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The Viability of Pop-Up Thrift Shops in Increasing Revenues for Goodwill Industries of Akron

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**The Viability of Pop-Up Thrift Shops in Increasing Revenues for Goodwill Industries of
Akron**

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College of Business, The University of Akron

Honors Project in Business Administration (6100:497-001)

Dr. Susan Hanlon

April 4, 2022

Abstract

The Honors Project in Business Administration course at The University of Akron (UA) College of Business (CoB), conducted September 2021 through May 2022, involved partnership with the local nonprofit Goodwill Industries of Akron (GIA) at the direction of Interim Dean of the CoB, Dr. Susan Hanlon. The purpose of this capstone project was to generate ideas and recommendations to GIA for a new, sustainable business unit, the revenue of which would cover the annual \$250,000 operating cost of a new transportation support initiative to overcome GIA's clients' barriers to employment (McClenaghan & Watkins, 2021). During the secondary research phase of this project undertaken from September 2021 through December 2021, three options for a new business unit were explored: a childcare center business unit; a vocational services and training business unit; and a curated pop-up shop business unit. Ultimately, the latter-most option was chosen as the focus for primary research, as GIA already has high brand recognition for resale goods in the eyes of consumers and operational experience in clothing and accessory sales that they could capitalize on to target a key demographic willing to spend additional monies (found to be called the "creativist" thrift shopper) to sustain a profitable business unit (Andrews, Bachowski, Croston, Dunphy, & Latham, 2021). In this publication, authors Morgan Andrews, Casey Bachowski, Caitlin Croston, Zach Dunphy, and Weston Latham ("Contributor Consultants") discuss the primary research process which led to arriving at the recommendation that GIA implement a Pop-Up Thrift Shop business unit to increase revenues.

Keywords: Goodwill, Pop-up shop, Thrift shop, Thrifting, Thrift Shoppers

Introduction

Primary research was divided into four phases – *Phase I: Contextualization*, *Phase II: Stakeholder Discussions*, *Phase III: Focus Group*, and *Phase IV: Experimentation* – for organizational purposes and to illustrate how each phase built on those prior. Although each phase had unique methodology and results, all shared the same goal of obtaining data to inform a test-run of a Pop-Up Thrift Shop as the final research outcome in *Phase IV: Experimentation*.

Phase I: Contextualization consisted of two surveys distributed to two unique populations (current GIA shoppers and students at UA) and had the goal of understanding existing perceptions of GIA operations and individuals' personal thrift shopping habits. *Phase II: Stakeholder Discussions* was defined by a conversation with key GIA representatives to understand the way in which GIA operates two existing specialty clothing operations, those operations' historical effectiveness at boosting revenue, and how a Pop-Up Thrift Shop business unit could contribute to specific organizational needs and goals. The events of this phase also led to Contributor Consultants personally examining of one of these specialty business units for further context. *Phase III: Focus Group* was just that: a focus group with students at UA who fit the creativist shopper demographic detailing the factors which would influence how a Pop-Up Thrift Shop hosted on their college campus could be well received. Finally, in *Phase IV: Experimentation*, a Pop-Up Thrift Shop was hosted get a true understanding of the results GIA could reasonably expect should they decide to leverage this research and implement this proposal as a fully developed business unit.

Methodology

Phase I: Contextualization

The first essential part of conducting our primary research was to gain an understanding of the existing perceptions of Goodwill Industries of Akron (GIA) and various individuals' personal thrift shopping habits. To do this, two surveys were distributed: one to current GIA shoppers and one to students at the local institution The University of Akron (UA). Current GIA shoppers were selected as the first group to survey to provide baseline data on why people visit GIA stores, the types of items they seek out, and to determine typical demographic makeup of current shoppers. Students at UA were selected as the second group to survey because secondary research led to the discovery of the key demographic of creativist thrift shoppers: individuals who visit and shop at resale, second-hand, or thrift stores to find statement pieces that express their individuality, creativity, and uniqueness, and who will pay an increased price for those pieces (Andrews et al, 2021). These individuals are defined by their personal affinity to reject mainstream shopping alternatives, such as malls/department stores and are also more likely to have/obtain a four-year college degree (Steward, 2017). These combined characteristics allowed us to assume a large concentration of creativist thrift shoppers could be found on college campuses; thus came the rationale for examining UA students as a second survey group. Results from both surveyed groups would be valuable individually as well as when compared, specifically because this could highlight disparities in viewpoints between the two demographics.

The external GIA shopper survey was distributed primarily via an email newsletter published by GIA. This newsletter is sent to GIA shoppers who "opt-in" to promotional and news items from the company once per week. Additionally, paper advertisements with QR codes were displayed near the checkout lanes of GIA's headquarter store and specialty curated thrift

store *blue* Boutique. To minimize the effects of inadvertently excluding a population who did not own a smartphone or were unfamiliar on how to use a QR code from survey participation, paper versions of the survey were provided and kept behind the counter to be handed out upon request (although no data originated from this medium). The UA student survey was distributed via an email list of students that Contributor Consultants shared classes with or with whom they were mutually involved in a student organization. Additionally, over 20 paper advertisements with QR codes were displayed in high-traffic areas across campus to engage as many students not covered by the email list as possible. Further participation in the surveys was garnered with the opportunity for participants to enter a drawing to win a \$25.00 Goodwill gift card. After two weeks, 145 and 208 responses were recorded for the current GIA shopper and UA student surveys, respectively.

Although the overall purpose of the two surveys was the same, the content between the two were slightly different. The surveys were both relatively concise, containing either 13 or 17 questions each (Appendix A, Documents A1-A2). Question answer choices frequently utilized the traditional five-point psychometric Likert scale (Extremely Satisfied/Likely, Somewhat Satisfied/Likely, Neither Satisfied/Likely nor Dissatisfied/Unlikely, Somewhat Dissatisfied/Unlikely, and Extremely Dissatisfied/Unlikely). However, the GIA shopper survey focused on GIA's existing customer base's thrifting habits and motivation for thrifting, with the assumption that fundamental data points such as the likelihood to shop at thrift stores would fall in the Likely to Extremely Likely range, given that participation in this survey was garnered from either visiting a GIA store or being on the GIA email newsletter list. Questions regarding the survey participant's biggest reason for thrift shopping, intent behind thrift shopping, categories of clothes purchased, brands sought out, and total transaction amount were asked first

to establish a general shopper profile. Following these questions, survey participants were asked about their familiarity with *blue* Boutique, a specialty GIA store selling upscale second-hand clothing, jewelry, shoes, and accessories, and were asked to contrast their likelihood to shop at this store versus a traditional thrift store. The purpose behind asking questions about *blue* was to determine the percentage of current shoppers that knew of and/or shopped at this business unit to draw inferences about GIA's publicity efforts for the store and whether this could be included in our final business recommendation. The final survey questions asked about preference between browsing or utilizing a shopping list as well as the likelihood of the respondent to shop at a pop-up shop, setting the foundation for later phases of research to determine the viability of creating and then conducting such a shop. Demographic data surrounding gender, age, and employment status was collected to conclude the survey.

For the most part, the UA student survey contained the same questions the GIA shopper survey did. The slight difference between the two surveys dealt with the much higher probability of students to select Extremely Unlikely, Unlikely, and Neither Likely nor Unlikely responses to the first question, "How likely are you to shop at thrift stores?", when compared to GIA shoppers. In other words, the question asking about the likelihood of shopping at thrift stores, when asked to GIA shoppers, was anticipated to have zero Extremely Unlikely or Unlikely responses because survey participants had to have actively shopped at GIA, either currently or historically, to access to the survey via newsletter or cash wrap advertisement. Utilizing conditional logic, if the first question had any negative/neutral responses (Extremely Unlikely, Unlikely, or Neither Likely nor Unlikely) two questions inquiring about the reasons why the survey participant does not thrift shop and if they would consider shopping at thrift stores if they carried more in-style pieces were asked – instead of the four positive response questions

inquiring about their intent behind thrift shopping, categories of clothes purchased, brands sought out, and total transaction amount. If there was an overwhelming theme amongst students, these questions would allow for further research to identify possible ways to change students' perception of thrifting and/or their likelihood to thrift. In addition to receiving questions regarding the *blue* Boutique and likelihood to buy clothing at a pop-up shop, survey participants were also asked about their likelihood to stop at a pop-up shop if it were hosted at their college campus. We asked this question as the basis for garnering baseline support for *Phase IV: Experimentation*, which would consist of an experimental Pop-Up Thrift Shop. Demographic data on survey participants' gender, age, and employment status was also collected, and to conclude the survey, participants were asked if they were interested in participating in a follow-up focus group as to establish an in-house candidate pool for *Phase III: Focus Group*, discussed later.

Phase II: Stakeholder Discussions

Following survey distribution, further discussion with key Goodwill Industries of Akron (GIA) stakeholders regarding existing GIA specialty operations was necessary to further contextualize our proposed research idea of a Pop-Up Thrift Shop on a college campus. GIA's CEO, Nan McClenaghan, and Vice President of Operations and Logistics, Cheryl Watkins, provided a review of GIA's two unique business units: the *blue* Boutique and eBay Marketplace. When a GIA employee in a traditional store sees an item that could sell for a significantly greater price than it would at a regular store, therefore increasing GIA's revenues, the item could either be sent to *blue* or sold on eBay. GIA's *blue* Boutique sells upscale clothing, shoes, and accessories at a fraction of retail prices. A unique quality of *blue* is that each item is priced

individually, unlike traditional GIA stores which have a set price for each category of clothing and a weekly color sale structure. This individual pricing structure also comes with an increase in price when compared to traditional GIA stores; an item at *blue* will normally be at least double the corresponding traditional GIA store price. Donations are not accepted at *blue* – all its inventory originates from traditional GIA stores. Every business quarter, it is expected that other GIA stores will send a specific quantity and quality of clothing, shoes, and accessories to *blue* to support its operations. When these items arrive at *blue*, the store the item originated from is recorded, and upon sale, the store which the item originally came from receives its associated profits. Due to this operational design, *blue* is not thought of as a revenue-generating business unit; rather, *blue* is thought of as a marketing campaign designed to illustrate the concept that treasures can be found at both traditional and specialty thrift stores operated by GIA (McClenaghan & Watkins, personal communication, February 11, 2022).

As expected from its categorization as a cost center, *blue* did not generate any overall profit from their opening date in August 2015 through 2018. Despite revenues steadily increasing, expenses stayed at a constant rate higher than revenues could reach. Starting in 2017, the number of transactions per year at *blue* decreased, but the average transaction total slowly increased. This allowed for a small profit to be generated for the first time in 2018. However, this positive turn was quickly tampered as revenues decreased every year following 2018, driven by a large construction operation which closed main streets and sidewalks in downtown Akron, Ohio, the city which *blue* was located. Thus, there were not nearly as many transactions per year from 2019-2021, so the increase in average transaction total from 2015-2018 did not make up for the decrease in the number of transactions. Plus, in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic began, furthering existing financial struggles and foot traffic to the store. At the end of 2021, when conditions of

the pandemic began to improve and *blue*'s location lease was set to expire, the decision was made to move *blue* to a strip mall outside of the city to Copley, Ohio. With this new location in mind, it was explained to us that *blue* will likely have greater revenues, but also greater costs. Factors contributing to greater revenues in this new location include a projected triple of number of transactions per year (2,615 to 7,150) with only a slight decrease in average transaction total (\$35.87 to \$35.50). Factors contributing to greater costs include a higher rental cost. According to data two months after relocation, *blue* was exceeding the projected average transaction price by \$5.50, with the projected amount equaling \$35.50 and the actual amount equaling \$41.00 (McClenaghan & Watkins, personal communication, February 11, 2022).

