What are some of the ethical considerations surrounding the production and consumption of clothing, and how does second-hand clothing fit into that?
- 9) How can someone find second-hand clothing that fits their personal style and meets their specific needs?
- 10) What are some of the challenges faced by those who sell or donate second-hand clothing, and how can those be addressed?

### Abbreviations

PV Perceived value  
SPSS Statistical Package for Social Sciences

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### Author contributions

N.M, N.A, and Y.T. have scrutinized the literature and formulated the research gap. In addition, they wrote down the literature review. A.M. and A.S. formulated the methodical framework of this study to achieve the desired objectives. They selected the sample size from the available population and have designed, together with K.B., the data collection instrument and suggested the method of data analysis. Y.T. and K.B. have presented the discussion of results. The discussion of different collected data presented in the results. A.M. contributed to this research by collaborating with A.S., N.M., N.A., K.B., and Y.T. in the design of the data collection instruments. All authors have read and approved the manuscript.

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Authors declare that funding of preparing this study or further processing of its publication in case of approval is totally borne by themselves.

### Availability of data and materials

The authors declare they have full access to all study data, take fully responsibility for the accuracy of the data analysis, and have authority over manuscript preparation and decisions to submit the manuscript for publication.

### Declarations

#### Ethics approval and consent to participate

A local ethics committee ruled that no formal ethics approval was required in this particular research, they only asked to have a copy of the published report after the research has been completed.

#### Consent for publication

Consent for participant is not applicable.

#### Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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