



## Motivational Dimensions In Alfred Schutz's Phenomenology: Understanding Secondhand Consumption Lifestyle Among Universitas Negeri Makassar Students

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**Abstract:** This study explores the phenomenon of secondhand consumption among students at Universitas Negeri Makassar (UNM) through Alfred Schutz's phenomenological framework. The research aims to uncover the motivational dimensions that shape students' engagement with secondhand goods as part of their urban lifestyle. Using a qualitative approach and phenomenological design, the study focuses on understanding the subjective meanings behind students' thrifting behavior. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and social media documentation at several major secondhand markets and thrift shops in Makassar. The analysis, following Schutz's typifications of "because of motive" and "in order to motive", revealed four central themes: economic efficiency, self-identity expression, environmental awareness, and the influence of digital communities. Findings indicate that thrifting among UNM students is not merely a cost-saving strategy but a reflective social practice that integrates aesthetic creativity, moral consciousness, and sustainability values. Moreover, social media serves as a cultural catalyst that transforms secondhand consumption into a medium for identity construction and digital participation. The study concludes that thrifting functions as a multidimensional cultural strategy through which students negotiate modernity, sustainability, and self-expression within the dynamic urban culture of Makassar.

**Keywords:** Secondhand Consumption, Student Lifestyle, Sustainable Fashion, Makassar.

### INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of secondhand goods consumption in recent years has grown rapidly across major cities in Indonesia, including Makassar. This shift marks a transformation in the urban consumption paradigm, where secondhand items once associated with low social status or negative stigma are now perceived as a form of smart, economical, and sustainable consumption aligned with modern lifestyles. Empirical studies have shown that consumer decisions in Makassar to purchase secondhand clothing are primarily influenced by price, product quality, and brand value, with consumers expressing satisfaction in acquiring original products at affordable prices (Mujahid et al., 2022). Furthermore, consumption behavior among Makassar residents has been proven to be shaped by income and lifestyle factors, with income emerging as the most dominant determinant (Hasnari, 2017). However, these patterns vary across social classes: while higher-income groups



often display excessive consumption behavior, middle and lower-income groups tend to exhibit more moderate consumption practices consistent with Islamic principles (Rahman & Fitrah, 2018). These findings illustrate that secondhand consumption within Indonesia's urban context represents a blend of economic pragmatism and the evolution of contemporary lifestyle values.

This phenomenon is most visible among youth and university students, who view secondhand consumption not merely as an act of saving money but as a medium of self-expression and identity formation. Thrifting culture has evolved into a significant cultural movement among young Indonesians, including university students, who use secondhand shopping to express creativity, personal style, and environmental awareness (Fadly et al., 2024). Research has shown that students engage in thrifting not only for economic reasons but also to construct unique and creative fashion identities (Haryanti & Falah, 2023). Through this practice, young consumers fulfill fashion needs, experiment with diverse clothing combinations, and gain access to branded products at lower prices (Fahira & Banowo, 2025). More broadly, thrifting has also been interpreted as a form of social responsibility and environmental consciousness (Firjatulloh & Sinduwiatmo, 2024).

A similar phenomenon has grown rapidly in Makassar, one of the major economic and cultural centers in Eastern Indonesia. Traditional markets such as Pasar Terong, Pasar Sentral, Pasar Toddopuli, and GOR Sudiang have become key locations for the sale of secondhand goods ranging from clothing and shoes to imported branded accessories. Meanwhile, modern thrift shops in Pettarani, Hertasning, and Panakkukang have adopted more aesthetic and eco-friendly retail concepts, often integrated with social media platforms for digital promotion. This development reflects a changing pattern of urban consumption, where university students no longer rely solely on high-end shopping malls to keep up with fashion trends but instead embrace more economical yet stylish alternatives.

Students at Universitas Negeri Makassar (UNM) represent a socially active, creative, and adaptive demographic at the forefront of this cultural transformation. For many, purchasing secondhand goods is not merely an act of financial pragmatism but a form of prestige, self-uniqueness, and appreciation for the historical and aesthetic value of vintage items. They interpret secondhand consumption as part of a sustainable fashion movement and as resistance against the exploitative nature of the fast-fashion industry (Fadly et al., 2024; Fitriani et al., 2024). Prior



research indicates that students perceive thrifting as a lifestyle that integrates aesthetic, economic, and social dimensions into a reflective form of consumption (Dwiyantoro & Harianto, 2014). This practice contributes not only to environmental awareness but also fosters creativity and social responsibility among young generations (Prasetio et al., 2025).