GIA's eBay Marketplace operation is akin *blue*, with one difference being that stores contributing inventory to the eBay marketplace are not expected to meet a quota for items contributed to this business unit. Between eBay and *blue*, eBay has a greater number of transactions overall, but they have a much lower number of items sold. In other words, purchasers on eBay are buying items one at a time instead of bundling items together in one transaction. Another important metric to examine is sell-through rate, which is the number of items sold divided by the overall number of items available for sale. *blue* has a lot more items that rotate through the store, thus it has a lower sell-through rate than eBay. Overall, eBay has been more profitable than *blue* because there are a lot less expenses associated with it such as the lack of an additional building and lack of full-time employees dedicated to the *blue* location (McClenaghan & Watkins, personal communication, February 11, 2022).

To gain a better understanding of the *blue* Boutique as a specialty business unit for GIA, we visited the store. It was beneficial to examine the inventory, store layout, and surrounding area and compare this with the old *blue* Boutique location. In contrast to the previous downtown

Akron, Ohio *blue* Boutique location, the new Copley, Ohio store included an expanded inventory that added men's, women's, and children's clothing, shoes, and accessories instead of just women's clothing, shoes, and accessories. Regarding the general layout of the store, it seemed to be better organized and structured with visible signage describing the categories of clothing on various racks. Finally, the surrounding area and even neighbor shops in the strip mall were thought to be more convenient, relevant, and interesting to potential shoppers when compared to the offerings of the downtown Akron, Ohio location. Visiting the *blue* Boutique sparked the idea to leverage this location for inventory for the Pop-Up Thrift shop of *Phase IV: Experimentation*.

Phase III: Focus Group

With valuable information from the discussion with Goodwill Industries of Akron (GIA) and a visit to GIA's *blue* Boutique complete, the third phase of research began. This phase consisted of a focus group of students from The University of Akron (UA) who fit the demographic of creativist thrift shoppers. The intent behind conducting this focus group was to examine this target market's shopping habits; while the *Phase I: Contextualization* provided a general understanding of student preferences, a focus group could unearth specific reasoning behind answers and provide deeper understanding to inform *Phase IV: Experimentation*. Filtering the *Phase I: Contextualization* student survey question, "Would you be interested in participating in a focus group for an additional \$25 gift card?" by Yes responses provided an initial pool of 110 potential focus group participants, the data of which were placed into an Excel spreadsheet for further analysis to select the optimal focus group.

The goal of participant selection was to create a focus group that would reflect known information about creativist thrift shoppers while also including one contrary opinion to enhance

discussion/debate. To achieve this goal, candidates were filtered based on their intent behind thrift shopping, total transaction amount, likeliness to make a purchase at a pop-up shop, and gender. Five ideal participants, reflecting the five available slots in the focus group, were defined as:

1. Female responding \$31-40, \$41-50, or \$50+ to “Q4 How much money do you spend in one trip to a thrift store?” and Somewhat Likely or Extremely Likely to “Q9 How likely are you to buy clothing at a pop-up shop?”
2. Female responding \$21-30 to “Q4 How much money do you spend in one trip to a thrift store?” and Somewhat Likely or Extremely Likely to “Q9 How likely are you to buy clothing at a pop-up shop?”
3. Female responding Neither Likely nor Unlikely to “Q9 How likely are you to buy clothing at a pop-up shop?”
4. Male responding \$31-40, \$41-50, or \$50+ to “Q4 How much money do you spend in one trip to a thrift store?” and Somewhat Likely or Extremely Likely to “Q9 How likely are you to buy clothing at a pop-up shop?”
5. Male responding \$11-20 to “Q4 How much money do you spend in one trip to a thrift store?” and Extremely Likely to “Q9 How likely are you to buy clothing at a pop-up shop?”

(Appendix A, Document A1)

Potential participants matching each category were contacted one at a time via the email address they provided in the *Phase I: Contextualization* student survey. A 24-hour response deadline was enacted to move through the selection process quickly and efficiently. Due to lack of response from potential participants within categories 2, 3, and 4, perfect alignment of actual

participants to ideal participants was not achieved. Thus, the following actual participants were obtained:

1. Female responding \$21-30 to “Q4 How much money do you spend in one trip to a thrift store?” and Somewhat Likely to “Q9 How likely are you to buy clothing at a pop-up shop?”
2. Female responding \$11-20 to “Q4 How much money do you spend in one trip to a thrift store?” and Somewhat Likely to “Q9 How likely are you to buy clothing at a pop-up shop?”
3. Female responding \$11-20 to “Q4 How much money do you spend in one trip to a thrift store?” and Somewhat Likely to “Q9 How likely are you to buy clothing at a pop-up shop?”
4. Female responding \$31-40 to “Q4 How much money do you spend in one trip to a thrift store?” and Somewhat Likely to “Q9 How likely are you to buy clothing at a pop-up shop?”
5. Male responding \$11-20 to “Q4 How much money do you spend in one trip to a thrift store?” and Extremely Likely to “Q9 How likely are you to buy clothing at a pop-up shop?”

(Appendix A, Document A1)

The focus group was conducted on Microsoft Teams to bypass issues related to UA COVID-19 protocols – namely, hearing participants clearly while wearing face masks/coverings and accurately interpreting facial expressions. Additionally, an online meeting would allow for an easy recording and transcription process. Questions asked of the focus group participants were formulated based on results from the *Phase I: Contextualization* surveys and were intended to

inform *Phase IV: Experimentation*. The first section of questions was designed to understand how students view the thrifting experience and what items they seek in a typical visit. A key goal of this section was to define the core value that thrift shopping offers students. These questions allowed for a deepened understanding of their desires for the future Pop-Up Thrift Shop in *Phase IV: Experimentation*. The second section of questions was aimed at examining participants' perceptions on prices at various kinds of thrift stores, including traditional, curated, and pop-up. This inquiry began with a question regarding the thrift stores they most frequently visit, with the intent to lead into explanations as to why one store may be favored over another, revealing core desires of the demographic of creativist thrift shoppers. To conclude this section, participants were asked about the anticipated price difference between regular and curated thrift stores, with the intent behind this question being that responses could provide insight as to how GIA's *blue Boutique* prices would be received by creativist thrift shoppers if implemented in *Phase IV: Experimentation* (Appendix B, Document B1).

The third and final section of questions regarded opinions on a Pop-Up Thrift Shop. Participants were asked about their general experience with pop-up shops. Since these shops are a spontaneous, limited-time occurrence, this question was used to gauge initial interest and discover examples of pop-up shops to pull inspiration from, if applicable. Participants were then asked about their preference of inventory within these unique environments, revealing how their perspectives would deviate from those of traditional thrift store offerings. Then, to provoke further discussion, participants were asked about specific items they would like to see offered at a Pop-Up Thrift Shop, with the rationale being that the focus group members may mention unique categories of items that had not been considered. The final question of the focus group

addressed pricing preferences by asking how much participants were comfortable spending on a single visit (Appendix B, Document B1).

Phase IV: Experimentation

Prior research phases, which consisted largely of information gathering and contextualization efforts, culminated in *Phase IV: Experimentation* with an experimental Goodwill Industries of Akron (GIA) Pop-Up Thrift Shop hosted at The University of Akron (UA). Preparation for the Pop-Up Thrift Shop consisted of securing a date, time, and location for the event, obtaining and reviewing inventory, and determining pricing.

First, a relationship was established with the Coordinator of Scheduling and Events for the Student Union over a month in advance to reserve a date, time, and location for the event. Ultimately, the Pop-Up Thrift Shop was conducted on Tuesday, March 15, 2022, from 11:00am-1:30pm in the UA Jean Hower Taber Student Union (“Student Union”) Piano Lounge. The Student Union was selected as the event location as it is one of the most popular places on UA’s campus, consisting of numerous restaurants, the campus bookstore, various campus service offices, lounges, meeting/study rooms, and an event ballroom. Specifically, the Piano Lounge is located on the main floor between a popular coffee chain and campus eatery, both of which are subject to heavy foot traffic at all hours of the day, but especially at lunchtime – the time at which the Pop-Up Thrift Shop was strategically scheduled. Additionally, the Pop-Up Thrift Shop occurred before UA’s spring break, during which many students travel to a warmer climate for vacation. At this time, people may be looking for new clothing or pieces that are out-of-season in regular stores (such as seeking shorts, dresses, and tank tops for a visit to Florida despite Ohio’s snowy conditions) so they can look fashionable and match the vacation location’s weather.

Inventory selection for the Pop-Up Thrift Shop was undertaken by both GIA and Contributor Consultants independently, then reviewed jointly. First, GIA employees were directed to select pieces from the *blue* Boutique salesfloor and eBay listings that matched provided images, descriptions, and brands of items outlined in the “Pop-Up Shop Style Guide” and “blue Inventory Review” documents (Appendix C, Document C1-C2). These documents were created after a data review from *Phase I: Contextualization* surveys and the *Phase III: Focus Group* and *blue* Boutique visit. The intent was to assist GIA in identifying and selecting the trendy, unique, and popular styles likely to be purchased by college students. Second, Contributor Consultants utilized the same documents and personal judgment to select inventory from one of GIA’s traditional stores’ salesfloor. Lastly, to ensure that selected inventory from both GIA and Contributor Consultants could sell well among college students at UA, a final inventory review was conducted a few days before the Pop-Up Thrift Shop was to take place. Four of us who were available on the date of the inventory review examined each item for appropriate condition, style, and brand, then determined, through a vote on each piece, whether an item should be included in the final Pop-Up Thrift Shop inventory. In the event of a tie, items were accepted into the final inventory.

The responsibility of pricing of items to be sold at the Pop-Up Thrift Shop was left to GIA and their subject matter expertise, as minimal data from *Phase I: Contextualization* surveys and the *Phase III: Focus Group* did not allow us to confidently recommend a specific pricing strategy. Despite this, we summarized and provided all available data to GIA via the “Pop-Up Shop Pricing Data” document with the hopes it would assist them in developing a pricing structure (Appendix C, Document C3). Ultimately, GIA opted to utilize a mixed pricing structure for the Pop-Up Thrift Shop. Flat pricing, wherein all items of a like category were the same

price, was implemented for items originating from the traditional GIA store salesfloor, and a price-as-marked pricing structure was maintained for items from *blue* Boutique and eBay listings (Table 1).

Table 1
Pop-Up Shop Flat Pricing Structure

Item	Price
Short Sleeve T-Shirt	\$10.00
Long Sleeve Shirts	\$15.00
Long Sleeve T	\$12.00
Shorts	\$12.00
Long pants	\$16.00
Hoodies	\$14.00
Dresses	\$15.00
Coats	\$25.00

Hosting the Pop-Up Thrift Shop at the UA Student Union involved some significant logistical coordination. In the weeks leading up to the event, discussions surrounding transportation, product unloading, and parking were conducted and a plan was put in place for smooth arrival and departure. Representatives from GIA arranged to have the clothing inventory hung on three racks and the accessory/shoe inventory and promotional materials placed in a laundry cart then transported via a company box truck. All items were able to be easily loaded and unloaded at the Student Union deliveries dock. From there, the building's freight elevator was utilized to bring these supplies to the second floor and were subsequently rolled into the Piano Lounge.

To increase interest, engagement, and sales at the Pop-Up Thrift Shop, the event was promoted and advertised in various ways leading up to its occurrence. First, 25 posters with the date and time of the event, the kinds of items visitors could expect to find, and relevant imagery were created and displayed across UA's campus (Appendix C, Image C3). Second, a publication in "ZipMail", a weekly UA email newsletter sent to all currently enrolled students, faculty, and

staff members, was visible for two weeks prior to the event (Appendix C, Image C4). Finally, Contributor Consultants leveraged personal correspondences, personal social media publications, and word-of-mouth initiatives among friends and acquaintances to build excitement for the Pop-Up Thrift Shop.

