

Pakistani Consumers and Purchasing Secondhand Clothes: A Study of Post Covid-19 in Digital Era

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Access This Article Online
Quick Response Code



DOI

10.62019/BRDR.02.02.02

Volume: 2 | Issue: 2
Pages: 65-72

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How to Cite This Article

Fatima, D., & Razzaq, S. (2022). Pakistani Consumers and Purchasing Secondhand Clothes: A Study of Post Covid-19 In Digital Era. *Business Review of Digital Revolution*, 2(2), 65-72.

Received: 18-Jul-2022

Revised: 15-Sep-2022

Accepted: 20-Oct-2022

Published: 31-Dec-2022

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ABSTRACT

The business of second-hand clothes is emerging in the modern society in current digital era. There are different factors that are leading consumers to purchase these clothes. The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of secondhand clothes (SHC) in Pakistani consumers and purchasing. This research has used primary data collected with random Pakistani consumers. The data is analyzed by Smart PLS 3 for empirical findings. This research concluded that the brand awareness, need for uniqueness and socio-environmental awareness has significant impact on purchasing second-hand clothes. Further this research model is novel in the body of knowledge based on its variables. These findings are theoretically and practically important to enhance the body of knowledge and practice of secondhand clothes business as well. This research future directions are a way forward for the scholars to enhance the body of knowledge further.

Keywords. Secondhand Clothes, Consumer, Purchasing, Perceived Cost, Environmental Values, Digital Era.

1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic had global psychological, social, and economic effects in addition to physical illness. The most viewed and searched-for topic on the internet and in all media was "COVID-19." All nations afflicted by Corona, including China, the United Kingdom, Italy, Pakistan, and others, declared a medical emergency (Abbasi et al., 2022). The government has created a stay-at-home policy, and awareness campaigns have been started to encourage people to do so, as this is the only way to reduce the number of COVID-19 patients. After a long break, Pakistan's industry is struggling to recover from the hit it has taken from Coronavirus restrictions. COVID has affected many businesses in Pakistan like surgical goods & medical instruments, the cotton & cloth industry, fruits, and agriculture.

There was a considerable influence on apparel spending habits as a result of the fall in disposable income of a sizable segment of the Pakistani community as a result of the financial situation made worse by the coronavirus outbreak (El Khatib, 2020). As a result, desire for products with reduced pricing increased. Also, many people witnessed reselling companies they no only wore to earn cash when investing additional time at residence due to personal

exclusion; however, this didn't happen to be done deliberately; rather, it was due to a medical condition that had a severe monetary implications (El Khatib, 2020). Second-hand retail is expanding quickly due to rising consumer ecological consciousness and the appeal of sustainable fashion (Park, Kwon, Zaman, & Song, 2020).

Young people are recognized for establishing fashion trends in digital era, and their interest in secondhand shopping significantly altered how even major firms do their business (Sorensen & Johnson Jorgensen, 2019). Most often, the justifications given for buying used items are described as being based on financial considerations, a desire to appear well, or adhering to the environmental protection ideology (Cernicova-Buca, 2022). With a relative view of previously and throughout Covid-19, this investigation provides educational original implications concentrating on the Pakistani purchaser in the frame of reference of an international occasion that impacted the interpersonal everyday life of fashion involvement, straight influencing behavior of customers, and generating good outcomes for the studies and the existing knowledge.

The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of secondhand clothes (SHC) in Pakistani consumers and purchasing: a study of post

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covid-19 era. In addition to the objectives, the research includes an introduction to SHC, a discussion of how the fashion business has become problematic in modern society, and justifications for why this study should be creative in how it approaches the idea of sustainability. On the specific concerns in evidence, the literature evaluation supports the hypotheses examined in this study. In addition, the materials and techniques used are presented together with the theoretical analytical model. The results are then examined and discussed, followed by a discussion of the work's ultimate conclusions. The results of the methodology are then provided while considering the original aims.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The wearers of clothing in contemporary life are now examined by society and either given acceptance or rejection (Hansen, 2014; Hansen & Le Zotte, 2019). Customers from different socioeconomic backgrounds and classes, including artists and high-profile people like ex-pats, tourists, and royal family members, buy and wear secondhand clothes comfortably. SHCs are no longer considered to be low-level fashion. Instead, they have evolved into a global fashion trend today (Herjanto, Scheller-Sampson, & Erickson, 2016). Additionally, SHC established a brand-new industry known as leftover vendors, who helped SHC clients by selling scraps of old fabric that could be used to fix SHC. Currently, SHCs are widely accessible in thrift stores, flea markets, second-hand stores, vintage stores, auctions, garage sales, yard sales, specific SHC markets, local and conventional markets, local and online marketplaces, and the Internet (Herjanto et al., 2016).

