



## **Student Saving, Earth Gaining: Thrifting and Upcycling Way to Sustainability**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study examines how students can effectively manage their budgets while contributing to environmental sustainability through thrifting and upcycling practices. The researcher aimed to establish a sustainable process with a significant impact on the environment. This topic highlights the importance of thrifting and upcycling for both the environment and students, encouraging informed and eco-friendly choices as alternatives to fast fashion. Using an explanatory sequential design, the study employed a mixed-methods approach, starting with a quantitative phase utilizing surveys and followed by a qualitative phase using interviews. Random sampling was used, with 217 respondents answering the survey questionnaires and 85 students participating in interviews, selected from those who frequently purchased clothes from thrift stores. Results indicate that these practices help students save money and reduce the environmental impact of fast fashion and disposable consumer culture. The study underscores the importance of cultivating sustainable consumption practices among students and suggests ways for businesses, educators, and policymakers to promote and support upcycling and thrift store shopping. In conclusion, students can play a vital role in advancing a more sustainable future by embracing mindful consumption practices, and the study suggests exploring additional research methods to strengthen its findings.

Keywords: Student saving, Earth Gaining, Thrifting, Upcycling, Sustainability

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### **Introduction**

Earth saving is the collective effort to preserve the environment, emphasizing sustainable practices, carbon footprint reduction, and biodiversity promotion. The importance of earth conservation is to ensure a habitable planet, address climate change, and maintain ecosystem balance. Saving our earth and its environment becomes highly important as it provides food and water to sustain life. An individual's well-being depends solely on this planet; it gives food and water to all living things, and it is everyone's responsibility to take care of it. There are many factors that need to be considered in preserving the earth; one of those is the way people treat the environment. To conserve the earth, promoting reuse, reducing new production demand, and creatively repurposing items should be practiced. These practices contribute to sustainable living, conserve resources, and align with eco-friendly consumption, supporting the broader mission of earth-saving.

College students face financial challenges and environmental concerns but thrifting and upcycling offer a unique solution. Do it yourself (DIY) videos on platforms like YouTube and TikTok inspire students to transform their thrifting and upcycling into sustainable practices. The researchers will conduct, do it yourself (DIY) videos that will empower college students to express their creativity and personalize their belongings by upcycling discarded items into stylish clothing accessories, decorative home accents, or functional furniture. In addition, Pappmehl (2020), emphasizes the significance of thrift and upcycle as the best sustainable fashion choices. This perspective aligns perfectly, which focuses on how students can save money and contribute to Earth's well-being through thrift and upcycling. By highlighting how the advice and insights provided by Pappmehl (2020) resonate with the principles of student savings and earth gains, The article can serve as a real-world example of how thrift shopping and upcycling clothing can be a practical and eco-conscious approach for students. Thrifting and upcycling are not only financially savvy but also responsible choices that align with sustainable living practices.

The researcher aims to create a sustainable process that could have a huge impact on the earth. This topic pertains to the importance of thrifting and upcycling in the environment and to students. According to Aryaputra et al., (2023) this research likely explores how thrifting and alternatives to fast fashion can significantly reduce the environmental impact of the fashion industry. It aims to educate and motivate students to make informed, eco-friendly choices by embracing thrift and upcycling as alternatives to fast fashion. The Cheap and Environmental Thrills of Thrifting, or Ükay-Ukay, suggests that students can achieve both financial savings and contribute significantly to environmental conservation through the practice of thrift and upcycling. This is especially appealing to students, who often find themselves on a tight budget. As stated by Sagun (2023) article discusses the "cheap thrills" that thrifting can provide, emphasizing that students can enjoy a wide variety of fashionable items without breaking the bank. However, the significance of thrifting and upcycling goes beyond financial savings. It directly connects to the broader theme of sustainability, which is becoming increasingly important

in today's global discussions. The article by Sagun (2023) sheds light on the cheap and environmental thrills of thrifting, emphasizing its appeal to students seeking to save money and make a positive impact on the environment.

The researchers face various gaps in executing this study. According to the study by Kiehn and Vojkovic (2018). It suggested looking into ways of integrating digital media methods into second-hand retail practices and encouraging the millennial second-hand consumer to participate in both online and offline retail channels. According to Elias et al., (2023) the respondents were well aware of the thrifting culture but were unsure of how thrifting helps the environment. This study aims to promote sustainable fashion thrifting, which aligns with the principles of sustainable fashion by encouraging the reuse and recycling of clothing and promoting a more circular economy within the fashion industry.