Regarding the actual setup of the Pop-Up Thrift Shop, it was oriented in a way which invited customers in to browse items located on the tables first, transition to examining clothing items on racks, and conclude their visit at checkout (Appendix C, Image C1). This layout optimized initial engagement with GIA promotional materials and provided increasing curiosity as customers progressed from shoes and accessories to clothing items. Additionally, a Goodwill-branded event sign was displayed near the edge of the Piano Lounge to catch the attention of students walking by (Appendix C, Image C2). At all times, at least one member of Contributor Consultants was standing near this sign to engage with and invite students to shop, utilizing attention-grabbing phrases such as “Do you have a minute to shop at our Pop-Up Thrift Shop?” and “Have you had the chance to browse our Pop-Up Thrift Shop?” paired with eye contact and a friendly gesture to the display. Once a customer verbally expressed interest and/or walked closer to the shop, the purpose of the Pop-Up Thrift Shop was briefly explained to them, they were invited to browse the inventory, and were encouraged to scan a QR code to take a survey about their experience. Beyond this initial engagement, customers were left to browse the Pop-Up Thrift Shop uninterrupted to allow for an unbiased shopping experience.

One piece of data regarding the methodology behind conducting *Phase IV: Experimentation* was the amount of labor hours utilized to prepare for and host the Pop-Up Thrift Shop. Since the research we conducted was experimental in nature, labor hours utilized for *Phase IV: Experimentation* and its preparation were considered “donated”. GIA estimated that

running the shop again would require at least 49 total labor hours: at least 32 labor hours to prepare for the Pop-Up Thrift Shop, one labor hour of driver time to transport the inventory, and at least 16 labor hours to host/operate the Pop-Up Thrift Shop (Nan McClenaghan, personal communication, March 16, 2022).

Results

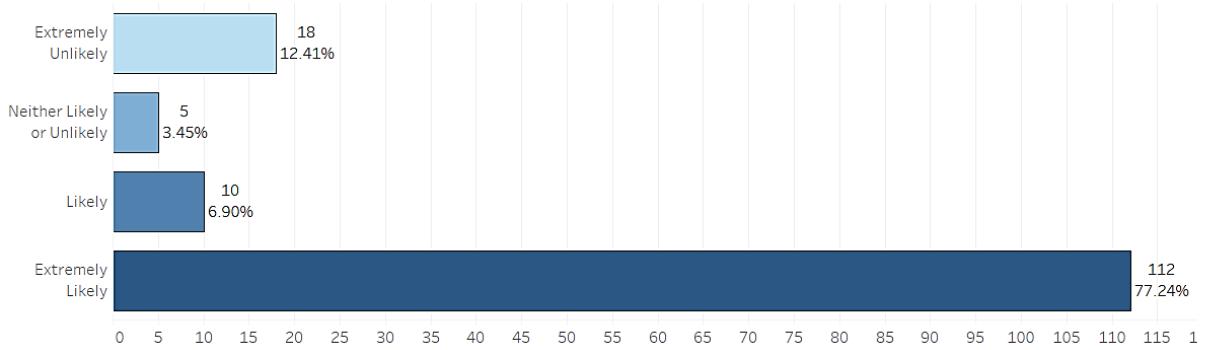
Phase I: Contextualization

The two surveys distributed to Goodwill Industries of Akron (GIA) shoppers and students at The University of Akron (UA) were open for responses for two weeks. Following survey closure, data was cleansed and visualized via Tableau to determine how results would inform later stage phases of primary research. GIA survey results were examined first. Most survey participants (84.14%) indicated they were Likely (6.90%) or Extremely Likely (77.24%) a shop at thrift stores (Graph 1). This was unsurprising considering gaining access to the survey was contingent upon scanning a QR code at the checkout of a thrift store or clicking on a link in a thrift store email newsletter. However, we were surprised by the amount of Extremely Unlikely responses (12.41%), but quickly realized that these likely came from individuals incorrectly clicking these choices, as many later indicated in free-response question answers.

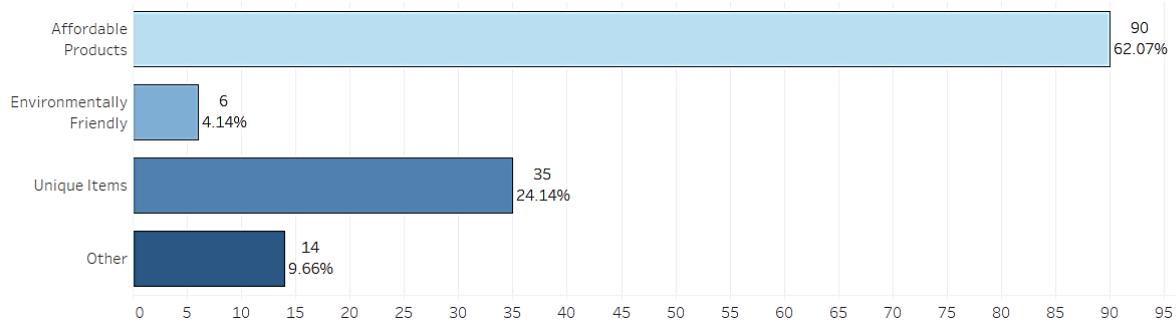
Affordable Products (62.07%) and Unique Items (24.14%) were the two most popular reasons reported reasons that survey participants thrift shop (Graph 2). This was also unsurprising as thrift shopping is commonly known to be cheaper than other options such as visiting a retail store or mall, and certainly offer unique items only limited by the items people are willing to donate. The lesser percentage of Unique Items responses proved to be noteworthy,

as we previously identified in our secondary research, the creativist thrift shoppers among younger people did not translate to the demographics of individuals taking this survey.

Graph 1
How likely are GIA shoppers to shop at thrift stores?



Graph 2
What is the biggest reason GIA shoppers thrift?



The 145 survey participants generated 310 total responses to the multi-select question “What do you buy at thrift stores?”. Results indicated that GIA shoppers overwhelmingly prefer to purchase Casual clothing (112 or 36.13%) over Business/Formal clothing (50 or 16.13%), Athletic clothing (53 or 17.10%), Vintage clothing (43 or 13.87%), and any additional categories

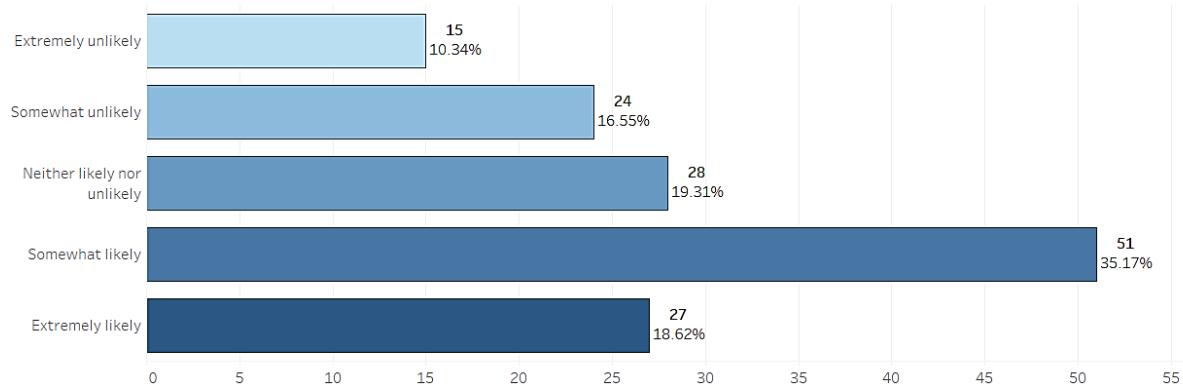
mentioned in the Other free response selection (52 or 16.77%) (Appendix A, Table A1).

Responses to the inquiry of brands sought out when thrift shopping were indeterminate; responses such as “Any”, “None in particular”, and “N/A” were noted, although various specific brands were also mentioned, such as Nike, Banana Republic, lululemon, and Levi’s.

Regarding survey participants’ familiarity with GIA’s *blue* Boutique, 68.28% indicated they were familiar with the store, while 31.72% reported they were not. In reviewing the likelihood of these survey participants to shop at *blue* versus a traditional thrift store, most (35.17%) stated they would be only Somewhat Likely to shop at *blue*, compared to most (80.69%) survey participants said they would be Extremely Likely to shop at a traditional thrift store (Graph 4; Graph 5).

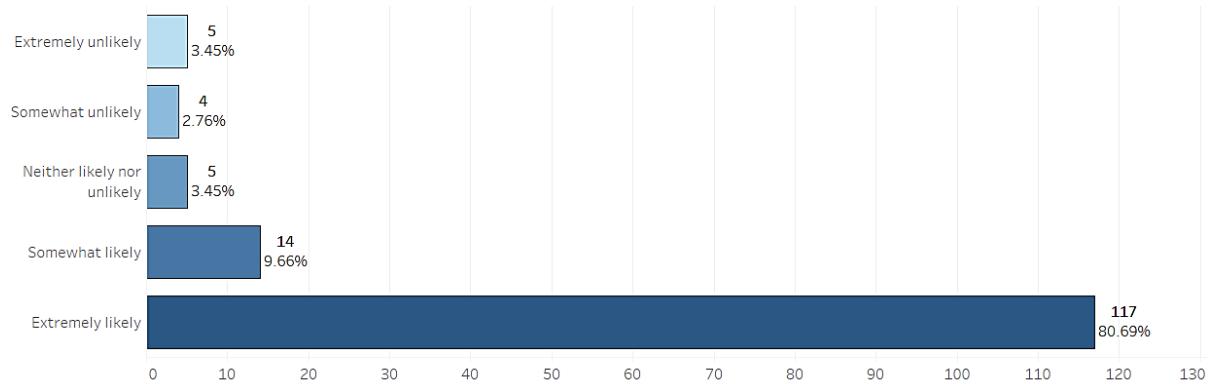
Graph 4

How likely are GIA shoppers to shop at blue?



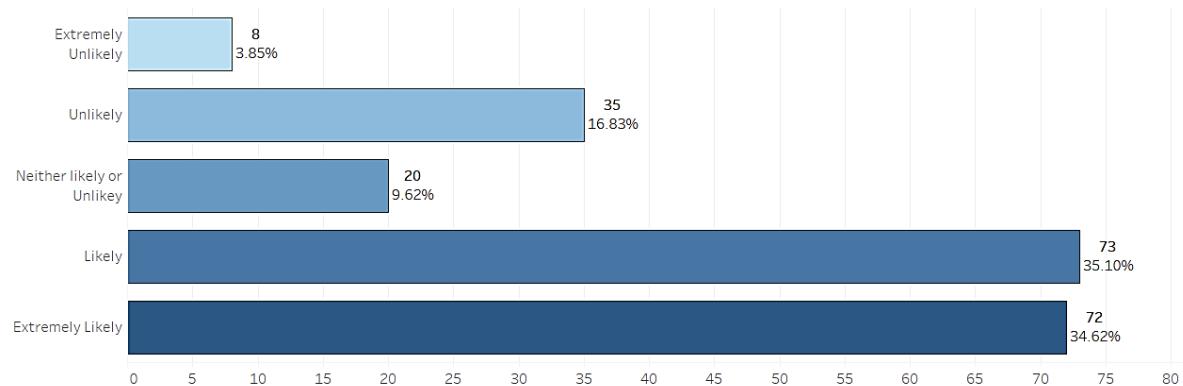
Graph 5

How likely are GIA shoppers to shop at a normal thrift store?