Such transformation signifies a broader shift from status-based consumption toward more meaningful and reflective forms of consumption (Hidayatullah et al., 2024). Social media particularly Instagram and TikTok plays a central role in normalizing and expanding thrifting culture among students, where purchasing secondhand goods becomes more than an economic act; it serves as a means of constructing digital identity and visibility (Fitriani et al., 2024). Consequently, the thrifting trend among UNM students exemplifies how global values of sustainability and creativity interact with the dynamic local culture of Makassar's urban society.

From a phenomenological perspective, students' behaviors in purchasing and using secondhand goods can be understood through Alfred Schutz's two motivational dimensions: "because of motive" and "in order to motive." Students are driven by economic and social factors (because of motive), such as budget constraints, peer influence, and media exposure, while their actions are also directed toward achieving broader cultural and social goals (in order to motive), such as appearing fashionable, expressing uniqueness, and promoting environmental awareness (Dwiyantoro & Harianto, 2014; Ghilmansyah et al., 2022; Firjatulloh & Sinduwiatmo, 2024). In other words, secondhand consumption among UNM students transcends basic material needs; it embodies expressions of identity, social class, and modernity embedded within Makassar's urban life. Therefore, this study is relevant for exploring the dynamic interaction between consumption culture, student identity construction, and social transformation in urban contexts. It focuses on how Universitas Negeri Makassar students interpret secondhand consumption as part of their lifestyle and the underlying motivational factors shaping this behavior within the broader framework of cultural change, identity expression, and environmental consciousness in Makassar City.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative approach using Alfred Schutz's phenomenological framework to explore the subjective experiences of Universitas Negeri Makassar (UNM) students



in interpreting secondhand consumption as part of their urban lifestyle in Makassar City. The phenomenological approach was chosen because it seeks to uncover the meanings underlying social actions based on individual consciousness rather than merely measuring observable phenomena. As Husserl explains, phenomenology aims to understand human subjective experiences through consciousness and intentionality toward lived phenomena (Dakhi et al., 2025), while Schutz extends this by emphasizing the social dimensions of human action. According to Schutz, every social action emerges through a process of meaning-making involving two motivational dimensions: the “because of motive” which encompasses individuals’ biographical experiences, economic conditions, and socio-cultural influences and the “in order to motive” which represents purposeful actions such as seeking to appear fashionable, assert personal identity, or promote sustainable fashion values. Within this conceptual framework, the study interprets how UNM students’ awareness and rationality are shaped through their thrifting practices in Makassar, motivated not only by economic considerations but also by social, aesthetic, and environmental values (Barimbing & Kahija, 2015; Maulana & Budiyo, 2024).

The research was conducted at several purposively selected locations that serve as central hubs of thrifting activities in Makassar, including Pasar Terong, Pasar Sentral, Pasar Toddopuli, and GOR Sudiang, as well as a number of modern thrift shops in Pettarani, Panakkukang, and Hertasning. These sites were selected due to their high transaction frequency and diverse student consumer base. Informants were recruited through purposive sampling based on the following criteria: (1) active UNM students; (2) individuals with prior experience purchasing secondhand goods such as clothing, bags, shoes, or accessories; and (3) participants capable of articulating and reflecting upon the personal and social meanings of their consumption experiences.

Data collection methods included in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation analysis of social media content, particularly Instagram and TikTok posts showcasing students’ thrifting activities. Data were analyzed using Schutz’s phenomenological analysis, which involves four stages: epoche (the suspension of researcher bias), description of meaning, phenomenological reduction, and social interpretation aimed at identifying the essence of meaning behind students’ secondhand consumption practices (Sudarsyah, 2016).

To ensure data trustworthiness, the study applied the four criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba; credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Afiyanti, 2008; Susanto et al.,



2023). These criteria were implemented through methodological, data source, researcher, and theoretical triangulation, as well as member checking and audit trails to verify data consistency (Saadah et al., 2022). Such measures ensured objectivity, coherence, and reliability of findings despite the dynamic social context of the research field (Hadi et al., 2021).