The researchers will conduct do it yourself (DIY) videos that will empower college students to express their creativity and personalize their belongings by upcycling discarded items into stylish clothing accessories. These videos will provide a wealth of ideas and techniques, ranging from simple alterations to ambitious transformations, allowing students to adapt projects to their skill level and personal style. Additionally, these videos showcase the vast potential of upcycling, encouraging students to view waste as a valuable resource rather than something to be discarded. These practices can help students save money, reduce their environmental impact, and express their creativity.

The researcher sought answers to the following specific questions:

1. How do students save money and manage their finances effectively in terms of buying clothes?;
2. How do students frequently practice recycling their clothes to be fashionable in their daily lives?;
3. Is there a significant relationship between the practice of saving money and managing finances in their recycling habits?;
4. How can students explore opportunities for income generation through environmentally sustainable practices for earth gains?; and
5. What creative upcycling activities that students can engage in to repurpose old items?

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## Method

The study utilized a mixed-method approach using an explanatory sequential design. According to George (2023), explanatory sequential means that the researcher first collected and analyzed quantitative data, and then used the gathered data from the second qualitative phase.

The researcher moved to the quantitative phase and used surveys. A survey questionnaire was administered to collect data about how students saved money and managed their finances effectively. Also, on how students practiced recycling their clothes to be fashionable. After that, the researcher analyzed the data from the quantitative phase, which was used as a reference to get the answer to the significant relationship between the practice of saving money and managing finances in their recycling habits.

The qualitative phase used an interview method that consisted of five (5) Open-ended questions to identify how students can explore opportunities for income generation through environmentally sustainable practices for earth gains.

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## Results and Discussion

### Part 1. Students, Perception in Saving and Managing Finances.

**Table 1.**

*Students, Perception in Saving and Managing Finances in Terms of Buying Clothes*

Question	Mean	SD	Description
1. I believe that saving money is one of the most important things a student should do.	3.81	0.47	Strongly Agree
2. I save money.	3.30	0.67	Agree
3. Is thrifting and upcycling clothes good way to save money.	3.47	0.62	Agree
4. I think saving money is effective while purchasing thrifting and upcycling clothes.	3.34	0.58	Agree
5. I prefer thrifting or upcycling clothes to saving money.	3.26	0.65	Agree
6. I consider shopping at thrift stores for clothing items to save money.	3.24	0.70	Agree
7. Its beneficial to set a specific budget for clothing purchases each month to control expenses	.3.52	0.62	Strongly Agree
8. I tried selling my old clothing to fund new purchases or save money.	2.56	1.00	Agree
9. I create old clothing into something new to avoid additional expenses.	2.70	0.92	Agree
10. I encourage others to save their money through thrifting or upcycling clothes.	3.17	0.74	Agree

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**OVERALL** **3.24** **0.70** **Agree**

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SD – Standard Deviation

Table 1 showed that students generally agreed with the idea of recycling their clothes to be fashionable, as indicated by the mean score of 3.24 and upcycling clothes items is almost always budget-friendly, especially for college students, making it easy for them to find hidden gems. Additionally, thrifting shopping contributes to saving the environment as it is one of the most ethical ways to shop. This method also allows people to create or upcycle their clothes, and it's a way to support small businesses in your local town.

On the other hand, the lowest-rated statement was "I tried selling my old clothing to fund new purchases or save money," which received a mean rating of 2.56 and a higher standard deviation of 1.00, indicating less agreement among students regarding this practice. This suggested that while students were generally inclined towards saving money through thrifting and upcycling, they may be less likely to explore selling old clothing as a means of financial support for new purchases. The findings of Wood (2022) revealed distinct challenges to recycling across different global regions. In developed areas like North America and Western Europe, a significant number of respondents expressed that upcycling was either inconvenient or that they lacked trust in existing recycling programs. Conversely, in regions such as the Middle East & North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America & the Caribbean, a key obstacle identified was the lack of knowledge on how to participate effectively in recycling initiatives.

a standard deviation (SD) of 0.74, indicating an overall agreement with these financial strategies. This suggested that students were inclined towards sustainable fashion practices. The overall results suggested that students generally agreed on the importance of saving money and utilizing thrifting and upcycling practices as effective ways to do so.