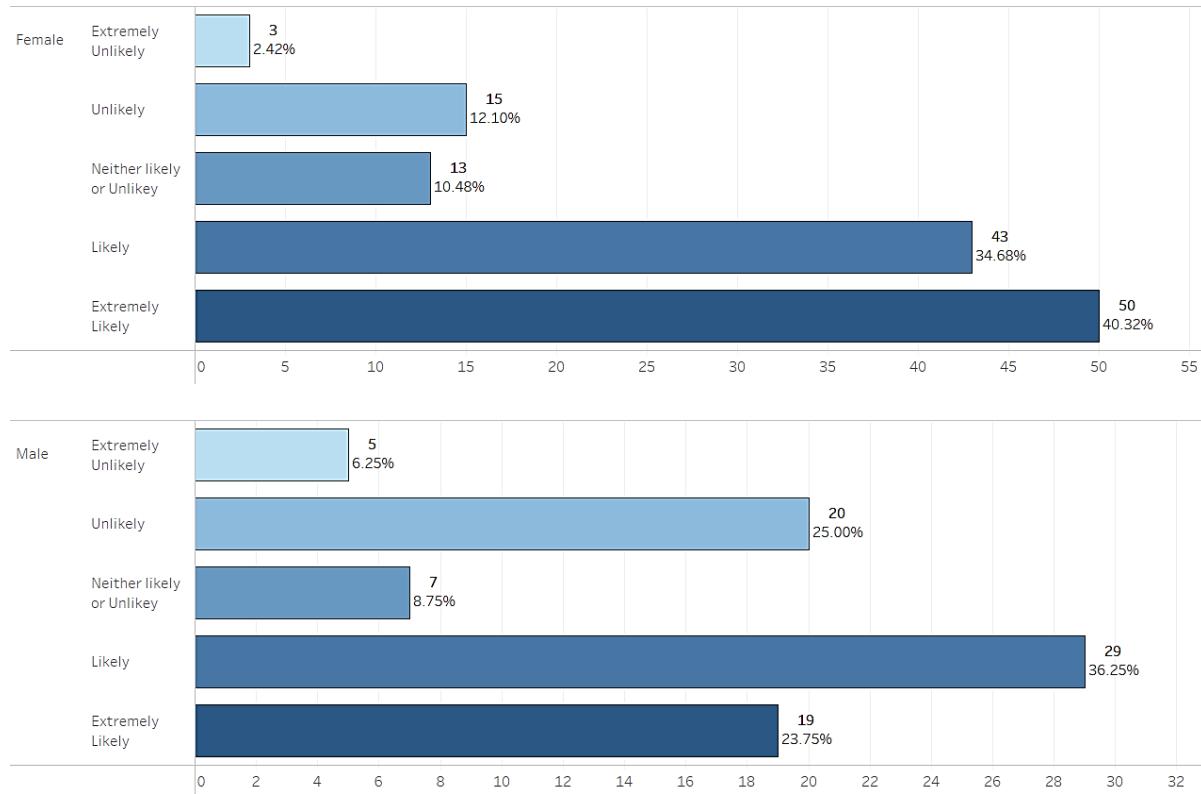


In examining questions related to pop-up shops, under half of respondents (46.89%) indicated they would be Extremely Likely (12.41%) or Somewhat Likely (34.48%) to make a purchase at a pop-up shop. While this data did not directly relate to garnering support for *Phase IV: Experimentation*, which would consist of hosting a Pop-Up Thrift Shop at a college campus, it affirmed that the focus of our future experimental Pop-Up Thrift Shop should target a different demographic than GIA survey participants, which we found were most frequently reported as ages 56-65 (38 or 29.92%) or 65+ (35 or 27.56%) (Appendix A, Table A1).

After realizing these results from the GIA shopper survey, we examined the UA student survey. Beginning with responses to the likelihood to shop at thrift stores, the UA student survey results were similar to the GIA survey, with a total of 69.72% of survey participants reporting they were Likely (35.10%) or Extremely Likely (34.62%) to do so (Graph 6).

Graph 6*How likely are UA students to shop at a thrift store?*

An important data point to note before analyzing the rest of the UA student survey responses is the survey participants' gender demographics. Fewer survey responses were gathered from males (80 or 39.22%) than females (124 or 60.87%) (Graph 7). This suggests either males may not be as likely to shop at a thrift store than females, or males may not be as likely to respond to research survey requests – but likely the former. Examining the results of the key question “How likely are you to shop at a thrift store?”, the frequency of responses by males differed from females (Appendix A, Document A1). Males’ most common response was Likely (36.25%), compared to females’ most common response being Extremely Likely (40.32%). The second-most common response of males was Unlikely (25.00%), whereas females’ was Likely (34.68%). And the third-most common response of males was Extremely Likely (23.75%), whereas females’ was Unlikely (12.10%) (Graph 7). This leads to the conclusion that males are, in fact, less likely shop at thrift stores than females. Moving forward with our research, this would be an important factor to consider when selecting inventory distributions for the Pop-Up Thrift Shop of *Phase IV: Experimentation*.

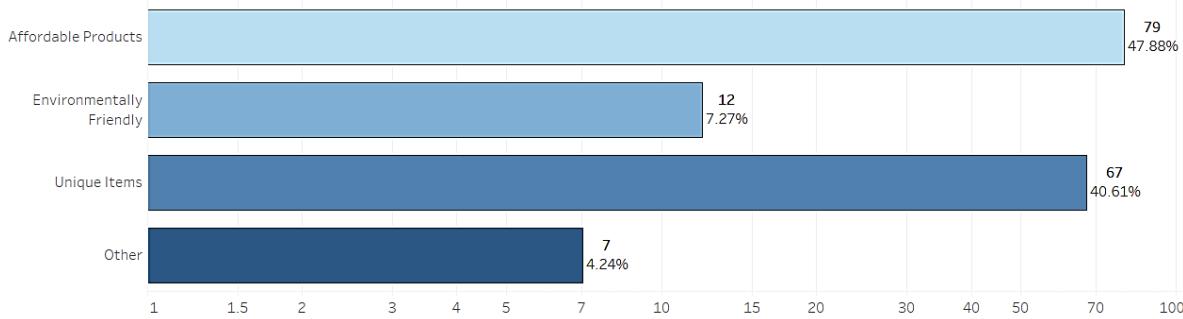
Graph 7*How likely are Male or Female UA students to shop at thrift stores?*

Next, regarding the biggest reasons UA students thrift shop, Affordable Products

(47.88%) and Unique Items (40.61%) were most often reported, notably at much less of a gap than the GIA survey (Graph 8). These results supported our secondary research findings that qualities of creativist thrift shoppers, being a focus on unique items, would be more prevalent among young people.

Graph 8

What is the biggest reason UA students thrift shop?



The 208 survey participants generated 367 total responses to the multi-select question “What do you buy at thrift stores?”. Results indicated that UA students prefer to purchase Casual clothing (131 or 35.69%) and Vintage clothing (93 or 25.34%) over Business/Formal clothing (69 or 18.80%), Athletic clothing (53 or 14.44%) and any other categories mentioned in the Other free response selection (21 or 5.72%) (Appendix A, Table A2). This allows us to infer that Vintage Clothing and Unique Items could be related; vintage clothing could provide a unique look that cannot be purchased at a traditional store and may satisfy the need for uniqueness that these survey participants have.

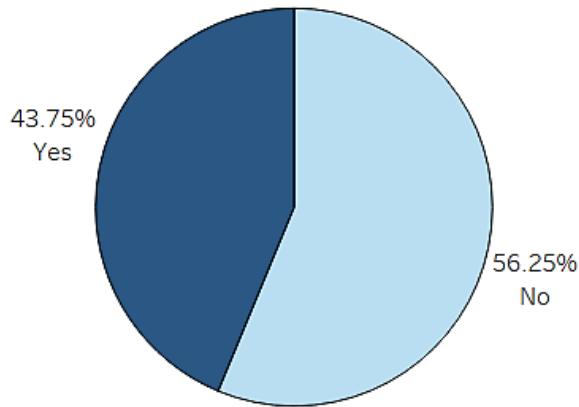
Like the GIA shopper survey, the results of the question which examined brands sought out when thrift shopping was unclear; common specific brand responses included Nike, Levi's, Champion, and American Eagle, but there were also a plethora of responses which stated brands were not as much of a factor as quality or style in selecting an item to purchase.

Regarding UA students' familiarity with the *blue* Boutique, 43.75% indicated they were familiar with the store, while 56.25% reported they were not (Graph 9). These results were surprising. Given the location of *blue* from 2015-2022 was less than a mile from UA's campus

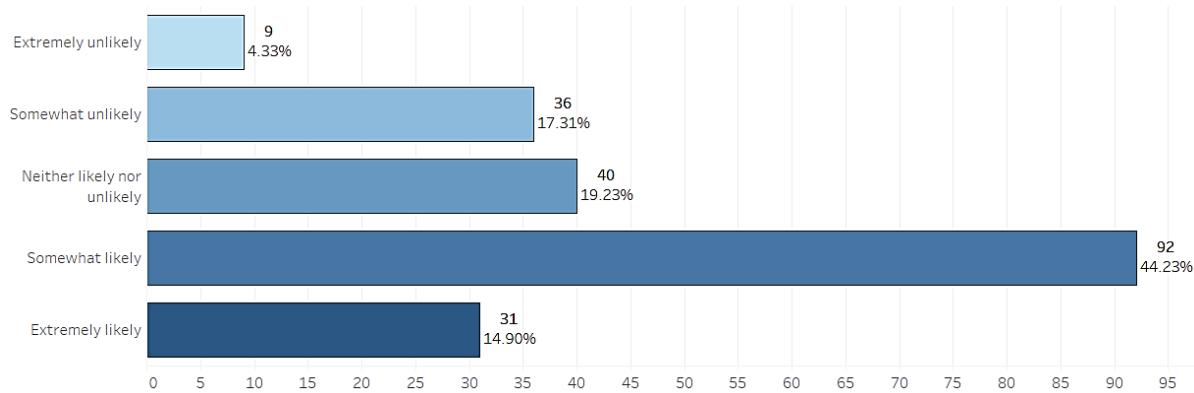
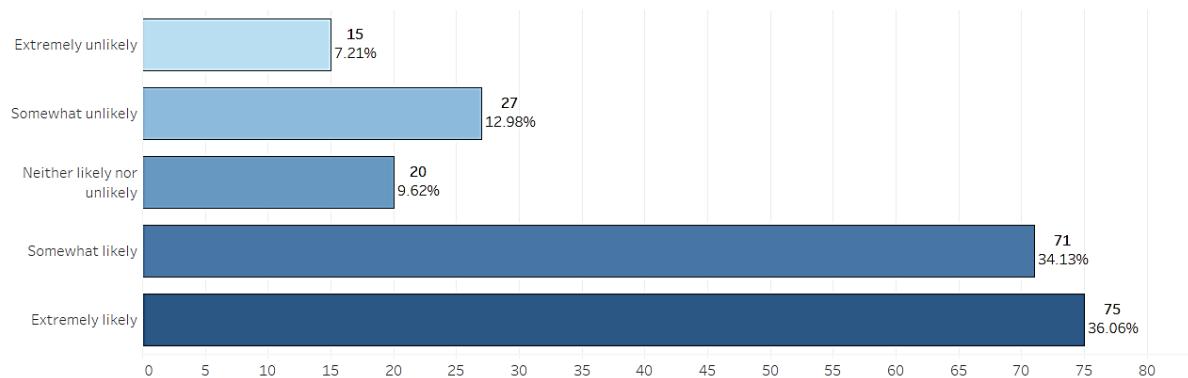
(as mentioned in Methodology, *Phase II: Stakeholder Discussions*), it would have been reasonable to assume that UA students were aware of *blue* simply because of its proximity to campus, but this proved to not be the case.

