

A Structural Analysis with SmartPLS of Second-Hand Clothing Consumption Practices in the Centennial Generation

Un Análisis estructural con SmartPLS de las Prácticas de Consumo de Ropa de Segunda Mano en la Generación Centennial

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Abstract

The research aims to explore the relationship between ethical norms and second-hand clothing consumption behavior among Generation Z, focusing on thrift store shopping, responsible consumption, and the use of vintage clothing. The growing popularity of purchasing used garments is addressed, considering ethical aspects such as garment origin, labor conditions, and hygiene. The study was conducted with a sample of 366 randomly selected Generation Z participants, using a digital survey through Survey Monkey. The results reveal that Generation Z individuals with high ethical standards show a strong preference for thrift store shopping, valuing the diversity and uniqueness of the garments. Additionally, a positive connection is observed between ethics and responsible consumption, as well as the use of vintage clothing, indicating that ethical beliefs influence sustainable practices and the choice of distinctive fashion. In conclusion, ethical norms emerge as an integral factor in Generation Z's consumption decisions, positively impacting thrift store shopping, responsible consumption, and the use of vintage clothing. These findings provide opportunities for marketing strategies that emphasize authenticity and sustainability, aligned with the ethical values

of this generation, thus contributing to a positive impact on the fashion industry.

Keywords: Centennials, Consumption, Clothes.

JEL Classification: D12, D18, E21.

Resumen

La investigación tiene como objetivo explorar la relación entre la normatividad ética y el comportamiento de consumo de ropa de segunda mano en la generación Centennials, centrándose en la compra en tianguis, el consumo responsable y el uso de ropa vintage. Se aborda la creciente popularidad de la compra de prendas usadas, considerando aspectos éticos como la procedencia de las prendas, las condiciones laborales y la higiene. El estudio se realizó con una muestra de 366 participantes Centennials seleccionados aleatoriamente, utilizando encuesta digital a través de Survey Monkey. Los resultados revelan que los Centennials con alta normatividad ética muestran una marcada preferencia por la compra en tianguis, valorando la diversidad y singularidad de las prendas. Además, se observa una conexión positiva entre la ética y el consumo responsable,



así como el uso de ropa vintage, indicando que las convicciones éticas influyen en prácticas sostenibles y elección de moda distintiva. En conclusión, la normatividad ética emerge como un factor integral en las decisiones de consumo de los Centennials, afectando positivamente la compra en tianguis, el consumo responsable y el uso de ropa vintage. Estos resultados ofrecen oportunidades para estrategias de marketing que resalten la autenticidad y sostenibilidad, alineadas con los valores éticos de esta generación, contribuyendo así a un impacto positivo en la industria de la moda.

Palabras Clave: Centennials, Consumo, ropa.

Código JEL: D12, D18, E21.

Introduction

In recent years, the purchase of second-hand clothing has experienced a significant increase in popularity, driven by various factors ranging from growing environmental awareness to the search for more economical and sustainable alternatives. (Humana Fundación Pueblo para Pueblo, 2023). This shift in consumer preferences not only reflects a transformation in shopping patterns but also raises crucial ethical considerations related to the original of garments and labor conditions in the industry. From Zinn's (2019) perspective, responsible consumption involves making conscious and thoughtful decisions when choosing products, considering their environmental and social impact. The acquisition of second-hand clothing aligns with this approach, reducing the demand for new garments and promoting reuse to consume more sustainably.

However, ethics in the purchase of second-hand clothing is not limited to sustainability; it also addresses aspects such as fair trade, the origin of garments, and hygienic safety (Fair, 2023). Additionally, the World Health Organization (2016) emphasizes the importance of ensuring the hygiene and safety of used garments to prevent health risks. The ethical dilemma lies in how the purchase of second-hand clothing, while promoting sustainability, highlights the aspect of acquiring products of unknown origin. Furthermore, consumer ethics, especially among Centennials, influence the choice of garments, considering the generational belonging factor (IPMARK, 2023).