The top two highest-rated statements further reinforced this trend, with students strongly agreeing that saving money is a crucial aspect of student life, with a mean rating of 3.81 and a standard deviation (SD) of 0.47, and that setting a specific budget for clothing purchases each month is beneficial for managing expenses effectively, with a mean rating of 3.52 and a standard deviation (SD) of 0.62. According to Peterson (2021), thrifting shopping is a great way to save money and help the environment. Affordability is another aspect that motivates people to seek out thrift shops because thrifting or

## Part 2. Students' Habits in Recycling Clothes. Table 2.

### *Students' Habits in Recycling Clothes in terms of Frequency*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
1. I prefer buying new clothes than second hand clothes (ukay-ukay).	3.53	0.97	Oftentimes
2. I buy second hand clothes (ukay-ukay).	3.91	0.92	Oftentimes
3. I buy clothes from ukay-ukay that have a quality design.	4.18	0.86	Oftentimes
4. I wear ukay-ukay clothes to look fashionable.	3.82	1.03	Oftentimes
5. I visit thrift shops often.	3.54	0.97	Oftentimes
6. I prefer ukay-ukay clothes because it's affordable.	3.90	0.99	Oftentimes
7. I wear recycled clothes often.	3.41	1.04	Sometimes
8. I recycle my clothes frequently.	3.45	1.06	Sometimes
9. I prefer to upcycle my clothes to be fashionable.	3.48	0.99	Sometimes
10. I design my own shirt to make it a new style.	2.82	1.20	Sometimes
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>3.60</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>Oftentimes</b>

SD – Standard Deviation

Table 2 indicated that students frequently practiced recycling their clothes to be fashionable in their daily lives, with an overall mean score of

3.60 and a standard deviation (SD) of 1.00, reflecting an oftentimes among respondents. Overall, the results indicated a strong trend among students towards embracing sustainable fashion practices, including purchasing second-hand clothes, valuing affordability and quality, and participating in thrifting and upcycling activities to contribute to a more environmentally conscious wardrobe.

Students showed a strong inclination towards buying clothes from ukay-ukay that have a quality design, as indicated by the highest average rating of 4.18 with a standard deviation of 0.86, signifying an oftentimes among respondents. This reflected a preference for second-hand clothes with appealing and well-crafted designs, aligning with their fashion choices. Following this, students oftentimes agreed with statements such as "I buy second-hand clothes (ukay-ukay)," with a mean score of 3.91 and a standard deviation (SD) of 0.92. This highlighted their positive attitude towards incorporating thrifted items into their wardrobe to achieve stylish looks. The next highest average rating was for the statement "I prefer ukay-ukay clothes because it's affordable," with a mean score of 3.90 and a standard deviation of 0.99, demonstrating an oftentimes among students in valuing affordability in their clothing choices. This suggested that cost-effectiveness played a significant role in their preference for second-hand clothes. According to Johnson and

Smith (2018), sustainable fashion practices, including recycling initiatives, played a crucial role in reducing environmental impact within the fashion industry. The article highlighted various recycling practices such as textile recycling, where discarded clothing and fabrics were repurposed into new products or materials. Additionally, the authors discussed the importance of consumer awareness and engagement in sustainable fashion, emphasizing the need for collaboration among stakeholders to promote recycling practices effectively.

The lowest average score was for the statement "I design my own shirt to make it a new style," with a mean score of 2.82 and a standard deviation of 1.20. Although there was agreement in designing personal shirts for a new style, this indicator reflected a sometimes level of agreement compared to the other statements, suggesting that designing personal clothing items may not be as prevalent among the student population. According to Vartan (2020), several factors contributed to the challenges and hesitations surrounding clothing recycling and do-it-yourself (DIY) design. The article emphasized the need for increased awareness, education, and innovation in the fashion industry to overcome these barriers and promote more sustainable practices. In summary, the challenges and reasons why people may not readily recycle their clothes or create their designs include technological limitations in textile recycling, consumer habits favoring fast fashion, and a general lack of awareness about sustainable fashion practices.