Graph 9

Are UA Students familiar with blue?



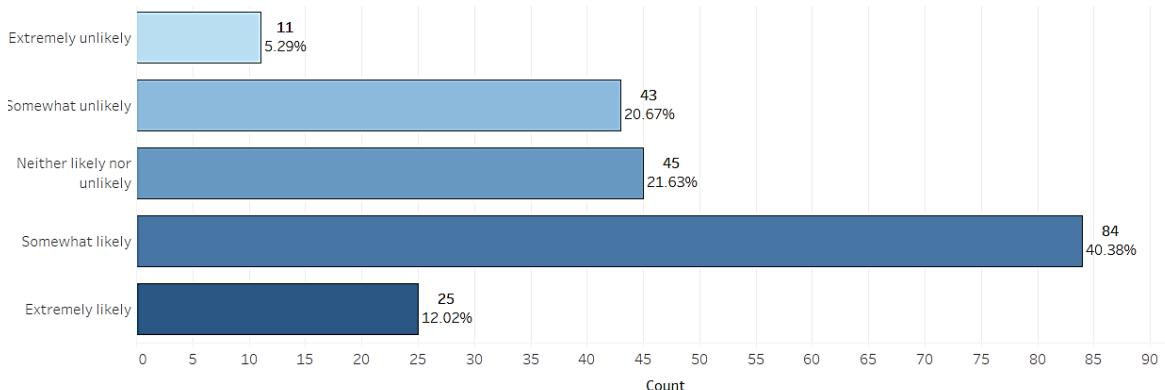
In analyzing responses to UA students survey participants' likelihood to shop at *blue* versus a traditional thrift store, 59.13% of survey participants indicated they would be Somewhat Likely (44.23%) or Extremely Likely (14.90%) to shop at *blue* compared to 70.19% of survey participants they would be Somewhat Likely (34.13%) or Extremely Likely (36.06%) to shop at a normal thrift store (Graph 10; Graph 11).

Graph 10*How likely are UA students to shop at blue?***Graph 11***How likely are UA student to shop at a normal thrift store?*

Now examining pop-up shop related questions, both students and GIA shoppers were asked about their likelihood to buy clothing at a pop-up shop after being provided the definition of a pop-up shop (Appendix A, Document A1; Appendix A, Document A2). The responses of most importance to us were students' since the experimental Pop-Up Thrift Shop of *Phase IV: Experimentation* would be held on a college campus and have a primary audience of said demographic. 52.40% of students responded positively to the inquiry about pop-up shops in general (Graph 12). The broader distribution of responses illustrated the uniqueness of survey participant opinions on this topic.

Graph 12

How likely are UA students to purchase clothing at a pop-up shop?



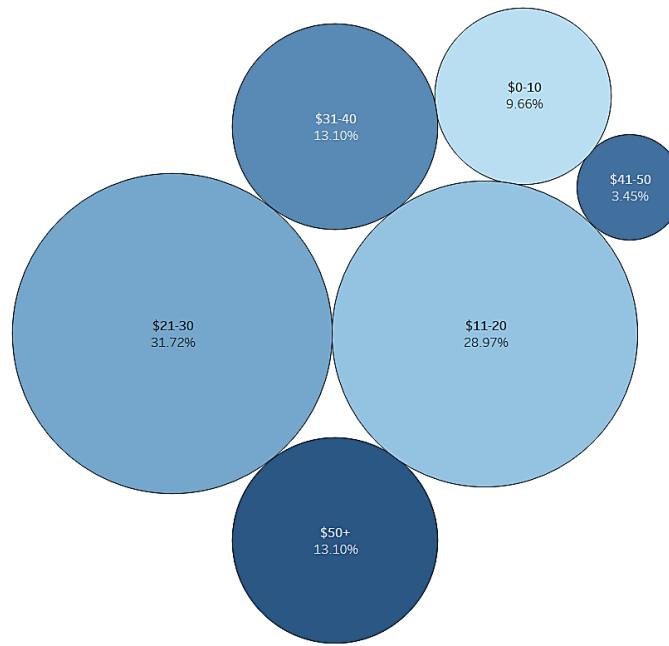
Finally, examining demographic data, unsurprisingly, an overwhelming majority (186 or 93.94%) of survey participants were in the age range of 18-25 years old. The majority (109 or 52.40%) of UA students surveyed were employed part-time, followed by full-time, unemployed, and intern employment statuses (Appendix A, Table A2). Both surveys had a higher number of females respond over males. Females accounted for 133 or 91.72% of GIA survey participants and 124 or 59.62% of UA student survey participants, versus Males accounting for 12 or 8.28% of GIA survey participants and 80 or 38.46% of UA student survey participants (Appendix A, Table A1; Table A2).

One difference worth highlighting between the two surveys was the stark contrast regarding recognition of GIA's *blue* Boutique. Most GIA survey participants were familiar with *blue*; however, most UA student survey participants were not. In both surveys most respondents said they would shop at *blue* after being informed of what *blue* was, showing that the demand for this specialty, curated thrift store exists but there may not be a large amount of awareness of its existence. This is an important conclusion to consider moving forward in research and recommendation. Another important data point was the average amount of money of shoppers would spend in one trip to thrift store. GIA survey participants' most popular ranges were \$21-30

(31.72%) and \$11-20 (28.97%) and UA student survey participants' most popular ranges were \$21-30 (40.00%) and \$11-20 (30.91%), showing that the price sensitivity of customers is the similar between both demographics (Graph 13; Graph 14). This later data from UA student survey participants will become an important factor to ensure the *Phase IV: Experimentation* Pop-Up Shop prices will be reasonable to customers. The results from these two surveys, especially the one addressing UA students, were utilized in the following *Phase II: Stakeholder Discussion* with GIA outlying the market for a Pop-Up Shop, in *Phase III: Focus Group* to gain further context as to what real creativist thrift shoppers (the target market for the future Pop-Up Thrift Shop) had to say about pricing, and the ultimate success of *Phase IV: Experimentation*.

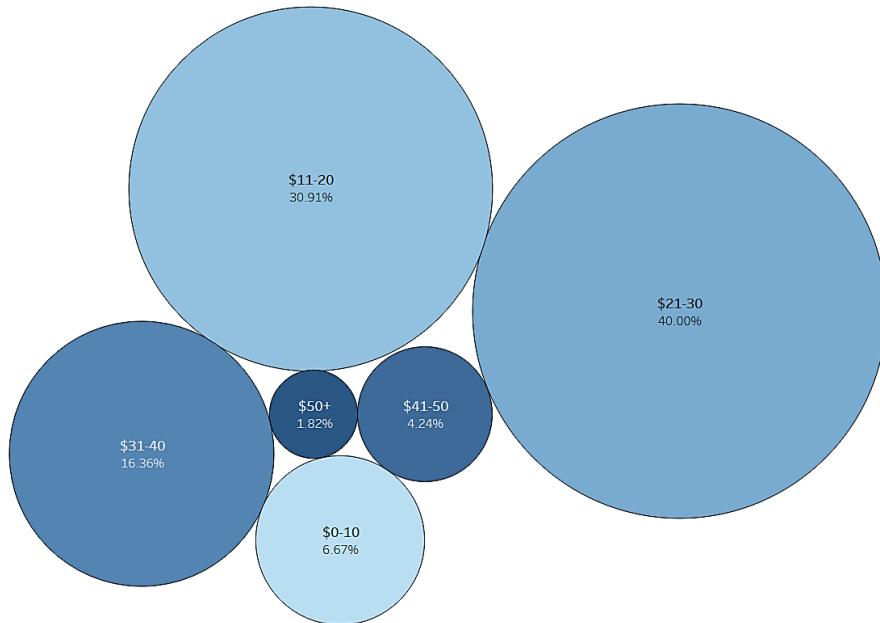
Graph 13

How much do GIA shoppers spend in one trip to a thrift store?



Graph 14

How much do UA students spend in one trip to a thrift store?

***Phase II: Stakeholder Discussions***

Although there were no tangible results or data obtained from engaging in the stakeholder discussions or visiting *blue*, the conversation we engaged in did validate some of our thoughts regarding *Phase IV: Experimentation*. The main thought that was supported was the idea of utilizing inventory from *blue* Boutique for *Phase IV: Experimentation*'s Pop-Up Thrift Shop. This would be a valid undertaking because *blue*'s inventory is typically in better condition and more sought after than the clothes at the other thrift shops due to their designation as belonging to a curated, specialty thrift shop. Additionally, after visiting *blue*, a good amount of clothing which matched descriptions and data points from *Phase I: Contextualization* student survey responses were found, allowing for the assumption that, as a whole, *blue*'s could provide appropriate inventory for the Pop-Up Thrift Shop. Naturally, items at *blue* were priced higher

than the traditional Goodwill stores, but this provided a point to consider when progressing through future research phases; would students accept a trade-off of increased prices for more unique, high-quality inventory? *Phase III: Focus Group* results addressed the theme behind this question and more.

Phase III: Focus Group

The focus group virtually gathered on February 25, 2022, to discuss thrifting preferences and needs. As the meeting opened, participants were given the opportunity to discuss their goals when thrifting. Group members agreed that their trips to thrift stores often had no goal in mind, and instead were recreational. The participants preferred exploration, though they named a few items that they would always drift to during their browsing. Some of these frequently visited items included T-shirts, jeans, and hoodies. When asked to name brands that they seek out, only a couple names emerged. Champion and Nike were cited as priority brands, though the third member of the group said she had preferred jeans brands but was unable to name them.

Participants were then asked about their preferred thrift stores and what unique value they provided. One member said that they simply prefer whichever is closest to them and that the convenience of proximity is the most important factor. The other two agreed that they prefer Village Discount. They stated that Village Discount had superior organization, often arranging clothes by color. The participants also enjoyed promotions held at that store like color of the day and student discounts on Sundays. When asked about the price difference they would expect between a thrift store and a curated thrift shop, they indicated that they would expect anywhere between a 100% or 400% price increase (Appendix C, Document C3). However, the group

members also indicated that they would prefer to go to a regular thrift store for the everyday clothes that they liked to look for.

When asked about their experience with pop-up shops, most of the participants admitted they had never attended one. The second participant mentioned that she visited some flea markets, but that was the extent of it. Moving on, the group members were then asked what kinds of items they would like to see at a pop-up shop. One participant specifically mentioned pop-up shops on college campuses and said she would hope to find casual wear and sports apparel related to the college. Another member said that she would hope to find more exciting and unique items, as she expects the pricing at a pop-up shop to be higher than usual. They also noted that access to quality shoes or jewelry may be an interesting option to find at pop-up shops.

As the focus group neared its close, the participants were asked a few extra questions to achieve a deeper understanding of their needs. When asked about quality concerns, the members noted that worries about the state of thrifted items may impact their trips or lead them to shop at a curated store if they are seeking a specific piece. They were optimistic about the quality of options at a pop-up shop, though one member voiced concerns over overcrowding and that it could turn them away. The focus group's final question involved willingness to spend at a pop-up shop, to which the participants responded they would be comfortable spending anywhere between \$40 and \$70 (Appendix C, Document C3).