This methodological approach also provided flexibility for the researcher to adapt data collection and analysis to the realities encountered in the field, allowing for a deeper exploration of the complex social meanings embedded in secondhand consumption behavior. The study was conducted over a four-month period, encompassing pre-field preparation, primary data collection, phenomenological analysis, and result validation, in order to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the meanings associated with the thrifting lifestyle among Universitas Negeri Makassar students.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **RESULT**

Based on the phenomenological analysis of Universitas Negeri Makassar (UNM) students' experiences in consuming secondhand goods, this study identified four central themes that represent the subjective meanings underlying thrifting as part of students' urban lifestyle in Makassar City. These themes include:

#### **a. Economic Motives and Consumption Efficiency**

Economic considerations emerged as the dominant motivation behind UNM students' engagement in secondhand consumption. Thrifting is perceived as a rational strategy to meet fashion needs without incurring high costs. High-quality branded products that remain in good condition offer an affordable alternative amid students' limited financial resources. This phenomenon aligns with Alfred Schutz's concept of the "because of motive", wherein social actions are influenced by past experiences and economic circumstances that shape individuals' consumption decisions.

#### **b. Self-Identity Expression and Creativity**

UNM students perceive thrifting not merely as a shopping activity but as a medium for self-expression and personal creativity. By curating secondhand fashion items, students construct distinctive styles that deviate from mainstream fashion trends. This practice functions as a form of



social identity construction, enabling students to articulate their personalities and aesthetic preferences. The behavior reflects Schutz's "in order to motive" dimension, which emphasizes goal-oriented actions students thrive to appear fashionable, unique, and socially accepted within their peer groups.

### **c. Environmental Awareness and Ethical Consumption**

Another salient theme highlights students' growing awareness of environmental sustainability and ethical consumption. Many UNM students regard thrifting as a contribution to reducing textile waste and as a critique of the exploitative nature of the fast-fashion industry. This awareness reflects a cultural shift from status-driven consumption toward more reflective, ethical, and environmentally responsible behavior, indicating a moral engagement with sustainability values.

### **d. The Role of Social Media and Digital Communities**

Social media plays a significant role in amplifying and normalizing thrifting culture among UNM students. Platforms such as Instagram and TikTok serve not only as venues for showcasing thrifted fashion finds but also as spaces for digital identity construction and community formation. Through online interactions, thrifting transcends its economic dimension to become a symbol of social belonging and participation in the global sustainable fashion movement emerging within the urban landscape of Makassar.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study indicate that the practice of secondhand consumption among Universitas Negeri Makassar (UNM) students extends beyond mere consumer behavior; it represents a broader social phenomenon that reflects the transformation of urban consumption culture in Makassar City. From Alfred Schutz's phenomenological perspective, students' engagement in thrifting can be understood as a product of socially constructed consciousness, formed through the interaction of personal experiences, socio-cultural values, and the growing influence of digital environments. Each act of consumption embodies a reflective process of meaning-making in which individual experience and awareness serve as the foundation for behavioral motives (Schutz, as cited in Poloma, 2003).

Economic motives serve as the initial dimension explaining students' secondhand consumption patterns. Many UNM students demonstrate a rational approach to managing financial



resources by purchasing branded, high-quality fashion items at affordable prices. This reflects Weber's concept of instrumental rationality, wherein individuals act efficiently to achieve practical goals (Weber, as cited in Poloma, 2003). Within Schutz's framework, this aligns with the "because of motive" category actions grounded in economic conditions and past experiences. These findings support the study of Mujahid et al. (2022), which found that consumer purchasing decisions in Makassar are significantly influenced by price, product quality, and brand value. Similarly, Joey Paywala et al. (2022) revealed that economic literacy and rationality substantially shape students' consumptive behavior. Hence, thrifting emerges as a manifestation of consumption efficiency among UNM students navigating the pressures of an urban, modern lifestyle. Yet, this behavior transcends economic rationality, evolving into a medium for identity construction and the negotiation of social meaning.