Brand awareness is the capacity of potential customers to notice or remember that the brand is an integral component of a certain product (Su & Chang, 2017). A brand contains a name or symbol that customers may use to recognize a product and help them remember it quickly. A crucial cognitive indicator and a vital part of consumer-based brand equity is brand awareness (Vasudevan & Kumar, 2019). In general, it is also acknowledged that this refers to customers' capacity to recognize a brand in sufficient detail to make a purchase. This identification may be through brand memory or brand familiarity (Kotler & Keller, 2016). A person's active and passive understanding of a certain brand is referred to as brand awareness. According to Edbring et al., (2016), the demand for status is linked to the purchase of used goods, and this behavior is seen as a good chance to buy upscale goods and well-known brands. However, many thrift shops began to offer branded items and charge higher rates in response to the rising demand for such things, and this tendency can be seen as a tactic to take advantage of the consumer (Machado, de Almeida, Bollick, & Bragagnolo, 2019). Correspondingly, the consumer's attachment to the brand harms their intention to purchase secondhand clothes, given that they occasionally choose to buy the item from the brand's store and that there are very few chances that they will find clothing from the brand to which they are most attached in thrift stores. Brand awareness affects consumer perceptions of goods, preferences, and brand loyalty (Su & Chang, 2017). One type of customer activity that results from their recognition of a brand is brand awareness. The degree to which consumers recall and identify a product from a trademark may be altered by this awareness, which ultimately fosters customer loyalty.

Hypothesis 1: *Brand awareness has impact on purchase*

secondhand clothes.

"Need for uniqueness" in the context of consumer behavior research refers to the assertion of personal identity and the development of goods that aim to highlight each customer's unique selling points in digital era. It is described as a person's effort to distinguish themselves from others by acquiring and utilizing consumer items to forge a sense of personal and social identity (Tian, Bearden, & Hunter, 2001). All people have an innate need for uniqueness, according to the consumers' need for uniqueness theory. Some folks want to be "just like everybody else," which is one extreme. On the other hand, some individuals want to stand out and be as unique as possible. Unique fashion awareness is defined by the purpose of one's look and attire. Walsh noted that fashion-conscious consumers tend to wear the newest (current) fashions, look stylish, and love buying for their purpose. Additionally, they typically buy more apparel than those who don't pay as much attention to fashion (Kim, 2018). A lot of customers may select SHC due to their need for individuality (Sandes & Leandro, 2016). Customers may be drawn to the urge to feel special, and literature has previously taken this idea into account providing a persuasive argument in favor of buying secondhand clothing (Nica & Potcovaru, 2015). Strongly distinctive people are making unconventional purchasing decisions, such as shopping for clothing on used sites to express their originality (Guiot & Roux, 2010). Buying used goods is motivated by the feeling of a one-of-a-kind acquisition prospect and the exceptionality of the thing (Xu, Chen, Burman, & Zhao, 2014).

Hypothesis 2: *Need for uniqueness has impact purchase secondhand clothes.*

Social ethics is the way people behave in front of society when confronted with the necessity to direct their conduct by standards that are seen to be more suitable. These guidelines, which constitute human behavior, are widely acknowledged as being necessary. Ethics has always defined a sort of successful conduct for both people and societal groupings, whether in antiquity or now (Vasquez-Parraga & Kara, 2019). Environmental awareness refers to psychological aspects of a person's predisposition to engage in eco-friendly practices (Stern, 2005). People with a strong utilitarian sense of worth pick and choose which of their clothes are unwanted based on the physical qualities or state of the garments. For instance, the owner determines whether an item is still wearable. People with a strong hedonic sense of worth, on the other hand, assess the objects according to their sentimental or emotional value. Scholars point out that demographic factors including age, gender, and religion are accountable for SHC disposal behavior in addition to the psychological aspect (Bianchi & Birtwistle, 2010). According to a cross-cultural study conducted in Chile and Australia by Bianchi and Birtwistle, older adults are more likely to donate or recycle their old clothing. Women are continuously more inclined than men to discard their SHC and less clothing. Due to the perception that women care more about the environment than men do, and they also wish to protect it for future generations. While various religions have varied inclinations when it comes to how they dispose of their SHC, highly religious people often dispose of their SHCs more responsibly (Felix, Asuamah, & Darkwa, 2013). The consumption of SHC is assessed, considering moral concerns about the effects of (over) consumption on the environment and society

as well as a wish for charitable straightforwardness. This acquisition is understood as a protest of consumerism and, more unambiguously, as a reaction to leftover (Zukhrufani & Ratnasari, 2022).