To effectively combine data obtained from the focus group into a tangible outcome, the "Pop-Up Shop Style Guide", a document containing the genres, photos, descriptions, and brands of clothing and accessories students would likely purchase, was created with the intention to inform future inventory selection of the *Phase IV: Experimentation* Pop-Up Thrift Shop at The University of Akron (UA) (Appendix C, Document C1). This document was divided into three

categories of women's clothing, men's clothing, and accessories. Each category began with a general description of what a shopper in this category aims to find. For women's clothing, the following description was generated using common language from the focus group transcript: "Our demographic looks for causal, comfortable, every-day, slightly unique pieces which are of good condition and reasonably priced." Following this description, the broader category of women's clothing was divided into five subcategories of items most purchased by college student thrift shoppers: college apparel, jeans/pants, hoodies/crewnecks, t-shirts, and other items. The category of men's clothing was divided into five subcategories of college apparel, hoodies/crewnecks, pants, button-downs, and other apparel. Finally, the category of accessories was divided into three subcategories of jewelry, bags, and shoes. Each of these subcategories included a short description of the general style of items to look for, such as the jeans/pants category of women's clothing, which included, "should have minimal, tasteful distressing or be completely plain. Jeans that are high rise (have a high waistline that rises to or above the bellybutton), are straight-legged, and are black are all sought-after styles. Paperbag pants (pants with a built-in belt with scrunch/pleating at the waistline) are also a popular style." Finally, each subcategory contained "Best Brands" and "Best Styles", which included images of the logos of notable, popular brands to look for as well as images of key styles of clothing. These "Best Brands" and "Best Styles" were informed by the focus group participants' responses to brands they sought out at thrift stores as well as modeled by the visit to GIA's *blue* Boutique, which carries more popular, high-quality brands than a traditional GIA thrift store.

Phase IV: Experimentation

Results obtained from the Pop-Up Thrift Shop include objective sales data and subjective survey results. First, regarding objective sales data, key metrics include net sales, total number of transactions, average sale amount, and total items sold, among others (Appendix C, Table C1). The Pop-Up Thrift Shop generated \$845.00 in net sales, had 38 total transactions with an average sale amount of \$22.27, and sold 56 items total. To evaluate whether these sales data points are comparable to traditional GIA operations, we obtained data from GIA on these corresponding metrics (Table 2).

Table 2

Comparative Results of Sales Data Between Pop-Up Thrift Shop, Traditional GIA Operations, and blue Boutique Operations

Metric	Pop-Up Thrift Shop	GIA Operations (Traditional)	GIA Operations (<i>blue</i> Boutique)
Net Sales	\$845.00	\$1,640-\$4,100	\$541.50
Number of Transactions	38	100-250	15
Average Sale Amount	\$22.27	\$16.40	\$36.10
Total Items Sold	56	311-778	21

However, multiple adjustments to these numbers are needed to accurately compare them. First, metrics from traditional GIA operations are indicative of a store being open an average of 10.57 hours a day, derived from headquartered store's Monday-Saturday hours of 9:00AM-8:00 PM, Sunday hours of 10:00AM-6:00PM, and the below equation.

$$\left(11 \text{ hours} * \frac{6}{7} \text{ days open}\right) + \left(8 \text{ hours} * \frac{1}{7} \text{ days open}\right) = 10.57 \text{ avg hours}$$

Second, the *blue* Boutique store is open an average of 8 hours a day, derived from Monday-Saturday hours being 10:00AM-6:00PM. Finally, the experimental Pop-Up Thrift Shop was open for 2.5 hours, derived from 11:00AM-1:30PM event time. To arrive at a metric-by-the-

hour analysis: Non-averaged column 2 data was divided by 2.5 to account for the number of hours the Pop-Up Thrift Shop was operating, non-averaged column 3 data was divided by 10.57 to account for the average hours a traditional GIA store is open for, and non-averaged column 4 data was divided by 8 to account for the average hours the *blue* Boutique is open for (Table 3).

Table 3

Adjusted Hourly Comparative Results of Sales Data Between Pop-Up Thrift Shop, Traditional GIA Operations, and blue Boutique Operations

Metric	Pop-Up Thrift Shop	GIA Operations (Traditional)	GIA Operations (<i>blue</i> Boutique)
Net Sales per Hour	\$338	\$155.16-\$387.89	\$67.69
Number of Transactions per Hour	15.2	9.46-23.65	1.88
Average Sale Amount	\$22.27	\$16.40	\$36.10
Total Items Sold per Hour	22.4	29.42	2.63

After appropriate adjustments, conducting a comparative analysis becomes much easier, and the following become clear:

- **Net Sales per Hour.** The Pop-Up Thrift Shop outperformed *blue* by nearly 400% and fell within the 78th percentile of the range of Traditional GIA Operations.
- **Number of Transactions per Hour.** The Pop-Up Thrift Shop outperformed *blue* by 13.32 more by-the-hour average number of transactions (just over 700% higher) and fell within the 41st percentile of the range of by-the-hour average number of transactions of Traditional GIA Operations.
- **Average Sale Amount.** The Pop-Up Thrift Shop yielded a higher Average Sale Amount than Traditional GIA Operations by \$5.87 (approximately 35.8% higher) but failed to match *blue* by \$13.83 (approximately 38% lower).

- **Total Items Sold per Hour.** The Pop-Up Thrift Shop sold 750% or 19.77 more items per hour than *blue* but sold 24% or 7.02 less items per hour compared to Traditional GIA Operations.

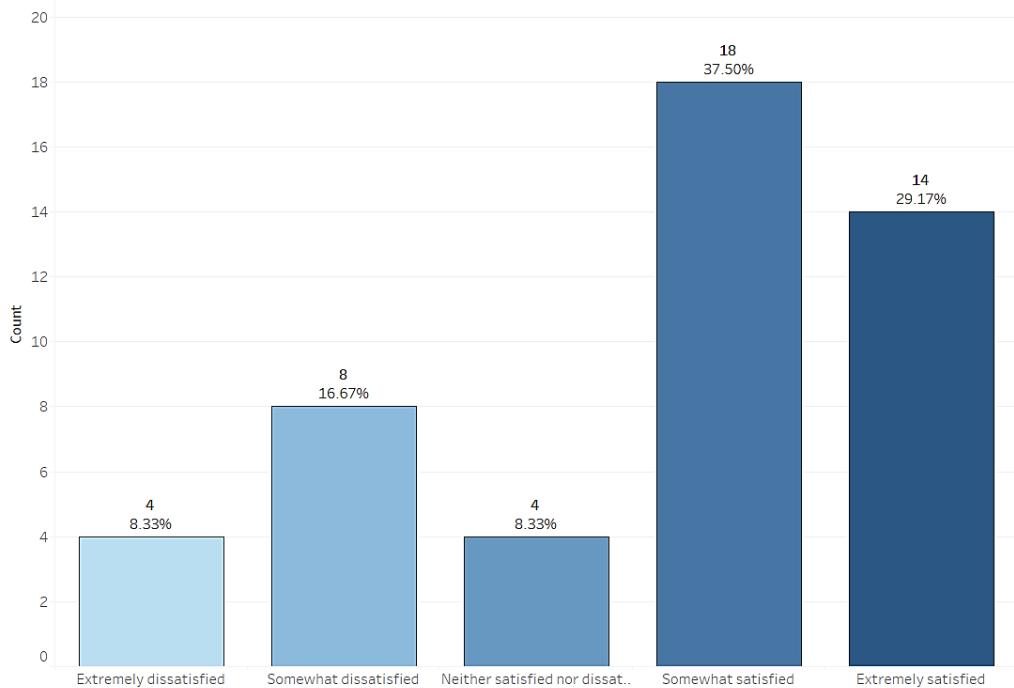
Second, regarding subjective survey results, a Pop-Up Shop Reviews survey was conducted to examine visitors' perspectives on the event and gauge support for a repeat event (Appendix C, Document C4). A total of 48 responses were gathered over the 36 hours the survey was open. Responses were incentivized by initial greeting/welcome at the actual event which prompted the scanning of a QR code and the opportunity to win a \$25 gift card. The survey consisted of six initial general satisfaction questions leveraging the traditional five-point psychometric Likert scale (Extremely Satisfied/Likely, Somewhat Satisfied/Likely, Neither Satisfied/Likely nor Dissatisfied/Unlikely, Somewhat Dissatisfied/Unlikely, and Extremely Dissatisfied/Unlikely), then utilized conditional logic to separate respondents who did make a purchase from those who did not to ask additional relevant questions of both parties. Of individuals who did purchase something, they were asked to report how many items they purchased, provide a list of the items purchased, and indicate how much money they spent total. Of individuals who did not purchase something, they were asked why they did not make a purchase and what kinds of items they would consider purchasing in the future. Finally, both parties were asked to provide any additional comments, concerns, or suggestions and reported their demographic information.

Observing results of these questions provided insights as to what could be improved for future Pop-Up Thrift Shops. First, satisfaction with the selection of items available at the Pop-Up Shop was assessed and revealed a 66.67% positive response rate (Somewhat Satisfied and Extremely Satisfied) (Graph 14). Second, satisfaction with the pricing of items was examined,

but revealed no pattern in responses. 35.41% of people reported dissatisfaction (Somewhat Dissatisfied and Extremely Dissatisfied), 43.75% reported satisfaction (Somewhat Satisfied and Extremely Satisfied), and many (20.83%) reported they were Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied (Graph 15). This prompted us to look at the open-ended responses to “Why did you not make a purchase at the Pop-Up Shop?”, which revealed comments such as “Too expensive”, “I didn’t see anything I really needed for the prices”, and “The prices were the same cost of new clothes so I’d rather get new clothes”. One eye-opening response was, “While the prices were less than retail, I can get 2-3 items of the same quality for the cost of 1 from this shop by going to thrift stores I know. I also heard from someone else that they find things for better prices at the actual goodwill store.” This led us to realize that the pricing structure detailed in *Phase IV: Methodology* created by GIA could be improved.

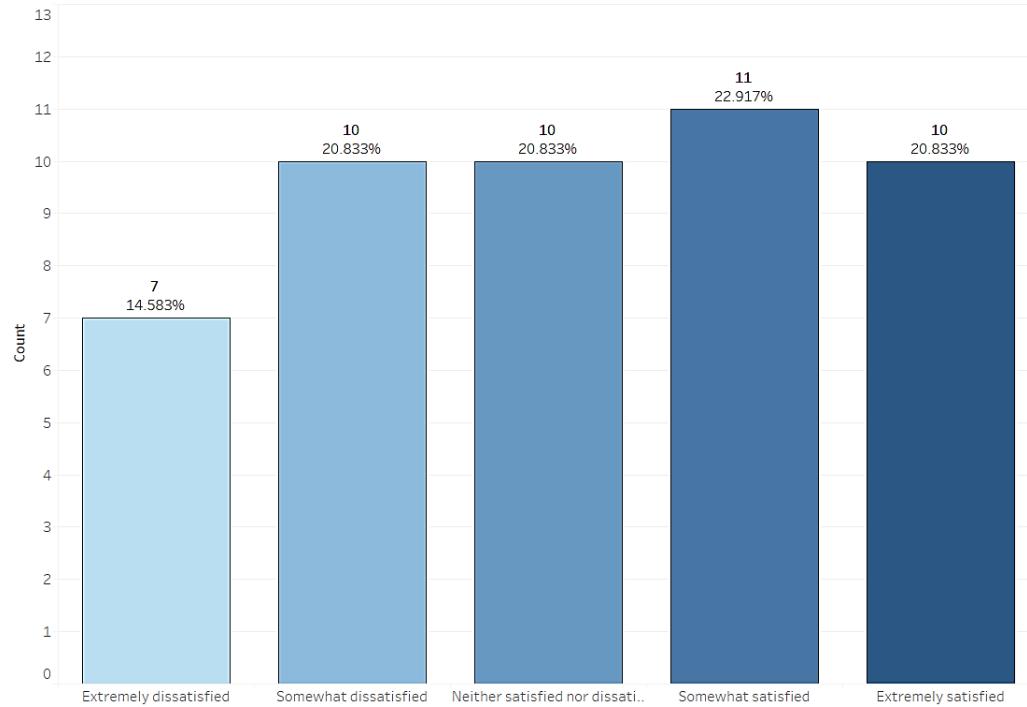
Graph 14

How satisfied were shoppers with the selection of items available for purchase at the Pop-Up Thrift Shop?



