



## **Thrift Traders' Survival Strategy After the Issuance of the Used Clothes Import Policy at the Comboran Market, Indonesia**

Ilyas Shaso Pratama, Khofifatu Rohmah Adi, Nurul Ratnawati

Universitas Negeri Malang, Semarang Street No. 5, East Java, Indonesia.

Correspondence should be addressed to Khofifatu Rohmah Adi; [khofifatu.rohmah.fis@um.ac.id](mailto:khofifatu.rohmah.fis@um.ac.id)

### **Abstract**

This research was conducted at the Comboran Market on Prof. Moch Yamin Street, Sukoharjo, Klojen District, Malang City with the following objectives: 1) to describe the background of thrift traders selling at the Comboran Market, and 2) to describe the survival strategy of thrift traders after the issuance of the policy of importing used clothes in the Comboran Market. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method. Data analysis uses the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana. The results of this study reveal that the background of Thrift traders in the Comboran Market is due to the potential for great interest in used clothing buyers in the Comboran Market and generate income with large profits. The name of the second-hand goods market has become an identity for the Comboran Market, and its location is easily accessible because it is in the middle of the city. The survival strategy of thrift traders after the issuance of the policy of banning the import of used clothes is with an active strategy, namely by maintaining existing potential such as utilizing family members as workers and being selective in choosing merchandise. The passive strategy is not to buy bales of used clothes at the agency, however, look for branded used clothes and buy them at a low price and resell them at a price that can make a profit. Also, a network strategy by building good relationships with agents and buyers so that daily needs can be met.

Keywords: survival strategies; thrifting traders; second-hand clothing imports.

### **Introduction**

Fashion trends Among the community, especially the millennial generation, it is increasingly diverse along with the changing times. Young people often consider fashion or clothing as a factor that can boost their confidence, especially when using clothes from well-known brands (Suarningsih et al., 2022). The young generation will look for ways to look fashionable with minimal expenses, so that they can achieve their goals efficiently (Putri & Anzori, 2023). Finally, they decided to buy used clothes, or they were known as Thrifting. Today's young generation does not hesitate to wear used clothes or Thrift to increase their confidence (Hayati, 2021).

Thrifting is an activity of finding and buying used goods, including clothes, that are in accordance with the desired model and suitable price, so that it is possible to buy goods according to the

desired or budget owned. In other words, Thrifting It can be interpreted as the activity of looking for used goods in certain locations that specialize in selling used products (Gulfira, 2015). Thrifting is an activity to find various used items that are in demand. The presence of thrifting for fashion connoisseurs is very interesting, because it is able to get unique, good quality clothes and get branded clothes at low prices (Lestari et al., 2023). Activities Thrifting Not only as an activity to buy used goods but has its own sensation when obtaining rare and cool items (Virginia, 2022).

Phenomenon Thrifting in Indonesia, it penetrates various areas on the Indonesian coast such as areas bordering neighboring countries such as Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Batam, and Lampung as an entry point for importing used goods (Oktawiningsih & Saifudin, 2023). At the end of 2018 until now, the business Thrifting continues to develop and improve. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), in the 2018-2022 period, imports of used clothes continued to experience a very significant increase. In 2022, the volume of used clothing imports increased drastically with an increase of 230.40% compared to used clothing imports that occurred in 2021 (Putri & Anzori, 2023). Based on this data, it can be concluded that in the last 5 years, imports of used clothes are still circulating freely in Indonesia with the value of imports continuing to increase.

Along with the increasing value of used clothing imports, President Joko Widodo has banned the import of used clothes, because it is feared that it will harm the domestic textile sector (Fadila, Alifah, & Faristiana, 2023). This prohibition is based on the Ministry of Trade Regulation Number 40 of 2022 concerning amendments to Ministry of Trade Regulation Number 18 of 2021 concerning Goods Prohibited from Export and Goods Prohibited from Import. Based on these provisions, the ban on the import of used clothes is not in accordance with government regulations and is intended to protect customers from diseases that may be transmitted through clothes (Paradisa & Asriwandari, 2017). In accordance with the ban, the government hopes that the public will not buy used clothes. In addition, with the import ban policy, it is hoped that it can revive domestic economic development by building MSMEs and developing local products.