Hypothesis 3: *Socio- environmental awareness has impact on purchase secondhand clothes.*

The usefulness of a product is evaluated overall by the consumer based on impressions of what is supplied and received (Zeithaml, 1988). The idea of perceived value has developed from two fundamental dimensions: economics (the trade-off between quality and price/sacrifice) and psychological factors on the emotional and experiential sides of consuming. A key precursor to customer pleasure and behavioral intentions is perceived value. Typically, consumers base their purchasing decisions on the anticipated advantages (Aycock, Cho, & Woods, 2022). According to Chi (2011) consumers are more inclined to buy a product whose perceived worth is higher. This implies that buyers could base their purchasing choice on how much they think a thing is worth. Consumers' purchasing intentions are significantly influenced by perceived value since it combines transaction utility and acquisition utility. (Gupta & Kim, 2010) found that perceived value positively impacts online customers' purchase intentions based on the study paradigm. Studies provide empirical support for the positive relationship between perceived value and purchase intention (Chen, Tsai, & Hsieh, 2017). Amaral and Spers (2022) rethinking consumption patterns are seen as extremely important since there is a deeper understanding of the effects that a particular purchasing decision. The behavior affects sustainability, promoting more mindful and ecologically conscientious consumption in modern culture. The industry, the customer, and the creators of new goods all play critical characters in the development of this newfangled period. Given the backdrop that has been revealed, it is possible to identify new scenarios for the industry looking for the circularity of clothing (Amaral & Spers, 2022). The framework of study is available in Figure 1.

Hypothesis 4: *Perceived cost moderates the relationship between brand awareness and purchase secondhand clothes.*

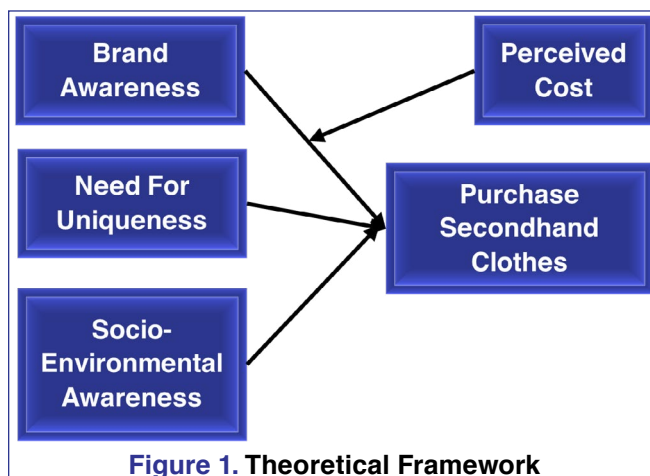


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

3. METHODOLOGY

This research has developed questionnaire to collect the data as the existing instruments were not sufficient for it. The instrument

development process was comprehensive. The literature was reviewed at first and a pool of questionnaire was developed. Furthermore, the exploratory factor analysis findings were tested to check the validity of questionnaire on a data of 55 sample. Furthermore, the confirmatory factor analysis findings are also checked for the final validity of the questionnaire. The developed questionnaire is administrated to collect the data. This study has collected data from Pakistani consumers randomly, and the sample size was 398. The findings of this research are testes with Smart PLS 3.0 data analysis tools.

4. FINDINGS

“PLS Algorithm” calculations are used to check the “validity and reliability” of the research. The study has obtained the value of “Cronbach’s alpha, composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE)” for testing the validity. The recommend value for Cronbach’s alpha is 0.70 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011) that is achieved by this study. The recommended value for CR is 0.70 (Valentini & Damasio, 2016) that is also achieved by the findings. The recommended value for AVE is 0.50 (Valentini & Damasio, 2016) achieved by the research. The study has reliability and validity for its findings of each construct (see Figure 2 and Table 1).