Graph 15

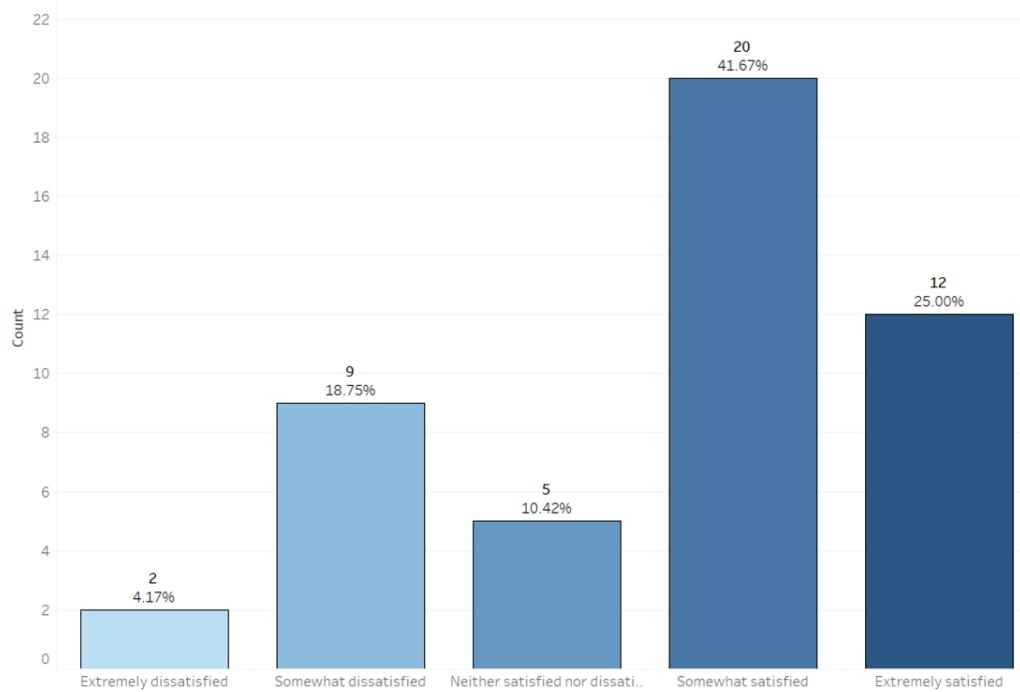
How satisfied were shoppers with the pricing of the products at the Pop-Up Thrift Shop?



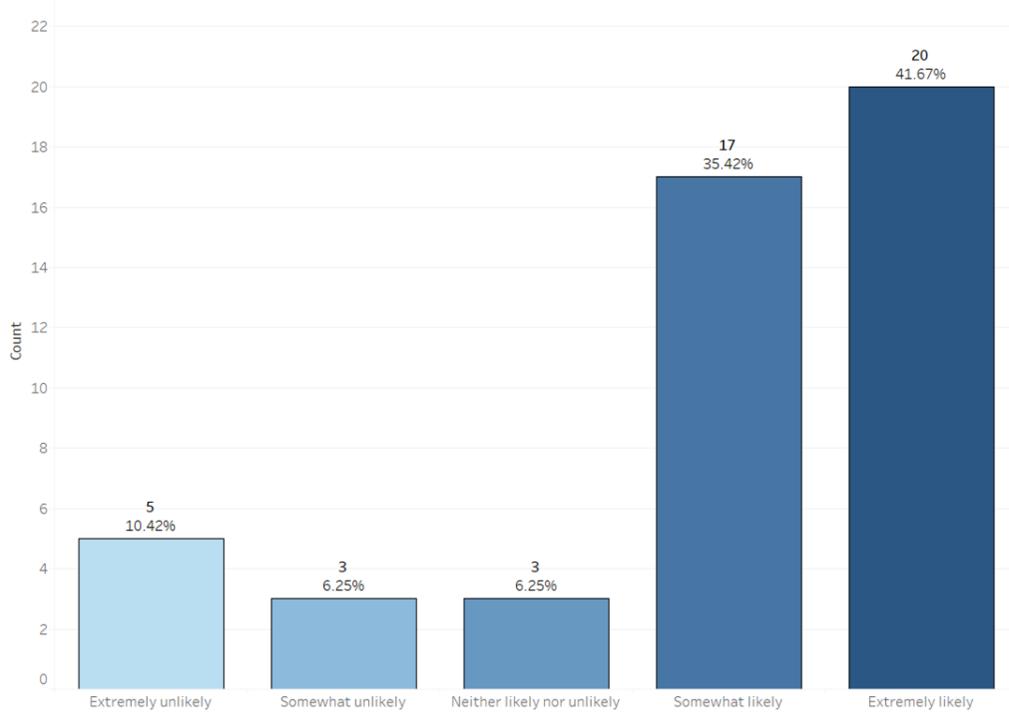
Finally, the two most important questions we wanted to examine were overall satisfaction with the Pop-Up Thrift Shop and how likely survey respondents would be to shop at a similar offering again. Results from both questions were promising. Most (66.67%) stated that they were Somewhat Satisfied (41.67%) or Extremely Satisfied (25.00%) by the Pop-Up Thrift Shop as a whole. The two most popular responses to the likelihood to shop at a GIA Pop-Up Thrift Shop again were Extremely Likely (41.67%) and Somewhat Likely (35.42%) (Graph 16; Graph 17). Ultimately, these results revealed to us that besides the pricing of items, the experimental Pop-Up Thrift Shop was relatively well-received, although there is room to improve the number of Extremely Satisfied responses to overall satisfaction. Thus, future recommendations were aimed at increasing this percentage.

Graph 16

Overall, how satisfied were shoppers with the Pop-Up Thrift Shop?

**Graph 17**

How likely are shoppers to revisit a GIA Pop-Up Thrift Shop in the future?



One final detail and opportunity for improvement worth highlighting originated from questions with free-response options. We received a significant amount of feedback from respondents that the Pop-Up Thrift Shop did not contain items in their sizes. Responses such as “I didn’t find anything I wanted or that was in my size”, “I’m probably what you would consider a plus sized gal, and I didn’t see anything that would have fit me”, and “I didn’t find something in my size but there were several cute items” were noted. Unfortunately, this was not something that we thought to address in the phases in advance of the experiment. However, one respondent got to the root of this issue by stating: “There aren’t ever really any plus size options at thrift stores.” Indeed, selection of items for the Pop-Up Thrift Shop was limited only by the items people were willing to donate to GIA that appeared at *blue* and one traditional store’s salesfloor.

Discussion

Limitations of Research

Most of the limitations of this study came from *Phase III: Focus Group* and *Phase IV: Experimentation*. First, the focus group experienced limitations largely due to actual versus expected attendance and the medium which it was conducted. Regarding attendance, five participants were identified and confirmed would be participating in the focus group, however, only three out of the five participants arrived at the virtual focus group despite multiple attempts to contact those absent. Ultimately, we moved forward with the three participants who were present. Having two missing individuals led to a narrower perspective on topics discussed and prevented the group from reaching its fullest potential. Regarding the medium the focus group was conducted through, the group’s inherent ability to discuss virtually via Microsoft Teams was somewhat unnatural. The group quickly fell into a pattern of speaking one by one in the same

order rather than having a more dynamic conversation as originally intended and is characteristic of a focus group. As a result, the focus group did not have the free flow of ideas, lacked constructive disagreements, and overall was not extremely engaged.

Second, the limitations of *Phase IV: Experimentation* Pop-Up Thrift Shop included not having enough time to select a greater selection of items, failing to consider size distributions for the shop's intended demographic prior to hosting the shop, not obtaining foot-traffic data, and a small sample size of the Pop-Up Thrift Shop Reviews survey. Regarding a lack of time to select items, a few days before the Pop-Up Thrift Shop was to be hosted, Goodwill Industries of Akron (GIA) allowed us 50 minutes to navigate the salesfloor of their headquarter store before operations opened to the public to pull items which could be appropriate for the Pop-Up Thrift Shop based on our survey data, focus group research, and results documents such as the "Pop-Up Shop Style Guide" (Appendix C, Document C1). A greater amount of time would have been preferred, as the store was quite large and not every section was able to be examined thoroughly. More appropriate selections could have been made, including finding more unique items, pieces in better condition, and brand-name offerings if more time was permitted. Another limitation was that research was not conducted on clothing size distributions appropriate for the creativist thrift shopper demographic, resulting in some constructive comments in the previously discussed in "Results" of *Phase IV: Experimentation*. Data of this kind could have been collected via *Phase I: Contextualization* survey questions and/or in *Phase III: Focus Group* inquiries, however, sometimes individuals react negatively when asked to reveal their clothing size(s) and asking this or similar questions could have been received as invasive, inappropriate, or irrelevant, therefore discouraging participants' engagement in or commitment to future research. Even if this data were obtained, the actual collection of items that aligned with these sizes would have likely been

limited. Particularly, “plus-size” clothing is not as common as “standard-size” clothing in general retail environments, so naturally, pieces available at a traditional GIA store or even a specialty, curated location such as *blue* would likely have a similarly poor or even worse selection, as GIA is limited to selling pieces from the donations they receive. On another note, one piece of data that would have been beneficial to collect in hindsight was foot-traffic of shoppers at the Pop-Up Thrift Shop. Obtaining the count of individuals which visited the shop could have allowed for more analysis on total reach, visitors per hour, and other metrics. Finally, the Pop-Up Thrift Shop reviews survey only garnered 48 responses. It would have been beneficial to have a larger response rate which better reflected the foot-traffic that the Pop-Up Thrift Shop received, as it was certainly more than 48 people.

Client Recommendations

Regularly hosting Pop-Up Thrift Shops and subsequently turning these operations into a business unit will allow Goodwill Industries of Akron (GIA) to increase revenues to support their enhanced transportation support initiatives. As previously discussed, the experimental Pop-Up Thrift shop of *Phase IV: Experimentation* yielded \$845.00 in net sales in 2.5 hours (Appendix C, Table CA). This, it is not unreasonable to assume that net sales could reach into the thousands of dollars for each Pop-Up Thrift Shop conducted in the future, especially if the following recommendations are enacted:

1. **Continue to host Pop-Up Thrift Shops at The University of Akron (UA) and new locations.** Due to the events of *Phase IV: Experimentation*, Contributor Consultants has already established a relationship with the Coordinator of Scheduling and Events for the UA Student Union on behalf of GIA, so reaching out to this individual to

schedule the shop would be simple due to an existing familiarity with how the experimental Pop-Up Thrift Shop operated and the assistance Contributor Consultants and GIA needed to conduct it. It would be smart to host another Pop-Up Thrift Shop at UA since it was received well with 77.09% of survey participants reporting that they would be Somewhat Likely or Extremely Likely to shop at a GIA Pop-Up Thrift Shop in the future, as mentioned in “Results” of *Phase IV: Experimentation*.