This study examines the ethical standards in the purchase of second-hand clothing, particularly within the Centennial generation. Ethical standards have been recognized in previous research as a key factor in purchasing decisions, as they influence consumption choices based on moral principles and social responsibility (Forteza, 2020). Regarding purchases in flea markets, this acquisition channel has stood out for its connection to responsible and sustainable consumption practices, as it allows consumers to choose products that favor the circular economy (Urbinati, Chiaroni, y Chiesa, 2017). On the other hand, responsible consumption has gained relevance in recent studies, where it is associated with the preference for products that contribute to waste reduction and the promotion of sustainability (García, 2019). Finally, the use of vintage clothing has become popular as an ecological and stylistic alternative within the Centennial generation, who value the authenticity, history, and sustainability of garments (Martín, García, y López, 2022). Based on these findings, this study aims to identify how ethical principles influence purchasing decisions, the choice of acquisition channels, the practice of responsible consumption, and the preference for vintage clothing. The main objective of this study is to analyze the ethical standards in the purchase of second-hand clothing, focusing on the Centennial generation, to generate valuable information to adapt marketing strategies and promote ethical and sustainable consumption practices in the fashion industry.

1. Theoretical framework

While the fashion industry is one of the largest in the global economy, due to its mass production practices, it is also the second most polluting industry on the planet (Papasolomou, 2019). As a result, more and more people are expressing their commitment to the planet and the responsible use of available resources by choosing alternatives such as purchasing second-hand or used items (Euromonitor, 2023). For this reason, buying second-hand or used clothing has gained popularity in recent years as a way to reduce the environmental impact of the textile industry and promote sustainability (Humana Fundación Pueblo para Pueblo, 2023). In this regard, there are ethical standards that regulate the purchase of second-hand or used clothing.



1.1 Ethical Standards

First, it is important to highlight that ethical standards in the purchase of second-hand or used clothing are based on responsible consumption ethics. According to Zinn (2019), responsible consumption involves the conscious and thoughtful selection of the products we buy, considering their environmental and social impact. Purchasing second-hand or used clothing is a way to consume more responsibly, as it reduces the demand for new garments and promotes reuse. It is also crucial to consider the origin of the clothes being purchased. According to Azapagic and Perdan (2014), buying second-hand or used clothing can promote fair trade and support local communities if garments are sourced locally or ethically produced. Another important ethical concern is the hygiene and safety of the garments. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2016), second-hand or used clothing can be a vector for diseases if not properly disinfected. Therefore, it is essential to ensure that garments are clean and disinfected before purchasing them at a flea market.

1.2 Second-hand clothing purchases

In recent years, there has been an increase in second-hand clothing consumption, driven by the rise in environmental awareness and the search for more affordable and sustainable alternatives. According to a study on circular fashion conducted in 2021, the second-hand clothing market is projected to reach 77 billion by 20225 (ThredUp, 2021). Buying second-hand or vintage clothing not only affects employment types among consumers but also can also be seen as an ethical and sustainable practice in terms of fashion and the environment. A study conducted by Lee y DeLong (2021) in South Korea found that university students and lower-income individuals were more likely to buy second-hand clothing. On the other hand, professionals and office employees were less inclined to purchase second-hand clothing. These findings suggest that second-hand clothing consumption is more related to economic situations and personal needs rather than profession. According to a report by McKinsey and BOF, 52% of Centennials claim to seek information about the origin and manufacturing conditions of a garment before purchasing it, representing a 10% increase compared to Baby Boomers (McKinsey, 2019). This trend indicates that Centennials are more aware of the social environmental impact of

their purchases, motivating them to make informed decisions. Additionally, the growing interest in sustainability is driving a significant shift in the fashion industry, forcing brands to adapt to the demands of younger consumers. Furthermore, belonging to certain social groups can also influence ethical purchasing standards. For example, a study by Aftab et al. (2017) found that second-hand consumers in the United Kingdom tend to be young, low-income individuals with left-wing political ideologies. These factors may influence their perceptions of value and willingness to buy second-hand clothing. The use of second-hand clothing can also be mediated by psychological factors such as identity and self-esteem. For example, a study conducted by Lu et al. (2017) found that the social identity of second-hand consumers was strongly related to their self-esteem. Those with occupations considered socially valuable may have a greater need to demonstrate their status and, therefore, be less willing to wear second-hand clothing.

1.3 Consumption Among Centennials

The analysis of different generations plays a crucial role in understanding consumer behavior, as it facilitates segmentation and evaluation of purchasing decisions. A detailed understanding of each generation from a current perspective becomes essential for organizations, as lifestyles have undergone significant influences and continue to evolve into new dynamics of general interest (Contreras & Vargas, 2021).