Beyond its economic function, thrifting serves as a form of nonverbal communication and self-expression for UNM students. Through the selective use of secondhand fashion, students project individuality, creativity, and aesthetic identity. Consistent with Blumer's theory of symbolic interactionism (as cited in Poloma, 2003), human action is not dictated by external forces but by meanings created through social interaction. Thrifted clothing, therefore, becomes a symbol through which students articulate social belonging, creativity, and a desire to differentiate themselves from mainstream fashion trends. This observation aligns with Fadly et al. (2024), who argue that thrifting among Indonesian students functions as both self-expression and social responsibility. Similarly, Sitohang et al. (2024) emphasize that students' thrifting behavior is influenced by psychological, social, and economic factors that shape fashion identity. In the context of Makassar, thrifted fashion embodies authentic fashion and cultural pride, serving as a counter-narrative to global fashion homogenization.

A growing environmental and ethical consciousness also emerged as an important theme among UNM students. Thrifting is increasingly perceived not only as an economic alternative but as an environmentally responsible practice that challenges the wastefulness of fast fashion. This reflects an ongoing shift from materialistic consumption to a reflective, morally grounded approach that emphasizes sustainability. Hidayatullah et al. (2024) describe thrifting as a symbol of sustainable thinking and an eco-conscious lifestyle, while Fadly et al. (2024) and (Haryanti & Falah, 2023) highlight its role in promoting ethical consumption and social responsibility among



students. For UNM students, engaging in thrifting represents both cultural resistance to the exploitative fashion system and an expression of environmental awareness within their consumer behavior.

Social media has become a crucial factor in reinforcing and disseminating thrifting culture among UNM students. Digital practices such as haul videos, OOTD (Outfit of the Day) posts, and the promotion of local thrift shops contribute to the normalization of secondhand consumption and the construction of digital identity. This phenomenon exemplifies a process of fashion glocalization, wherein local values intersect with global sustainability trends through digital mediation. As noted by Fitriani et al. (2024), social media redefines thrifting from a purely economic activity into a representation of aesthetic and environmentally conscious modern living. In this context, UNM students act as cultural agents who utilize digital platforms to form communities, share fashion inspiration, and advocate for sustainable values. Thrifting, therefore, is no longer a marginal or niche practice but a defining element of the digital identity of urban youth in Makassar.

Within Schutz's phenomenological framework, UNM students' thrifting behavior can be analyzed through two typifications of motivation: "because of motive" and "in order to motive." The because of motive encompasses economic limitations, family influence, peer environment, and media exposure, while the in order to motive reflects aspirations to appear stylish, acquire unique and branded items, expand fashion collections, and express an environmentally conscious modern identity. These dual motives illustrate a balance between Weber's notions of instrumental rationality (practical goals such as efficiency and prestige) and value rationality (moral orientations toward sustainability and self-expression) (Weber, as cited in Poloma, 2003). The practice of thrifting among Universitas Negeri Makassar students represents a multidimensional social phenomenon shaped by the interplay of economic motivation, cultural identity, environmental awareness, and digital influence. Thrifting functions not merely as an alternative form of consumption but as a cultural strategy through which students negotiate their place within modernity, globalization, and sustainability discourses in the dynamic urban context of Makassar City.



## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the practice of secondhand consumption among Universitas Negeri Makassar (UNM) students constitutes a complex and multidimensional social phenomenon. Thrifting is not merely driven by economic considerations but also reflects processes of identity formation, environmental consciousness, and participation in the digital culture of Makassar's urban society. From Alfred Schutz's phenomenological perspective, students' actions are shaped by two principal motivational dimensions: the "because of motive" rooted in economic conditions, personal experiences, and socio-cultural influences and the "in order to motive" associated with aspirations to appear fashionable, assert individuality, and contribute to environmental sustainability.

The thrifting behavior of UNM students demonstrates a dual form of rationality: instrumental rationality, which emphasizes efficiency and practicality in fulfilling lifestyle needs, and value rationality, which underscores moral expression, creativity, and ecological awareness. Furthermore, social media plays a pivotal role in expanding the meaning of thrifting from a mere consumption activity into a modern lifestyle that integrates local cultural values with global orientations. In this regard, thrifting among UNM students should be understood not simply as an alternative consumption practice, but as a cultural strategy through which young people negotiate identity, sustainability, and modernity within the rapidly evolving context of globalization and urban transformation in Makassar City.

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