Table 1. Measurement Model

Constructs	Items	Factor Loadings	α	rho_A	CR	AVE
Brand Awareness	BA1	0.640	0.888	0.896	0.916	0.650
	BA2	0.667				
	BA3	0.880				
	BA4	0.878				
	BA5	0.866				
	BA6	0.866				
Need For Uniqueness	NU1	0.601	0.815	0.827	0.873	0.582
	NU2	0.727				
	NU3	0.830				
	NU4	0.861				
	NU5	0.766				
Perceived Cost	PC1	0.792	0.801	0.798	0.871	0.630
	PC2	0.878				
	PC3	0.828				
	PC4	0.662				
Purchase Second Hand Clothes	PSHC1	0.775	0.764	0.775	0.841	0.514
	PSHC2	0.670				
	PSHC3	0.757				
	PSHC4	0.684				
	PSHC5	0.695				
Socio-environmental Awareness	SA1	0.870	0.917	0.916	0.939	0.755
	SA2	0.920				
	SA3	0.910				
	SA4	0.896				
	SA5	0.735				

The study has considered the “Heteritrait-Monotrait (HTMT)” method of discriminant validity to determine the distinction between findings of variables. The recommended value of HTMT is 0.90 (Gold, Malhotra, & Segars, 2001) that is achieved by this study. Hence, all the findings of the study have discriminant validity. Table 2 contains the results of HTMT discriminant validity test.