Pledger y Schaffert (2021) provide an enlightening definition of generational cohorts, referring to these groups as sets of individuals who not only share similar birth years but also experienced common historical events during their formative and developmental processes. This concept highlights the significant influence that historical contexts and shared experiences have in shaping the perspectives and behaviors of these groups over time. Generation Z, also known as Centennials, stands out as the successor to Generation Y or Millenials, sharing certain social traits with them, the most notable being their digital behavior. However, Centennials possess unique characteristics, as they are considered digital natives, having experienced early exposure to technology since childhood. This demographic group, born between 1995 and 2010, is recognized for its consumption habits, social behavior, and distinct philosophies (Popescu et al., 2019).



Under labels such as Generation Z, Post-Millennials, Centennials, or the Snowflake Generation, these young individuals exhibit a constant connection to the Internet. Their immediacy in communication is evident in their preferences for platforms such as WhatsApp or Snapchat instead of email, which this generation considers obsolete. (Diario Financiero, 2012). Regarding their consumption and behaviors, Centennials tend to favor brands that promote diversity, inclusivity and social responsibility. Additionally, they value authenticity and seek personalized experiences when making purchases (Influency, 2023).

A person's age can influence their purchasing behavior, including their willingness to buy second-hand clothing. Different generations may have distinct values, interests, and priorities that are reflected in their consumption patterns. For instance, Centennials are more concerned with sustainability and may be more inclined to purchase second-hand clothing, whereas older generations may be more attached to buying new garments (Eckhardt et al., 2019). The preference for second-hand clothing among Centennials may stem from their desire to participate in a more circular economy, where products are reused, and waste is minimized.

According to a Kantar report, in 2021, 7% of Mexican households were headed by a Centennial, representing the same percentage of expenditure on mass consumer products, amounting to 40 billion pesos in a year.

Socioeconomic factors also influence the purchase of second-hand clothing. For example, it has been found that people with lower incomes are more likely to acquire these types of garments for financial reasons. On the other hand, people with higher incomes may buy them for sustainability or fashion-related reasons. Purchasing second-hand clothing can also be motivated by economic considerations, as it can be a more accessible and affordable option for Centennials, especially those looking for quality brands at lower prices (Chavez, 2020).

There are differences in fashion perception and the values associated with it among different generations. Values that promote sustainability and the collaborative economy are more common among younger generations, which may increase their willingness to buy second-hand clothing (Myllylä y Kronqvist, 2020). The Centennial generation often values authenticity and vintage aesthetics.

Second-hand clothing contributes to shaping the consumer's image in society and reinforces their stance on environmental issues (Chaturvedi et al., 2020). Finally, people's motivations and needs can influence their willingness to buy second-hand clothing. The reasons for purchasing it may include economic, stylistic, or sustainability-related factors, among others. These motivations and needs may vary depending on age, economic situation, and other individual characteristics (Myllylä y Kronqvist, 2020). Centennials are known for their rejection of fast fashion due to its environmental impact and labor practices. Opting for second-hand clothing can be a way to move away from fast fashion culture.

2. Methodology

The research is exploratory in nature and was conducted with a sample of 504 participants, selected through random sampling. Among the participants, 59.1% are female, 39.7% are male, and 1.2% identify as non-binary. In terms of age, 58.7% of respondents are between 18 and 21 years old, 14.1% are between 22 and 25 years old, and 16.2% are between 26 and 29 years old. Regarding their occupation, 39.5% are entrepreneurs, 25% study and work, and 22.2% work as operators. The survey was conducted online via the SurveyMonkey platform in the southeastern region of the state of Coahuila, Mexico. The instrument used was a questionnaire specifically designed for this research, consisting of 35 items distributed across four dimensions. These dimensions were evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 indicates "strongly disagree" and 5 "strongly agree." The items were adapted from the following previously validated scales: the Green Consumption Values Scale by Haws et al. (2014), the Prosocial Consumption Scale by Cavanaugh et al. (2015), and the Purchase Activism Scale by Paharia, Avery y Keinan et al., (2014). These scales helped identify participants' attitudes toward fast fashion, circular fashion, and purchasing clothing at flea markets, as well as measure their level of knowledge about activities carried out by companies in the textile sector. The Green Consumption Values Scale by Haws et al. (2014) was used for the Clothing Purchase (CP) dimension, measuring consumers' environmental concerns when buying new clothes. The Prosocial Consumption Scale by Cavanaugh et al. (2015) was applied to the Responsible Consumption (RC) dimension and the