The policy of banning the import of used clothes has a big impact on business actors Thrifting, because the income obtained is reduced and the categories of goods that consumers are interested in also decrease with the destruction of imported goods (Fatah et al., 2023a). Before the law was enacted, small traders who relied on businesses Thrifting Acknowledging that the income from this business is very helpful in meeting the cost of living. However, for now, they can only sell goods from the remaining stock. This means that sellers only sell goods from Thrifting that have already been purchased from agents only. After that, there will be no more used goods imported into Indonesia to be sold (Qurrotaayun et al., 2024). Thus, entrepreneurs Thrifting requires survival efforts to continue to meet their needs.

Based on the results of initial observations and interviews conducted by researchers with thrift traders in the Comboran Market, it can be concluded that business actors have experienced a decrease in income and capital that can be used to re-manage the thrift clothing business. Thrift traders in the Comboran Market are having difficulty adapting to innovate and build new businesses during the ban from the government. Currently, thrift traders at the Comboran Market have been able to follow changes due to government policies (Results of interviews and initial observations conducted on October 22, 2022). The problem of thrift traders having difficulty adapting must be resolved immediately as an effort by thrift traders to survive after government

policies. To solve these problems, there needs to be an effort that thrift traders must have to rise from the problems experienced. The efforts made by thrift traders can facilitate their business and provide profits in survival.

Previous research that is relevant to the discussion of this research is research conducted by Wahyuwardana (2023) related to the survival strategy of *Baju Bekas Bos* Market (Babebo) traders during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The results of his research show that with a trading strategy, by borrowing money at the bank, saving expenses and switching jobs, the Babebo traders can still meet their needs. This study is similar in that it discusses survival strategies implemented by second-hand clothing companies. The difference is that in this study it applies survival efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic, while in the research that will be carried out by the researcher it is applied in the face of government policies. Then the research conducted by Nisa and Indrawati (2023), which discusses the survival strategy of second-hand clothing traders, namely active strategy, includes active actions to maintain potential in ways such as using family members, making selections in sales, and increasing the products to be sold. Passive strategy, focusing on minimizing economic expenses by choosing good quality clothes to generate high income and save sales revenue. Meanwhile, the network strategy, by fostering good relationships with buyers and distributors to meet daily needs. The similarity of this research is the survival strategy of used clothing traders to overcome government policy problems. The difference is about the location taken to conduct research and the efforts of traders to face government policy problems.

The above studies are similar studies that discuss the survival efforts of second-hand clothing traders. The purpose of this study is to find out how the strategies carried out by thrift traders at Comboran Market in overcoming government policy problems that make thrift traders experience a drastic decrease in income and consumers are decreasing. Research that examines this is still rare. Thus, the researcher is interested in conducting research on "Thrift Traders' Strategies in Facing the Import Policy of Used Clothes in the Comboran Market".

## **Methods**

This study uses a qualitative methodology and is classified as descriptive research. The objective of qualitative research is to obtain reliable data to identify, develop, and present knowledge that can be used for problem solving. Descriptive research is research that leads to the presentation of symptoms, conditions and facts that are presented in detail, without explaining the relationship between variables and hypothesis tests (Wagiran, 2019a). Researchers in conducting research only take the facts that are researched, then explain them in the form of reports. This study presents descriptive data in the form of the results of the analysis of traders' survival strategies Thrifting in the face of government policies. Research with a qualitative approach emphasizes the importance of the presence of researchers in the field, especially in the Malang Comboran Market. The function of the researcher as the main data collection tool in qualitative research is very important, where the researcher functions as an observer or full observer, and acts as a data collector. To ensure the accuracy of the data, it is important for the researcher to obtain approval from the informant or previous research subject. This aims to prevent misunderstandings and ensure the correctness of the data. As explained by Moleong (2018), the responsibility of researchers in qualitative research includes planning, collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data.