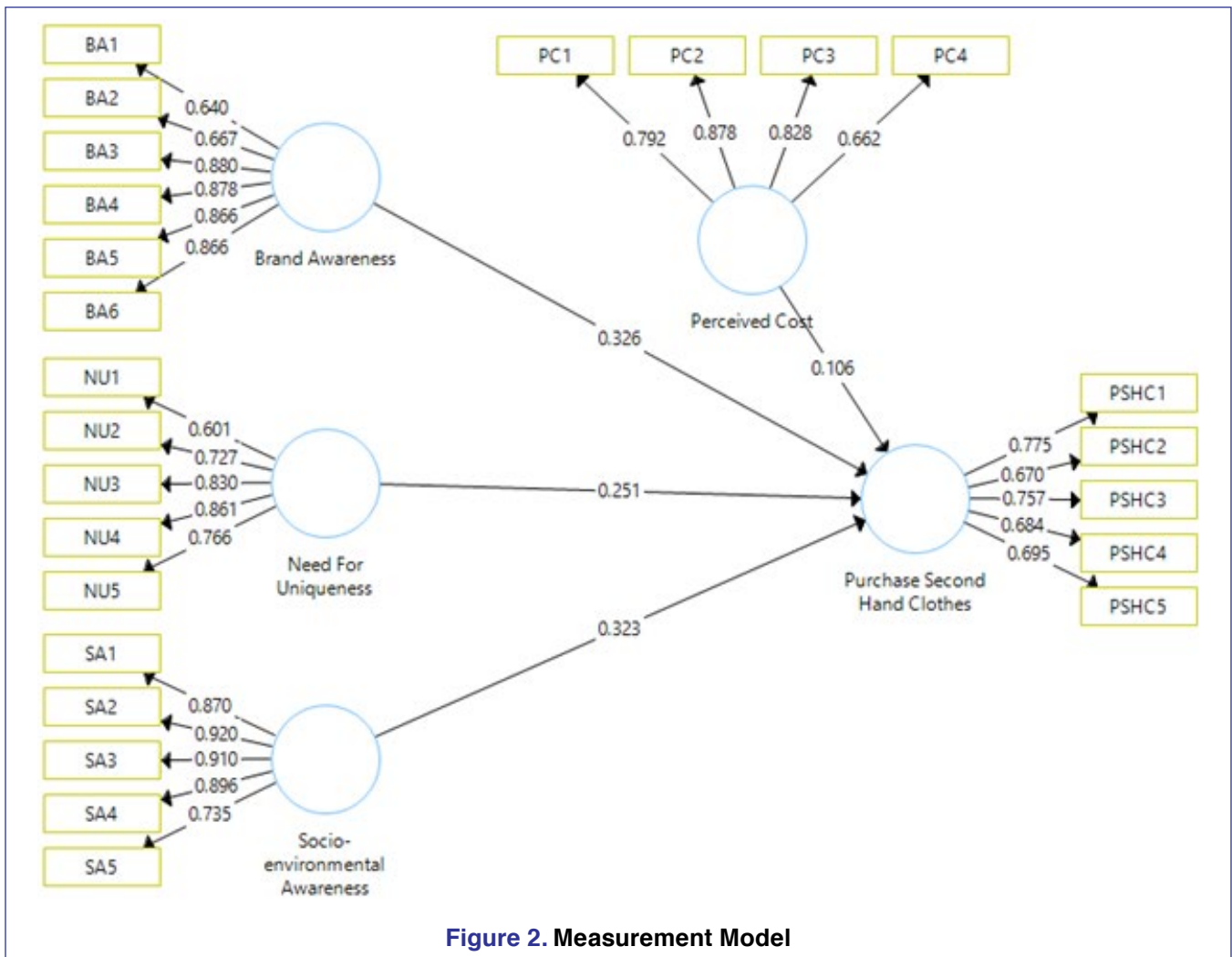


Figure 2. Measurement Model

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

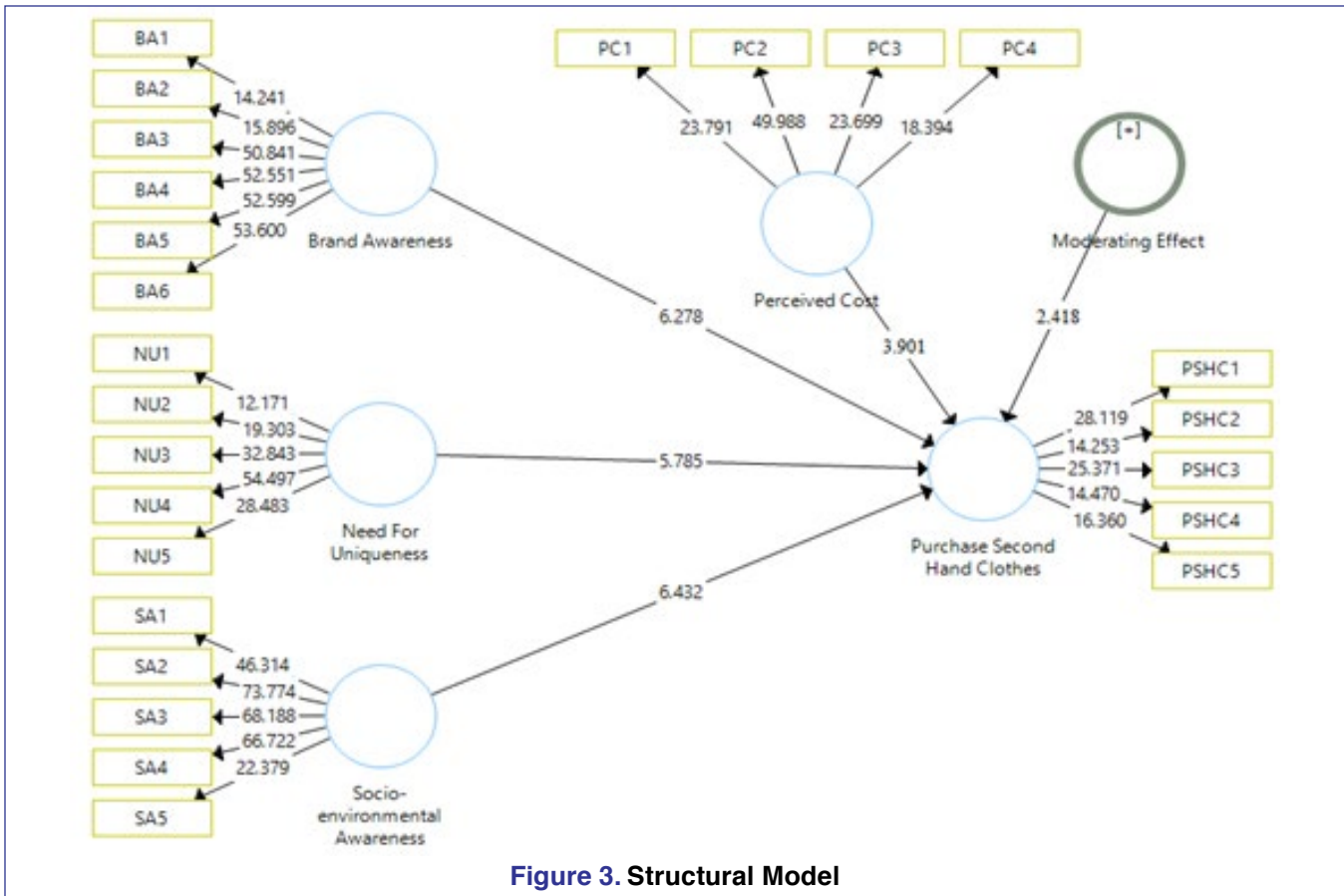
	Brand Awareness	Need For Uniqueness	Perceived Cost	Purchase Second Hand Clothes	Socio-environmental Awareness
Brand Awareness					
Need For Uniqueness	0.747				
Perceived Cost	0.733	0.775			
Purchase Second Hand Clothes	0.655	0.791	0.734		
Socio-environmental Awareness	0.791	0.662	0.684	0.794	