Vintage Clothing Use (VCU) dimension, assessing responsible and pro-environmental attitudes when purchasing second-hand clothing, such as at flea markets and in vintage fashion. Finally, the Purchase Activism Scale by Paharia, Avery y Keinan et al., (2014) was used to measure Ethical Normativity (EN), related to the ethical perception of purchasing second-hand or vintage clothing, evaluating acceptance and proactive behavior toward sustainability. The data analysis was divided into two parts: descriptive and inferential. In the descriptive part, SPSS v.27 software was used to obtain basic statistics on demographic variables and response distribution. In the inferential part, the structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) algorithm was applied using the SmartPLS v.4 statistical package. This inferential analysis allowed for the exploration of relationships between the research dimensions and the validation of proposed models. Based on the collected information, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1: The ethical normativity of Centennial consumers positively influences their inclination toward purchasing second-hand clothing at flea markets. Ethical normativity has been linked to responsible purchasing behavior, especially concerning sustainability and social responsibility. Several studies suggest that ethically conscious consumers tend to prefer purchasing sustainable products and supporting local markets (Paharia et al., 2014; Cavanaugh et al., 2015). In view of this, the inclination toward purchasing at flea markets, as a form of responsible and local consumption, may be influenced by high ethical normativity among consumers.

H2: The ethical normativity of Centennial consumers positively influences their practice of responsible consumption. The concept of responsible consumption has been widely studied as a manifestation of consumers' ethical awareness. Individuals with high ethical awareness tend to avoid excessive consumption and seek products with a lower environmental impact (Haws et al., 2014). Therefore, the ethical normativity of Centennials may be a key determinant of their responsible purchasing behavior.

H3: The ethical normativity of Centennial consumers positively influences their propensity to use vintage clothing. Ethical normativity is associated with a preference for products that promote sustainability, such as vintage clothing. Several studies indicate

that consumers who value ethics and sustainability tend to choose second-hand or vintage clothing over new products, as they consider this behavior to reduce environmental impact and promote the circular economy (Cavanaugh et al., 2015).

H4: Responsible consumption by Centennial consumers positively influences their inclination towards purchasing second-hand clothing at flea markets. Responsible consumption is closely linked to the preference for sustainable and low-impact products. Responsible consumers prefer local markets and alternatives such as flea markets, which help reduce waste and support their circular economy (Paharia et al., 2014). Thus, responsible consumption among Centennials is likely to translate into a greater inclination to purchase second-hand clothing at flea markets. H5: The adoption of responsible consumption practices by Centennial consumers positively influences their preference for vintage clothing. Responsible behavior and the adoption of sustainable practices are correlated with the preference for vintage clothing. Responsible consumers seek to reduce their environmental footprint and tend to choose alternatives like vintage clothing, which represents a more ethical and sustainable consumption.

(Haws et al., 2014; Cavanaugh et al., 2015).

H6: The purchase of second-hand clothing at flea markets by Centennial consumers positively influences their use of vintage clothing. Buying second-hand clothing at flea markets can have a positive effect on the adoption of vintage clothing, as both. b La compare based on values of sustainability, circular economy, and ethical consumption (Cavanaugh et al., 2015). Purchasing clothing at flea markets can serve as a gateway to vintage fashion, encouraging its use among consumers.

H7: The ethical normativity of Centennials varies significantly depending on age. Ethical normativity and awareness of sustainable practices vary with age, with younger generations (such as Centennials) being more likely to engage in ethical and sustainable behaviors. Age influences values and attitudes towards responsible consumption and sustainability (Haws et al., 2014; Cavanaugh et al., 2015).

H8: The occupation of Centennials significantly influences their frequency of purchasing at flea markets. Consumers' occupations influence their purchasing behaviors, with certain occupational

groups (such as entrepreneurs or students) being more likely to participate in local markets, such as flea markets, due to flexible schedules or the search for affordable options (Paharia et al., 2014).

H9: The gender of Centennials significantly influences their propensity to wear second-hand clothing.

Gender influences consumption decisions with research suggesting that women are more inclined to wear second-hand clothing due to factors such as fashion, savings, and sustainability (Cavanaugh et al., 2015).