The research was carried out at the Comboran Market on Prof. Moch Yamin Street, Sukoharjo, Klojen District, Malang City. This location is ideal for studying the analysis of traders' survival strategies Thrift In facing government policies because in the area there are many traders Thrift which has been selling for many years. The subject of this research is traders Thrift. This study uses primary and secondary data sources. Primary data is collected directly at the research site through non-participant observations on weekends, semi-structured interviews and direct observation activities in the field. Secondary data is information obtained by researchers indirectly through intermediaries (Sarwono, 2006). Secondary data is a form of further processing of primary data obtained in different forms. The secondary data collection process is through writing in the form of books, journals and other libraries that are in accordance with the research topic (Sugiyono, 2017). The techniques used in this study are observation, interview, and documentation techniques. To identify problems that require further investigation, researchers can use interviews as an initial data collection method. Observation is the basis of science because basically a scientist or researcher can conduct research based on data, namely reality or reality obtained through observation (Nasution, 2016). Observations are carried out to collect data related to traders' strategies both in terms of marketing, prices, and so on. Documentation is the collection of data and information in the form of archives, books, documents, writing numbers and photos that can support research. The documentation in this study uses a smartphone camera to take data in the form of images in the form of evidence that the researcher is looking for data.

This study will use qualitative data analysis, as proposed by Miles and Huberman, as the data analysis method, while the following activity components are part of the interactive model of data analysis. First, data reduction, this activity is used to determine data that is directly or indirectly related to the analysis of thrifting traders' survival strategies in the face of government policies. This is done so that the researcher's analysis is precise, does not deviate from the subject, and allows conclusions to be drawn. Second, data display (data presentation) is the collection of all data related to the analysis of thrifting traders' survival strategies in facing government policies researched by researchers in accordance with the reality in the field. Third, conclusion drawing/verification is the process of drawing conclusions and verifying. The initial findings are still provisional and subject to change if additional data is not found that is more convincing in further data collection. But the results will be considered credible when researchers return to the field to collect more data, and the initial conclusions are supported by accurate and consistent information.

The data is said to be valid if it is in accordance with the facts on the ground (Manzilati, 2017). Checking valid data uses a model consisting of credibility test, transferability test, dependability test, and confirmability test. The research credibility test aims to ensure that the data obtained by the researcher is trustworthy. To strengthen confidence in the results of the research, various methods such as triangulation, extended observation, dialogue with fellow researchers, research improvement, confirmation from participants, and analysis of negative cases. Source triangulation and method triangulation are the triangulation techniques used in this study. Triangulation of sources can be done by comparing the results obtained from key informants and supporting informants. Meanwhile, the triangulation method was carried out by comparing the results obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. Transferability test is a process in which a researcher will examine the extent to which the results can be applied in different situations (Moleong, 2018). This method of testing is carried out by other people reading the

research reports that have been made. Therefore, the report must be clear, detailed, and show the suitability between the problem being researched and the theory used (Chariri, 2009). Dependability test is a process of testing research results that is carried out by examining the entire research process. This audit can be carried out by independent auditors or research supervisors related to the entire research process from start to finish (Mekarisce, 2020). The confirmability test is carried out to determine the objectivity of research related to the research process that has been carried out. Qualitative research defines confirmability as an intersubjectivity, where the researcher discloses the results to the public to be assessed.

## **Results and Discussion**

### ***Background of Thrift Traders Selling Used Clothes at Comboran Market***

Thrift is an effort to find and buy used goods (Putri & Anzori, 2023). Effort thrifting is widely favored by several circles because it is profitable. The more popular the business thrifting makes many people see that there are business opportunities in it. Effort thrifting this is one of the efforts to provide great profits (Nurazizah & Firmansyah, 2023). This is based on the varied clothing models and prices that are relatively cheap for consumers with middle to lower incomes so that the profits obtained by sellers are quite large (Sianata & Keni, 2023). Business advantages Thrifting which is quite promising to make business thrifting widespread in both conventional and online markets. Business phenomenon thrifting this is supported by the huge consumer demand for used clothes in the market.

Comboran Market is one of the practices of traders sell clothes Thrift. Based on the results of the interview, several informants gave background reasons for selling used clothes at the Comboran Market. One of them is Nurhayati as a business actor who Interviewed in front of his business stall conveyed that the business Thrifting It is one of the businesses that has greater opportunities and income than the previous job. In addition, it is seen that currently there are more second-hand clothing enthusiasts at the Comboran Market than the younger generation.