The research has used “PLS Bootstrapping” calculations to determine the path significance of this study. The threshold for significant hypothesis is “ $t > 1.96$ and $p < 0.05$ ”. The study obtained the findings of H1 significant “ $t = 6.278$ and $p = 0.000$ ” and the influence of brand awareness is noteworthy on purchase second hand clothes. Secondly, the study obtained the findings

of H2 significant “ $t = 5.785$ and $p = 0.000$ ” and the influence of need for uniqueness is noteworthy on purchase second hand clothes. Thirdly, the study obtained the findings of H3 significant “ $t = 6.432$ and $p = 0.000$ ” and the influence of socio-environmental awareness is noteworthy on purchase second hand clothes. The results are presented in Table 3 and Figure 3.

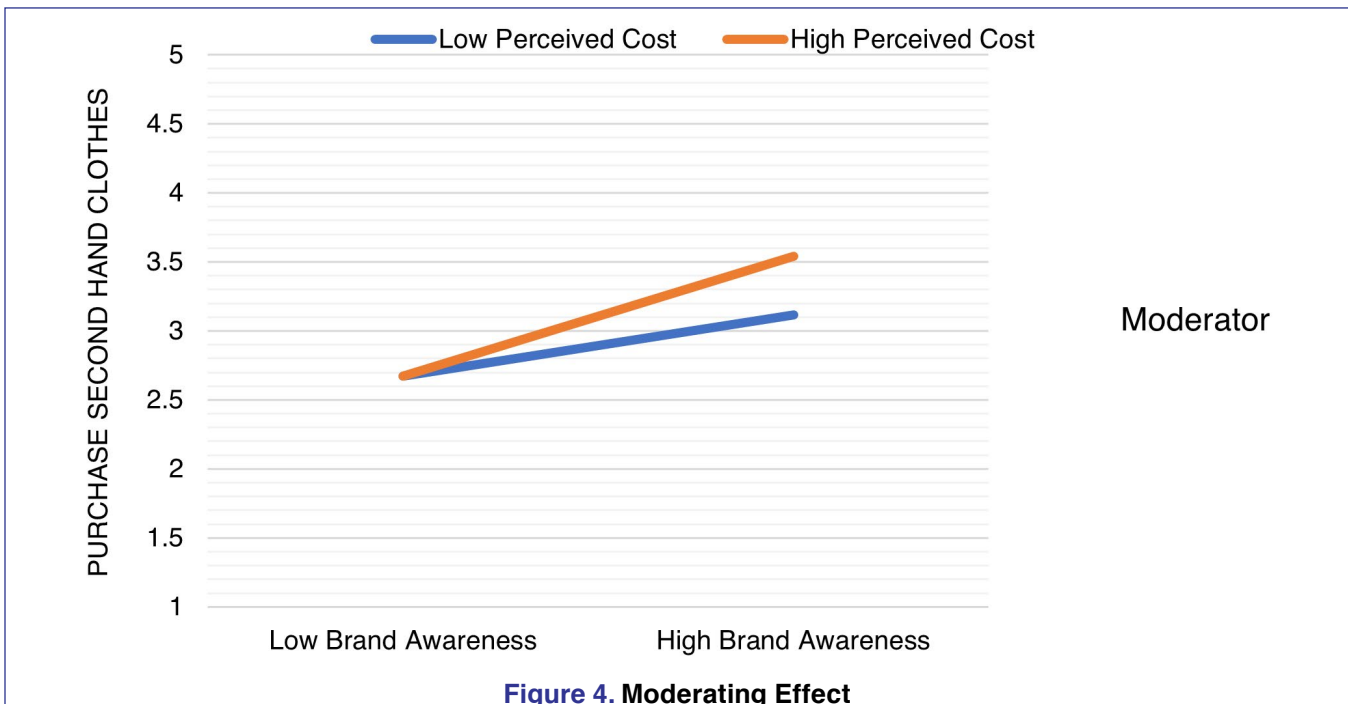
Table 3. Hypotheses Results

Path	β	SD	t	p	Results
Brand Awareness->Purchase Second Hand Clothes	0.326	0.052	6.278	0.000	Significant
Need For Uniqueness->Purchase Second Hand Clothes	0.251	0.043	5.785	0.000	Significant
Socio-environmental Awareness-> Purchase Second Hand Clothes	0.323	0.050	6.432	0.000	Significant
Moderating Effect->Purchase Second Hand Clothes	0.106	0.044	2.418	0.016	Significant



Finally, this study has obtained the results of H4 and determined that the moderating impact of perceived cost is significant on the relationship of brand awareness and purchase secondhand clothes “t = 2.418 and p = 0.016”. The outcomes

highlighted that the moderation of perceived cost is positive, and it strengthens the relationship of brand awareness and purchase secondhand clothes (see Figure 4).



5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The four hypotheses created in this study were thought about to comprehend how Pakistan consumers perceived used clothing in the Covid-19 pandemic. After the pandemic, brand awareness increased, but it had been inversely connected regarding desire to purchase SHC, designates that, following the epidemic, mature clients choose to buy clothing from their favorite brands in their individual stores rather than buying used clothing. Brand awareness did not play a major role in the decision to acquire SHC prior to the pandemic, probably since the abundance of products from many products available in used stores such as charity shops and e-shops. Due to concerns about hygiene and contamination after the pandemic, physical thrift stores were unable to supply or promote SHC, while internet thrift stores continued to grow (Mello, 2021)

The craving for distinctiveness and the urge to purchase SHC are still strongly correlated. As a result, regardless of the modifications, a characteristic of SHC's acquisition motive has persevered: people still buy SHC to show off their fashionable tastes and individuality, prior to as well as following the outbreak. Before the outbreak, the desire to stand out from the crowd by using SHC as a form of communication was already quite prevalent. After the Covid-19 pandemic, socio-environmental awareness has developed a significant relationship. Considering that people are buying more used clothing because of growing socioenvironmental awareness since the Covid-19 pandemic breakout.

The relationship between perceived cost and a desire to purchase SHC. Meaning that customers purchase SHC to gain in the pandemic, some semblance of social standing among friends and family. Consumers were prepared for the epidemic before it started getting SHC to prove to their friends and social circle that they to gain prestige and social recognition, one should support a cause that helps to protect natural resources and stops the environment from getting worse (Cervellon, Carey, & Harms, 2012). This intent to purchase SHC was still driven by the pandemic's occurrence, especially given the present valuation environmental considerations during the buying process.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Theoretical Implications and Practical Implications

The literature made it possible to understand the SHC phenomenon in digital era, it fell short of being able to explain the SHC phenomenon in its entirety. As a result, this literary work might not fully capture the phenomenon. The research's conclusions also based on literature that appeared in pandemic. The consumer's motivations were studied in several earlier SHC research and intend to acquire this kind of product. Several earlier research on SHC looked at the consumer's drivers and plans to purchase this type of goods. The uncertainty brought on by the global pandemic had an impact on consumer behavior today, as customers worldwide changed and interrupted their regular activity in response to the crisis. Mason, Narcum, and Mason (2020) noted alterations in consumer behavior patterns in response to the pandemic outbreak. Mehta, Saxena, and Purohit (2020) stated that the pandemic made people buy only what they needed and avoid making unnecessary purchases, which had an impact on materialism in their investigation of the shifts in consumer behavior, (Eger, Komarkova, Egerova, & Micik,

2021) identified increased use of online shopping channels as well as altered purchasing patterns. Practically, this research can provide best insights to business in market.

7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This study has introduced a comprehensive model of purchasing secondhand clothes that were not reported by the earlier studies. However, this study has limitations as it has collected data only from the diverse population of Pakistan. In this way, the future studies are required to collect data from a particular gender women or men to determine the findings. Furthermore, the future studies are required to test the moderating role of economic downturn in this model in the context of Pakistan. Therefore, the studies would provide further expedition to the knowledge and ways for practice.

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