3. Analysis of the Results

Regarding the experience of purchasing second-hand or vintage clothing, 56.3% stated that they had acquired it at flea markets or bazaars, 37.7% received it as an inheritance from siblings or relatives, and 6% exchanged it with friends or family members. This information reflects sustainable consumption practices within the Centennial generation, highlighting the demographic and gender diversity in their participation in second-hand fashion.

3.1. Validity of the Measurement Model

For the estimation of the Structural Equation Model (SEM), a minimum of 100 to 200 observations is required for the model to be reliable. This study meets this requirement with a sample size of 366 observations. Figure 1 shows the four latent variables of the models. Since these are multifaceted variables, they are measured through multiple items

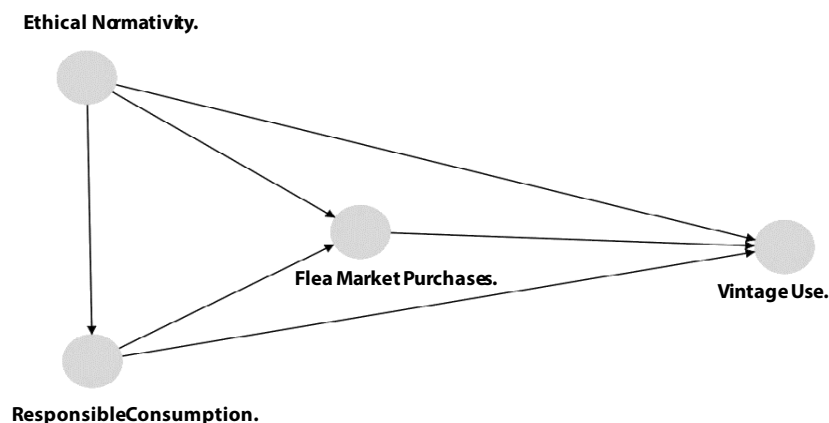
obtained using a five-point Likert scale, where five represents “strongly agree” with the statement, and one represents “strongly disagree.”

Figure 2 presents the final model, which includes a total of 13 items distributed among the four key constructs. Ethical normativity consists of 4 items, while responsible consumption is reflected through 3 items. The flea market purchases construct includes 4 items, and vintage clothing use also consists of 4 items. These items were selected after applying the established criteria to ensure the reliability and validity of the model.

In the analysis of the external loadings of the indicators, a value above 0.708 is considered acceptable, which means explaining more than 50% of the variance of the corresponding latent variable (Hair et al., 2019). Values close to 0.70 are considered sufficiently close to this threshold, especially in the case of underdeveloped or new scales, where it is common to find loadings below this value. For our research, we have adopted a refinement criterion in which indicators with loadings between 0.40 and 0.70 are removed, as long as this action significantly improves the model’s reliability.

The results presented in Table 1 indicate that only three indicators have loadings below the established threshold. However, their removal did not result in a significant improvement in the model’s performance, so it was decided to keep them. It is important to note that the remaining external loadings exceed the recommended value of 0.708, supporting the robustness of the proposed model.