This is slightly different from what was conveyed by Teguh as a business actor as well as a Thrift lover. The reason Teguh pursued this business in the thrift field is because buying used clothes is a habit that has been done for a long time, so he sees a profitable business opportunity. Opening a business thrifting can provide benefits in the form of income and he gets the desired branded clothes.

Entrepreneurs Thrifting able to survive and develop because of the support from parties who can increase their business, for example clothing models and brands that are favored by buyers. Hunt for clothes Thrift is one of the phenomena that is increasingly popular because the imported used goods offered have brands that are known to be expensive with good quality that are still worth using but can be obtained at a cheaper price than the original selling price. Whatever items and clothes are worn can be a form of self-expression and often as a symbol of a person's social status assessment. This phenomenon arose supported by the absence of rules Safeguard in Indonesia against the import of used clothes (Safitri & Bakhtiar, 2024). The increasing interest in clothing Thrift This is used by traders as an opportunity to make profits and choose a business of trading imported used goods. Then shops selling clothes began to appear Thrift spread from the largest sales centers to small shops spread across Indonesia. Even online stores Thrift Shops are also increasing on online shopping platforms and social media. The place of sale has also developed

starting from the traditional market, now there is a place to trade in. The most fundamental background for traders selling used clothes is the existence of promising business opportunities, as well as hobby distributors. The traders also aim to improve their standard of living.

### ***Thrift Traders' Strategy in Dealing with the Policy of Importing Used Clothes at the Comboran Market***

There is a ban on the import of used clothes written in Permendag Number 18 of 2021 which was amended by Permendag Number 40 of 2022 concerning Goods Prohibited from Export and Goods Prohibited from Import. Thrifting clothing entrepreneurs experienced confusion to obtain imported used clothes from abroad when this law was in effect. In addition, due to the ban, their income has shrunk and the category of goods brands they are looking for has decreased, because the market for illegal distributors is also more careful in marketing goods. This is in accordance with several informants interviewed at the Comboran Market, namely Kumala said that the new regulation related to the ban on the import of used clothes is quite impactful on the thrift business that she has been engaged in for a long time. The new regulation certainly has an impact on the income he will earn if he continues to sell thrift clothes, but he is ready for the risks that will occur.

The impact of the ban makes entrepreneurs develop survival strategies to continue living. Adaptation strategy as a strategy for survival is a person's ability to overcome various problems in their life (Suharto, 2009). The survival strategies carried out by thrifting clothing traders are divided into three, namely active, passive and network strategies. An active strategy applied by informants in selling used clothes is a strategy that focuses on the daily life of individuals or groups to achieve the desired goals. To get the desired results, it is necessary to utilize all available resources. For example, at work, you must maximize all your efforts and potential in order to achieve your goals. These efforts can be made by utilizing family members as workers, as well as being selective in taking merchandise in the sense that Thrift traders can choose to focus on certain types of used clothing, such as vintage clothing, clothes from certain brands, or clothes with unique styles. These efforts are in accordance with the Product Differentiation Theory put forward by Kotler & Armstrong (2014) namely traders Thrift can select merchandise so that the items offered are unique and attractive, so that the goods sold are more in demand by buyers. According to Kartajaya (2013) Any effort made by a businessperson to differentiate himself from competitors in order to provide the best value to customers is called differentiation.

Passive strategies are strategies that are applied in a person's daily life to reduce expenses, such as reducing food, clothing, and other needs so as not to experience difficult economic situations (Suharto, 2009). Clothing merchants Thrift at Comboran Markets implements this passive strategy with the aim of overcoming a difficult economy by saving expenses. The price of used clothes must be able to generate high income. The variety of trading models and prices offered make it its own attraction for those who buy it. Traders continue to maintain their business by going around looking for used clothes to traders who sell used clothes to be resold according to consumer needs, thereby reducing the existence of economic crises or even downturns.