### Part 3. Significant Relationship of Financial Saving and Managing Perception and Recycling Habits of Students.

**Table 3.**

*Correlation Analysis Between the Financial Saving and Managing Perception and Recycling Habits of Students*

Variables Correlated	r	Description	Sig- value	Decision	Interpretation
practice of saving money and managing finances in their recycling habits	0.78	A strong uphill (positive) linear relationship	0.00	Reject the null hypothesis	There is a significant relationship

Table 3 showed a significant relationship between the practice of saving money and managing finances and the recycling habits of the students. The value of  $r = 0.78$  indicated a strong uphill (positive) linear relationship between the practice of saving money and managing finances in the recycling habits of the student.

Additionally, the p-value score of 0.00, which is less than 0.5, indicated that the null hypothesis was rejected. The interpretation of the data showed that there was a significant relationship between the practice of saving money and managing finances in the recycling habits of the students. The researcher found that the students could save money and manage their finances effectively through their recycling habits. In line with these results, based on the findings of the study by Sheng et al. (2021), it was stated that recycling initiatives not only promote the conservation of resources but also guide individuals and organizations towards practices that save money without incurring extra costs. This approach fosters a culture of efficiency and environmental stewardship. By engaging in recycling, materials that would otherwise be discarded are repurposed or reused, reducing the need to procure new materials. This process naturally leads to cost savings, as the expense associated with acquiring raw materials is minimized.

### Part 4. Income Generation Opportunities

**Table 4.**

*Distribution of Students' Preferred Mode of Shopping*

Mode of Shopping	Frequency	Percentage
Online	59	69.41%
Offline	26	30.59%
TOTAL	85	100.00%

Table 4 displayed the overall rating for the distribution of the students based on their preferred mode of shopping. It showed that 69.41% of respondents preferred online shopping, while the remaining 30.59% preferred going to physical stores to shop. This indicated that fourth-year students preferred online shopping because convenience was their top priority when shopping. This finding aligned with the results of a study conducted by Google/Ipsos (2018), which found that 73% of shoppers preferred online channels to find items they're looking for due to convenience, safety, and changing consumer behaviors

**Table 5.**

*Distribution of Students' Brand Consciousness*

Yes	No	
	Frequency none	TOTAL
Frequency		

Reason	High Quality	none	none	none
85		0	0	0
Percentage	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
				100.00%

Table 5 presented the distribution of students in terms of brand consciousness. It showed that 100% of the respondents confirmed that they are brand conscious, likely due to the high-quality clothes produced by brands. The result suggested that the respondents prioritize the quality of the clothes before they buy. These findings supported the idea of Kautish et al. (2020) that consumers who are brand-conscious are more likely to make purchasing decisions based on their perception of brand value and identity.

**Table 6.**

Distribution of Students' Perception of Clothes Durability

Reason	Yes	No	TOTAL
	Frequency	Frequency	
It will last longer		none	none
85		0	0
Percentage	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
			100.00%

*Continuation of Table 9 Distribution of students in considering the durability of the clothes they buy*

Percentage	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
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Table 6 displayed the distribution regarding the consideration of the durability of clothes among the respondents. It indicated that 100% of the respondents confirmed that durability is important when it comes to shopping for clothes. This suggested that fourth-year students consider the durability of clothes because they last longer. This result supported the study by Pascal (2023), which stated that buying clothes that last helps reduce the amount of waste and pollution caused by the production and disposal of fast fashion.

**Table 7.**

Students' Perception in Buying Secondhand Clothes in terms of Environment

Yes	No	TOTAL
Frequency Reason	Frequency none	
Reduce clothes waste	none	
85	0	0
Percentage	100.00%	0.00%
		100.00%

Table 7 displayed the respondents' views on whether buying second-hand clothing helps the environment. It showed that 100% of the respondents confirmed that buying secondhand clothes helps the environment. This implies that the respondents seek to reduce their clothes waste by opting for second-hand items. These findings supported the idea presented by Park (2020) that by opting for secondhand clothing, we create less waste. Instead of discarding garments, we extend their life by giving them new owners. This practice helps prevent textiles from ending up in landfills or being incinerated.

**Table 8.**

Students' Perception on Thrifting as a Good Business

	Yes	No	TOTAL
	Frequency	Frequency	
Reason	cheaper clothes	to help the environment	none
22	63	0	0
Percentage	25.88%	74.12%	0.00%
			0.00%
			100.00%

Table 8 presented the respondents' opinions on thrifting as a good business. It indicated that 100% of the respondents confirmed that thrifting is a good business, with 25.88% stating that thrifting is good because the clothes are cheaper, while the remaining 74.12% believed it helps the environment. This

result suggested that the respondents saw thrifting as a positive business venture. These findings aligned with the study by Cotter (2024), which highlighted thrifting as a win-win situation—helping the environment while building a sustainable business.