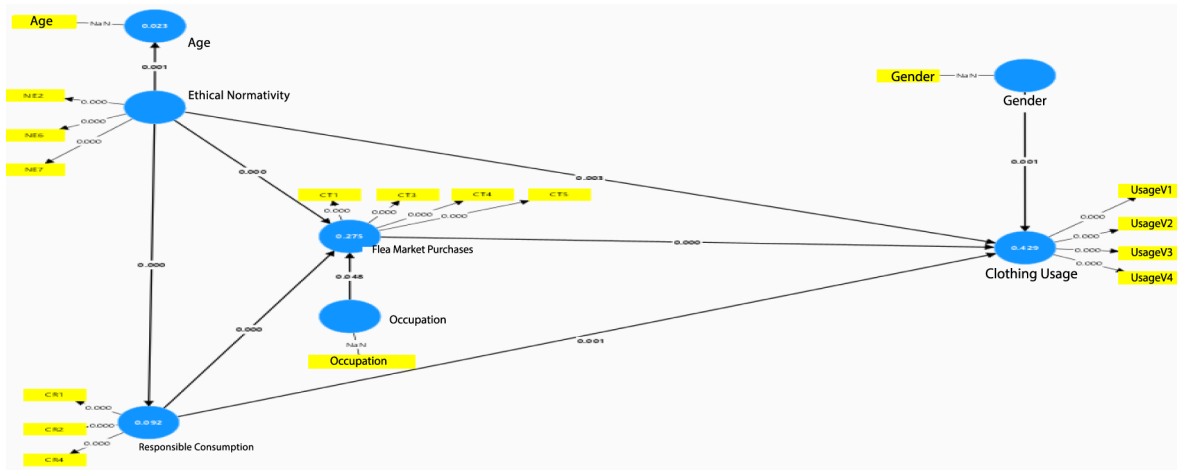
Figure 1. Conceptual Model



Source: Own elaboration



Figure 1. Conceptual Model



Source: Own elaboration

Table 1. External Loadings of the Items

items	Load
CR1: I read the labels before buying new clothes	0.743
CR2: When buying clothes, I consider myself a socially responsible consumer.	0.621
CR4: Buying new clothes makes me feel guilty towards the environment.	0.825
CT1: Buying clothes at flea markets makes me a smart consumer.	0.723
CT3: I save money by buying clothes at a flea market.	0.768
CT4: When buying clothes at a flea market, I support local commerce.	0.691
CT5: It is cool to buy clothes at flea markets.	0.801
NE2: Buying second-hand or vintage clothes is acceptable	0.847
NE6: It is ethical to buy vintage clothes.	0.722
NE7: I ask my friends where to buy the best second-hand or vintage clothes.	0.597
USOV1: It allows me to have more variety of clothes	0.767
USOV2: It helps me save money.	0.762
USOV3: It allows me to take care of the environment.	0.820
USOV4: It is trendy to buy it	0.772

Source: Own elaboration

In this analysis, we are evaluating convergent validity, which checks whether the items of a construct are aligned and capable of effectively representing the latent construct they belong to. Table 2 presents the composite reliability of the constructs, measured by rho_c, all of which exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating high internal reliability. Additionally, convergent validation is carried out through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). According to the criterion of Fornell and Larcker (1981), the AVE should be greater than 0.50, suggesting that more than 50% of the variance of the construct is explained by its items. In the model, the AVE values for the four constructs exceed the minimum required, ranging from 0.532 to 0.610, validating

Table 2. Reliability and Validity of the Constructs

Construct	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Flea market purchases	0.834	0.558
Responsible consumption	0.776	0.539
Ethical normativity	.769	0.532
Clothing use	0.862	0.610

Source: Own elaboration based on data obtained from SmartPLS

the convergence of the indicators within their respective constructs.

In the evaluation of discriminant validity, the HTMT statistic was used, representing the average of Heterotrait-Heteromethod correlations in relation to the average of Monotrait-Heteromethod correlations. It is established that, for the acceptance of discriminant validation, the HTMT value must be below 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015). The results, presented in detail in Table 3, indicate that this criterion is met, thus validating the discrimination between constructs.

3.2. Validity of the Structural Model

At this stage of the analysis, various indices are used to assess the validity of the structural model. The coefficient of determination (R²), which ranges from 0 to 1, reflects the model's predictive accuracy. Higher values indicate a greater level of precision, where 0.67 represents a substantial effect, 0.33 a moderate effect, and 0.19 a weak effect (Hair et al., 2011). To evaluate the significance of the standardized path coefficients (β), the bootstrapping method is employed. A minimum value of 0.2 is considered appropriate, with a preference for values above 0.3.

Table 2. Reliability and Validity of the Constructs

Construct	Flea Market Purchases	Responsible Consumption	Age	Gender	Ethical Normativity	Occupation	Clothing use
Flea Market Purchases							
Responsible Consumption	0.500						
AGE	0.160	0.091					
GENDER	0.076	0.255	0.093				
Ethical Normativity	0.722	0.534	0.192	0.205			
Occupation	0.157	0.067	0.528	0.082	0.144		
Clothing Use	0.789	0.531	0.145	0.236	0.626	0.104	