A network strategy is a lifestyle strategy that is applied to a person by fostering social ties with their environment, both formal and informal. For example, this shows a good working relationship with the second-hand clothing agency by bringing in second-hand clothes directly from the agency. Generally, in selling, agents have similarities that make it easier for them to get

raw materials. After promoting the product on social media, the sales representative of this one product promotes or advertises it further so that more and more people know about it. Utilizing social media to promote product sales by informing the public about the products offered.

Social capital is needed to overcome the problems faced by entrepreneurs Thrifting. The strength of social capital will be seen when entrepreneurs and the community help each other. Social capital is an advantage obtained as a benefit from the existence of trust in the community (M.M Usman et al., 2024). Establishing cooperation through the application of trust can be used to obtain mutual benefits. Individuals in the community will benefit from mutually beneficial networks and norms. According to research, social capital that is used to form bonds with each other or establish friendships, feelings of solidarity, and help each other in social networks will encourage socio-economic success for people in the community.

### **Conclusions**

The background of the many used clothing sellers in the Comboran Market is because the thrifting business is one of the businesses that has great opportunities and income compared to other jobs in the Comboran Market. In addition, it is seen that currently there are more second-hand clothing enthusiasts at the Comboran Market than the younger generation. The strategy carried out by thrifting traders at the Comboran Market to increase and maintain family economic income is an active, passive, and network strategy. In addition, in trading, of course, they have their own strategies in selling; these active strategies are: utilizing family members as workers, and being selective in taking merchandise. The passive strategy implemented is to reduce spending, such as reducing food, clothing, and other needs so as not to experience a difficult economic situation. The goal is to overcome a difficult economy by saving expenses. Passive strategies include: the ability to choose the price of used clothes to generate high income and reduce expenses. The network strategy is applied by fostering social ties with other people and the environment. Networking strategies include building good relationships with second-hand clothing agencies as well as promoting second-hand clothing through social media.

### **Data Availability**

The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

All authors in this publication declare no conflict of interest regarding the title, data, location, and results of the research.

### **Funding Statement**

This research was conducted independently by the researcher without any financial support or funding from external institutions or organizations.

### **Acknowledgments**

The author would like to thank all those who have helped in the preparation of this article.

## Supplementary Materials

This study does not include any supplementary materials.