In summary, Table 4 indicated that 69.41% of respondents prefer online shopping, while 30.59% prefer physical stores, suggesting that fourth-year students prioritize convenience in shopping. Table 5 showed that 100% of respondents are brand-conscious, valuing high-quality clothes from brands. Table 6 indicated that 100% of respondents prioritize durability when buying clothes, suggesting a preference for longer-lasting items. Table 7 revealed that 100% of respondents believe buying secondhand clothes helps the environment, indicating a desire to reduce clothing waste. Table 8 presented that 100% of respondents believe thrifting is a good business, with 25.88% citing affordability and 74.12% mentioning environmental benefits.

### Part 5. What creative upcycling activities that students can engage in to repurpose old item?

The researchers created a do-it-yourself (DIY) video about upcycling clothes to provide practical guidance and inspiration for individuals who wanted to reduce waste and extend the lifespan of their clothing through creative means using the results of statements of problems 1, 2, 3, and 4. They promoted the idea of upcycling materials to create a product of higher quality or value than the original to help reduce textile waste and pollution in our environment by producing a product made from the waste of other clothing businesses. According to Morsier (2021), do-it-yourself (DIY) empowered you to learn new skills, tackle tasks independently, and encourage creativity. Moreover, do-it-yourself was a budget-friendly solution in terms of saving money while creating something meaningful, contributing to overall well-being, and allowing you to personalize your living environment.

The researchers aimed to empower viewers with the knowledge and skills to upcycle old or unused garments into new and stylish pieces, promoting sustainability and mindful consumption. For editing the video, researchers used various applications, depending on their preferences and the required features. Specifically, researchers utilized Cap Cut, which offered basic editing tools suitable for do-it-yourself (DIY) video projects. Additionally, creative editing techniques were employed, such as adding background music, incorporating effects, and utilizing high resolution to enhance viewer satisfaction.

The benefits of do-it-yourself (DIY) videos like this were numerous. Firstly, these promoted environmental consciousness by encouraging viewers to engage in eco-friendly practices such as upcycling and repurposing clothing instead of disposing of them. Secondly, do-it-yourself videos fostered creativity and self-expression, as viewers were inspired to experiment with their own ideas and designs. Additionally, these videos could save viewers money by providing cost-effective alternatives to buying new clothing. Lastly, do-it-yourself (DIY) videos contributed to a sense of community by creating a platform for sharing skills, knowledge, and experiences among like-minded individuals. Moreover, do-it-yourself (DIY) content had been shown to empower individuals, boost confidence, and foster a sense of accomplishment as viewers successfully completed their own projects inspired by the video tutorials.

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## Conclusion

The researchers concluded that students prefer online shopping because it's more convenient they can save on transportation fares and experience less hassle than going outside for shopping. Due to the high-quality clothes produced by brands, all respondents confirmed that they are brand-conscious when it comes to clothes, and they agree that durability is crucial when buying clothes. It is frequently underestimated but holds significant importance for garment quality. It ensures clothing can endure wear and tear, extending its lifespan and reducing waste. Moreover, durable clothing contributes to lowering the environmental footprint of the fashion industry. The researchers concluded that practicing saving money has a significant relationship with managing finances in the recycling habits of students. The researchers found out that it implies that students who are adept at managing their finances by saving money may also be more inclined to engage in environmentally conscious behaviours such as upcycling. This correlation could stem from a broader mindset of resourcefulness and sustainability.

The researchers concluded that buying second-hand clothes helps the environment by reducing waste, and building thrift stores can help the environment. Thrift stores are vital for environmental preservation as they advocate for reuse, diminishing the necessity for new clothing production. By providing second-hand items, they prolong garment lifespans, divert them from landfills, and lessen the environmental burden linked to creating new clothes. Thrift stores also promote a circular economy by fostering clothing upcycling and repurposing, thereby conserving resources and minimizing waste. Through the "do it yourself" (DIY) video that the researchers made, students can upcycle their clothes and explore their creativity and fashion sense.

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