Source: Own elaboration based on data obtained from SmartPLS

Table 2. Reliability and Validity of the Constructs

	β	T-statistic	P-value
Flea market Purchase -> Clothing Use	0.486	11.275	0.000
Responsible Consumption -> Flea market purchase	0.203	4.743	0.000
Responsible Consumption -> Clothing Use	0.140	3.361	0.001
GENDER -> Clothing Use	-0.129	3.397	0.001
Ethical Normativity ->Flea market Purchase	0.412	10.032	0.000
Ethical Normativity ->Responsible Consumption	0.307	7.409	0.000
Ethical Normativity -> AGE	-0.150	3.356	0.001
Ethical Normativity -> Clothing Use	0.135	3.011	0.003
OCCUPATION -> Flea market Purchase	0.080	1.975	0.048

Source: Own elaboration based on data obtained from SmartPLS 4

In the context of analyzing the relationship between “Ethical Normativity” and “Flea market Purchase” (H1), the results show a positive relationship between the two variables. This suggests that as the Ethical Normativity of Centennials increases, so does the likelihood of them making purchases in flea markets. The t-statistic used to test the statistical significance of the relationship indicates that the observed effect is significant, supporting the robustness of the relationship between the two variables. Additionally, the p-value, which is much lower than the common threshold of $p < 0.05$,

implies that the relationship is highly significant, providing strong evidence that Ethical Normativity significantly influences Flea Market Purchase. These results indicate that Centennials with a stronger ethical orientation are more likely to buy clothing in flea markets.

The results (H2) show a significant positive connection between Ethical Normativity and Responsible Consumption in the context of Centennials. This indicates that, for this group, those who have a strong consumption ethic tend to adopt more responsible practices, which directly influence their purchasing decisions. It is suggested that ethical awareness is not only reflected in the preference for certain shopping locations but also plays a key role in considering sustainable and ethical factors when choosing clothing. Thus, ethical normativity appears to be a determining factor that promotes more conscious consumption behavior aligned with responsible principles.

The significant positive relationship (H3) between Ethical Normativity and the Use of Vintage Clothing in the context of Centennials highlights how ethical values influence the choice of second-hand garments. Those with strong ethical normativity tend to be more inclined to incorporate vintage pieces into their wardrobe, as they seek not only a unique style but also to actively contribute to sustainability. This behavior reflects a growing trend among Centennials to value the life cycle of products and be aware of the environmental impact of their purchasing decisions. The results obtained for this group show that consumption ethics go beyond the choice of new products, creating space for practices that support the circular economy.

There is also a significant positive connection (H4) between Responsible Consumption and Shopping



at Flea Markets, suggesting that Centennials, by adopting more responsible consumption practices, tend to prefer purchasing clothing in informal markets, such as flea markets.

This indicates that young people in this group not only focus on reducing environmental impact and promoting sustainability, but the observed relationship also reflects a growing trend among Centennials to prioritize options that are not only more economically accessible but also aligned with their ethical values. In this context, flea markets provide an opportunity to access high-quality clothing at lower prices while contributing to the collective effort to reduce textile waste and promote a circular economy model.

Responsible Consumption and Use of Vintage Clothing in the Context of Centennials reinforces the idea that environmental and ethical awareness plays a fundamental role in the preference for vintage garments. This suggests that, by adopting a more responsible approach to consumption, they are not only attracted to more sustainable alternatives but also show a natural inclination towards second-hand clothing, seeking to incorporate these garments into their wardrobe choices. Vintage clothing, being a reused option, aligns perfectly with the principles of responsible consumption, allowing them to satisfy their fashion needs without contributing to the environmental damage caused by the fast-fashion industry.

The results presented in the standardized path coefficients table (β) highlight significant associations between the constructs of the model, providing valuable insights, especially in the context of Centennials. The substantial relationship between "Shopping at Flea Markets" and "Use of Vintage Clothing" (H6) suggests that Centennials show a marked preference for acquiring garments in informal markets, such as flea markets, and tend to incorporate these unique pieces into their daily wear. This reflects a preference for reusing garments, with a focus on sustainability and responsible consumption, reinforcing the idea that vintage clothing is seen as an attractive alternative for this group.

The relationship between gender and behavior patterns (H6) regarding clothing use has been a relevant topic in the analysis of consumption habits. It examines whether there is a significant association between gender and preferences or habits related

to clothing use. Understanding how gender differences impact behavior patterns concerning clothing provides a deeper perspective on variations in consumption habits between men and women. The results show a value, where the low p-value indicates that the difference between genders in terms of clothing use is statistically significant. This confirms that gender has a significant impact on clothing use behavior.