## References

- Anisa, D., Hafizah, A., Siregar, N., & Hasyim. (2023). Dampak maraknya penjualan thrift terhadap pemasaran industri fashion di Kota Medan. *Mitita Jurnal Penelitian*, 2(1), 205–208.
- Chariri, A. (2009). *Landasan filsafat dan metode penelitian kualitatif*. Laboratorium Pengembangan Akuntansi (LPA), Fakultas Ekonomi Universitas Diponegoro Semarang.
- Fadila, N. N., Alifah, R., & Faristiana, A. R. (2023). Fenomena thrifting yang populer dikalangan mahasiswa. *Lencana: Jurnal Inovasi Ilmu Pendidikan*, 1(3), 278-291.
- Fatah, A., Sari, D. A. P., Irwanda, I. S., Kolen, L. I., & Agnesia, P. G. D. (2023a). Pengaruh larangan impor pakaian bekas terhadap pengusaha thrift. *Jurnal Economina*, 2(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.55681/economina.v2i1.288>
- Gulfira, N. (2015). *The art of thrifting (Yogyakarta)*.
- Hayati, M. (2021). *Thrifting sebagai presentasi diri mahasiswa di Pasar Putih Bukittinggi* (Universitas Negeri Padang). <http://repository.unp.ac.id/id/eprint/36148>
- Kartajaya, H. (2013). *Connect—surfing new wave marketing*. Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (2014). *Prinsip-prinsip pemasaran*. Erlangga.
- Lestari, E. P., Arieta, S., & Wahyuni, S. (2023). Thrift shopping sebagai gaya hidup mahasiswa Tanjungpinang. *Jurnal Sosio-Komunika*, 3(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.57036/jsk.v3i1.67>
- Manzilati, A. (2017). *Metodologi penelitian kualitatif: Paradigma, metode, dan aplikasi*. Universitas Brawijaya Press.
- Mekarisce, A. A. (2020). Teknik pemeriksaan keabsahan data pada penelitian kualitatif di bidang kesehatan masyarakat. *Jurnal Ilmiah Kesehatan Masyarakat: Media Komunikasi Komunitas Kesehatan Masyarakat*, 12(3), 145-151.
- Moleong, L. J. (2018). *Metodologi penelitian kualitatif* (Edisi revisi; Cetakan ketiga puluh delapan). PT Remaja Rosdakarya. <https://opac.perpusnas.go.id/DetailOpac.aspx?id=1133305>
- Nasution, N. (2016a). *Metode penelitian naturalistik kualitatif*. Tarsito.
- Nisa, K., & Indrawati, I. (2023). Strategi bertahan hidup pakaian bekas di Pasar Uka Garuda Sakti Km 3 Pekanbaru. *Concept: Journal of Social Humanities and Education*, 2(1), 142-152.
- Nurazizah, F., & Firmansyah, R. (2023). Analisis perkembangan barang import thrifting di Nara Thrift Store Cimahi. *Lentera: Multidisciplinary Studies*, 1(4), 287–291. <https://doi.org/10.57096/lentera.v1i4.47>
- Oktawiningsih, E., & Saifudin, A. G. (2023). Fenomena thrifting terhadap gaya hidup mahasiswa. *Sahmiyya: Jurnal Ekonomi dan Bisnis*, 348–353.
- Paradisa, T., & Asriwandari, H. (2017). *Permainan tradisional lompat tali merdeka sebagai media pelaksanaan proses game stage di SD Negeri 94 Pekanbaru* (Doctoral dissertation, Riau University).
- Putri, I. D., & Anzori, A. (2023). Upaya mempertahankan eksistensi pakaian second brand sebagai budaya populer di Bengkulu. *Jurnal Dehasen Mengabdi*, 2(2), 157-164.
- Qurrotaayun, B., Putri, M. L. E., Ferdiansyah, Y. P., & Wikansari, R. (2024). Dampak pelarangan impor pakaian bekas (thrift) terhadap pedagang di Indonesia. *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai*, 8(1), 1326–1337. <https://doi.org/10.31004/jptam.v8i1.12557>
- Safitri, N., & Bakhtiar, H. S. (2024). Penghapusan thrifting impor shop sebagai upaya penegakan Peraturan Menteri Perdagangan Nomor 40 Tahun 2022. *Tanjungpura Law Journal*, 8(1), 42–58. <https://doi.org/10.26418/tlj.v8i1.65000>
- Sarwono, J. (2006). *Metode penelitian kuantitatif & kualitatif*. Graha Ilmu.
- Sianata, V., & Keni, K. (2023). Faktor-faktor penentu niat beli produk pakaian. *Jurnal Manajemen Maranatha*, 22, 149–168. <https://doi.org/10.28932/jmm.v22i2.5999>
- Suarningsih, K., Nugroho, W., & Aditya, G. (2021). Thrift shopping sebagai alternatif konsumsi fashion. *Jurnal Ilmiah Sosiologi*, 1(2), 1–12.
- Sugiyono, S. (2017b). *Metode penelitian kuantitatif, kualitatif, R & D*. Alfabeta.

- Suharto, E. (2009). *Kemiskinan & perlindungan sosial di Indonesia*. Alfabeta.
- Usman, S. E., Hapsari, V. R., SE, M., & Silvester, M. P. (2024). *Buku ajar modal sosial*. Mega Press Nusantara.
- Virginia, G. S. (2022). *Fenomena thrifting sebagai budaya populer masyarakat Pasar Pagi Tugu Pahlawan Kota Surabaya* (UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya).
- Wagiran, W. (2019). *Metodologi penelitian pendidikan: Teori dan implementasi*.
- Wahyuwardana, D. (2023). *Strategi bertahan hidup pedagang Pasar Babebo di masa pandemi Covid-19 (studi deskriptif Pasar Baju Bekas Bos (Babebo) Kelurahan Mangli, Kecamatan Kaliwates, Kabupaten Jember)*. <https://repository.unej.ac.id/xmlui/handle/123456789/115583>