The negative mean suggests that, on average, gender is associated with less clothing use, which could be interpreted as a lower frequency of use or fewer garments being worn by one gender compared to the other. The results obtained corroborate the robustness of the relationships proposed in the model, validating the hypotheses and offering solid statistical evidence that supports the consistency and relevance of the relationships, reinforcing the general validity of the theoretical and conceptual framework used in the research.

4. Discussion

The research results reveal a significant relationship between the ethical normativity of Centennial consumers and their purchasing behavior in the second-hand fashion market.

The strong preference for shopping at flea markets, valuing the diversity and uniqueness of garments among Centennials with high ethical normativity, reflects the influence of their ethical convictions on their choice of acquisition channels. This finding aligns with existing literature emphasizing the importance of ethical values in contemporary consumers' purchasing decisions

(Ong et al., 2021). The results obtained in this study show that clothing use not only fulfills the basic function of dressing but has also become a powerful tool for personal expression and identity, particularly among Centennials. This group, in selecting garments, reflects their core values, such as sustainability and ethics, which establish a significant connection between consumption decisions and underlying beliefs about the environment and social responsibility.

However, while this finding confirms previous studies on the growing importance of responsible fashion, it also invites further exploration of the



true depth of this connection across different sociocultural and geographical contexts.

The way sustainability education is integrated into marketing strategies will be crucial in determining the effectiveness of these practices in driving behavioral change. In this regard, further studies are needed to explore the relationship between sustainability information and actual purchasing behaviors, especially considering factors such as the economic accessibility of sustainable products (Saavedra, 2022).

Educational campaigns could also serve as an effective means to increase environmental awareness. However, it is important to consider that Centennials are a generation saturated with information, so the effectiveness of such campaigns will depend on how well they emotionally connect with the audience and create a sense of urgency about changing habits.

While collaborating with influencers and content creators who share sustainability values seems like a promising strategy, further investigation is needed to determine to what extent these messages have a tangible impact on purchasing habits beyond stated intentions (Schneider, 2020).

Finally, education strategies on minimalism and slow fashion also raise questions about the practical reality of these movements. Although Centennials appear inclined toward these ideas, their long-term effectiveness depends on the availability of accessible alternatives, both economically and practically. The versatility and durability of second-hand clothing are essential aspects to highlight, but are consumers truly willing to invest in quality if fast fashion alternatives remain more affordable and convenient in terms of price and availability? (MarketingDive, 2023).

In summary, the results of this study open an important debate on Centennial consumption behavior, suggesting that while sustainability and ethics are key factors in their purchasing decisions, the social, economic, and technological context also plays a fundamental role in shaping their perception and practice of these values. The brands that wish to target this.

5. Conclusions

Brands looking to attract Centennials must consider not only the quality of their products but also how they communicate their ethical sourcing and sustainability efforts. While the study suggests that brands promoting authenticity and diversity in their second-hand products might strongly resonate with this generation, it's important to reflect on the perception of authenticity: Are consumers really seeking authenticity in the sense of a story behind the product, or is this desire more related to the social context in which the purchase is made? The difference in the meaning of authenticity among different consumers can impact the marketing strategies of brands, which must take these nuances into account (Centro de Comercio Detallista, 2024). This buying approach, characterized by financial awareness and support for local entrepreneurs, is especially relevant to the Centennial generation, known for its pragmatic focus, valuing sustainability, authenticity, and social responsibility. Shopping at flea markets resonates with these values, as it not only allows them to save money but also aligns with their interest in supporting local and sustainable initiatives. An important limitation of this study is the sampling bias, as the sample of 366 Centennial participants was randomly selected, but only those with internet access and familiarity with online survey platforms like Survey Monkey were included. This could exclude certain groups within the Centennial generation who lack access to these technologies or who do not actively participate in digital surveys, limiting the representativeness of the sample in a broader context. Additionally, self-reported data may be subject to social desirability bias, where participants may respond in ways they perceive as more socially acceptable, which might not reflect their actual behaviors or attitudes. In terms of future research directions, it would be interesting to explore how sociocultural and economic differences affect the adoption of responsible and ethical consumption practices among Centennials, particularly in contexts outside large cities. Furthermore, investigating the impact of digital platforms and emerging technologies, such as the metaverse, on promoting sustainable fashion and ethical behavior in clothing consumption could be a promising area.

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