However, it would be beneficial for GIA to explore other locations to host a Pop-Up Thrift Shop as well. Suggestions include another local post-secondary institution such as Kent State University or The University of Mount Union, nearby malls, or at seasonal/themed events in nearby communities. Specifically of note regarding expanding this business unit to other colleges and universities: these locations will likely contain a concentration of the ideal creativist thrift shopper demographic the Pop-Up Thrift Shops should be marketed to. To enhance a Pop-Up Thrift Shop on a college campus, the host institution’s campus event calendar can be leveraged to theme Pop-Up Thrift Shop inventory offerings – for example, displaying business and professional dress before a campus-wide career fair at a local institution.

2. **Revise pricing.** As previously mentioned in “Results” for *Phase IV: Experimentation*, one of the largest constructive comments of the Pop-Up Thrift Shop Reviews survey was that items were too expensive. We suggest a decrease in the flat pricing structure detailed in Table 1 of “Methodology” *Phase IV: Experimentation* by at least 50% to ensure that most items for sale are not more than double the price they would be found at a traditional GIA store, except in the case of luxury or designer items originating from *blue*. Additionally, we recommend that items above \$50 not be

included at future Pop-Up Thrift Shops, as this is outside of the maximum range of reported by participants of *Phase III: Focus Group* and made up only 1.82% of student responses in the *Phase I: Contextualization* surveys (Graph 14).

3. Reduce labor hours required for preparation and operation of the Pop-Up

Thrift Shop. As mentioned in “Methodology” *Phase IV: Experimentation*, GIA estimated that conducting the Pop-Up Thrift Shop took around 49 labor hours, composed of at least 32 hours of preparation, one hour of driver time to transport inventory, and at least 16 hours of staffing. However, we propose that conducting future Pop-Up Thrift Shops would take only 20-25 labor hours. The one hour of driver time to transport inventory to the Pop-Up Thrift Shop location could not be reduced, the preparation and staffing time could. Although 32 hours of preparation may have been accurate for the experimental Pop-Up Thrift Shop due to Contributor Consultants and GIA working extensively to prepare for the event, much of the work completed as part of this initiative can now be thought of as sunk costs/labor. In other words, items that took a large amount of time such conducting multiple meetings to align on expectations, sending emails to determine the nature of inventory selection, and composing reference documents were simply a result of the nature of the experiment’s first-time implementation that would not repeat in any future. Thus, we conservatively estimate 10-12 total labor hours of preparation to conduct future Pop-Up Thrift Shops, broken down into the following components: 2 hours for logistical or administrative operations, 2-4 hours to pull and review inventory from *blue Boutique*, 2-4 hours to pull and review inventory from traditional GIA store(s), 0-2 hours to organize inventory onto transportable carriers. Regarding reducing the 16

hours of staffing for the Pop-Up Thrift Shop, we recommend 3-4 employees work each Pop-Up Thrift Shop (one employee dedicated to checkout operations and the remaining acting as sales associates to assist with loading/unloading inventory and assisting customers). Using the experimental Pop-Up Thrift Shop hours as standard (3 hours composed of 2.5 total operational hours and 0.5 loading/unloading hours), this yields between 9-12 total hours of staffing to conduct future Pop-Up Thrift Shops.

Another suggestion which could further reduce the labor hours utilized for conducting a Pop-Up Thrift Shop includes implementing an inventory rotation system, wherein leftover inventory from one Pop-Up Thrift Shop could be utilized for the next Pop-Up Thrift Shop, remaining on dedicated inventory. This would ease additional labor counts because the pulling and packing it of inventory would not be as frequent; instead, replacement of inventory would occur.

4. **Strive for an inventory with demographically accurate size distributions.** As previously mentioned in “Results” for *Phase IV: Experimentation* and “Limitations of Research”, some Pop-Up Thrift Shop survey participants reported a lack of items in

their size, assumed to be larger “plus” sizes. To improve future Pop-Up Thrift Shops, we recommend that GIA conduct research on a typical creativist thrift shopper’s clothing sizes and model the results for the sizes included in inventory of their Pop-Up Thrift Shops to ensure that shoppers have access to clothing which will fit them.

5. **Consider seasonality implications of inventory.** As with any retail clothing operation, the season and style of inventory should be considered. For example, winter coats and boots should not be sold at a Pop-Up Thrift Shop in May, and shorts and tank tops should not be sold at a Pop-Up Thrift Shop in November. We

recommend matching the majority of Pop-Up Thrift Shop inventory to the current season while being aware of opportunistic exceptions (such as our experimental Pop-Up Thrift Shop having some summer-related inventory due to its occurrence the week before spring break).

6. **Utilize Pop-Up Shop's marketing potential.** Pop-up shops should not be viewed solely as a retail channel, as they create value outside of direct revenue (Marciniak & Budnarowska, 2009). When utilized to their fullest extent, they can be marketing opportunities. *blue* is a great tool to connect thrift shoppers with high quality items and would benefit from more exposure. This exposure can be attained through advertising at GIA's Pop-Up Thrift Shops. Featuring the name *blue* at these events and providing material to guide customers to the store can increase traffic and revenue beyond the hours of Pop-Up Thrift Shop operation. These events can also be used to promote GIA social media accounts, featuring handles on banners & supplementary materials. Promotions during Pop-Up Thrift Shops could also further benefit these opportunities, such as running a small giveaway for new followers on social media or offering coupons for *blue* to those who visit the Pop-Up Thrift Shop. Guiding people to the GIA social media accounts will also help advertise future Pop-Up Thrift Shops, as each event can be promoted ahead of time on these accounts. Social media can also be utilized during Pop-Up Thrift Shops, where attendees could be encouraged to post about the event for special rewards, like the aforementioned giveaway. These marketing techniques will allow Pop-Up Thrift Shops to elevate GIA's business, introducing creativists to a perfect thrifting experience for them.

Financial Results

Although preliminary financial results of the experimental Pop-Up Thrift Shop have been examined, an overarching evaluation of how implementing this initiative as a business unit for Goodwill Industries of Akron (GIA) has not yet been considered. To arrive at a comprehensive business recommendation, a pro-forma income statement was constructed utilizing GIA's previous five years (2017-2021) income statements (Appendix D, Document D1). Projecting pro-forma statements are important to gauge the overall viability of a business unit because they provide projections of revenues, expenses, and other relevant line-items and can be used to draw conclusions about said business unit. As is such, expected revenues within the proposed Pop-Up Thrift Shop business unit along with associated expenses were calculated. Baseline revenue for GIA, excluding any suggested Pop-Up Thrift Shop implementation, was forecasted to grow at 3.86%, the average year-over-year revenue growth for years previous. Thus, expenses and specific line items within the income statement were projected as a percent of revenues and that percentage was calculated based on the average percentage of revenue of the line for the previous five years. We found that Pop-Up Thrift Shops are financially viable with a profit margin ranging from 38-46%.

From these initial explorations, we conducted further analysis on the profit to be expected from Pop-Up Thrift Shops in three scenarios: one with a realistic frequency, one with more frequent implementation, and one which would provide the revenue GIA originally desired – \$250,000. Creating these estimates involved a number of assumptions, largely based on *Phase IV: Experimentation's* Pop-Up Thrift Shop test-run in The University of Akron (UA) Student Union. We assumed each shop would run three hours, up from our experiment which was 2.5 hours, and each hour was assumed to bring in the experiment's per hour revenue of \$338, or,

when adjusted for the new hourly duration, \$1,014 per shop. On the expense side, we made the assumptions that GIA would adopt point three of the “Client Recommendations” section and reduce labor hours to 25 per shop. We also assumed a fair average wage for workers at \$15.00 per hour. We also incorporated between 10-25% (10% in Scenario 1, 15% in Scenario 2, 25% in Scenario 3) increases in GIA’s advertising and marketing budget from the existing estimate of \$70,000 a year, since Pop-Up Thrift Shops as a new business unit would require additional marketing and promotion to garner support and visitors. We also assume a flat \$100 registration fee expense to account for future shops not hosted at the UA Student Union (this venue does not have any hosting/registration fee unless an event were to be over four hours long). However, it is important to note that these assumptions are quite conservative. It would not be unreasonable to assume that, should GIA implement all six items outlined in “Client Recommendations”, the Pop-Up Thrift Shop’s per hour revenue could increase beyond *Phase IV: Experimentation*’s trial-run Pop-Up Thrift Shop of \$338 to \$500 or more, which would yield greater profits (as items suggested in “Client Recommendations” would increase revenues without affecting expenses) and allow for less shops to be hosted per year to achieve desired revenues. But, moving forward with these initial assumptions, a matrix of three scenarios was created to examine how the frequency of hosting Pop-Up Thrift Shops would affect revenues, expenses, profit, and total GIA profit margin (Table 4).

Table 4
Pop-Up Thrift Shop Implementation in Three Scenarios

	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
Shops per Year	46	90	250
Revenues	\$46,644.00	\$91,260.00	\$253,500.00
Expenses	\$28,850.00	\$53,250.00	\$136,250.00
Profit	\$17,794.00	\$38,010.00	\$117,250.00
GIA Total Profit Margin*	2.96%	3.03%	3.30%

*As-Is = 2.89%

Scenario 1 is the easiest to implement and therefore the most reasonable one for GIA to adopt. Running 46 shops in a year, roughly once a week, would not be too burdensome while maintaining the infrequent aspect that characterizes a pop-up shop. This would yield revenues of \$46,644.00 and expenses of \$28,850.00 for a profit of \$17,794.00. Scenario 2's outcomes are essentially double Scenario 1, resulting from hosting 90 Pop-Up Thrift Shops each year. This is also a viable option but would require a larger undertaking from GIA. Lastly, Scenario 3 details the frequency of Pop-Up Thrift Shops required to reach \$250,000 in revenue. This, in short, is unrealistic to achieve. First, 250 shops in a year would mean averaging 5 shops per week during all times of the year, the frequency of which is in alignment with a traditional retail store. This would be unrealistic from a labor perspective since most of GIA's employees focus would be solely on this endeavor and less on their other operations. Plus, pop-up shops are inherently infrequent, surprise events, so having this many shops takes away from the essence of the shop and why it is so attractive to customers.

However, adopting Pop-Up Thrift Shops on any level bodes well for GIA from a financial and marketing perspective. GIA's existing net profit margin is 2.89%, however this can be increased the more Pop-Up Thrift Shops are held, showcasing the strong profitability of the business line which largely stems from low or nonexistent expenses outside of labor costs. Another financial benefit is that Pop-Up Thrift Shops have no large initial outlays, which also means that this proposal can start sooner than other business lines which may require significantly more time, money, and other resources to establish. The promotional opportunities of Pop-Up Thrift Shops allow for GIA to increase traffic to both their traditional and specialty operations, because Pop-Up Shops are, at their heart, a marketing tactic. When GIA hosts Pop-Up Thrift Shops in the future, they should focus on rerouting shoppers and creating a memorable

experience to draw brand loyalty. For example, if visitors to the Pop-Up Thrift Shop fall into the creativist thrift shopper demographic, wherein they are less concerned with the price of items and more so prioritize the uniqueness of the items, they can be directed to GIA's specialty operations such as the *blue* Boutique and eBay marketplace. If visitors to the Pop-Up Thrift Shop are looking for even more affordable options than what is offered and do not relate to the stylized nature of the Pop-Up Thrift Shop, they can be directed to traditional GIA stores. Additionally, establishing Pop-Up Thrift Shops in conjunction with a new social media marketing campaign can increase business benefits in a cyclical fashion; each Pop-Up Thrift Shop provides the opportunity to capture photos, videos, and testimonials of the experience, which could then be utilized in advertising for future Pop-Up Thrift Shops. In summary, the previous items were examples of key ideas to increase revenues beyond points detailed in "Client Recommendations". However, they cannot be numerically realized, and are therefore excluded from financial analysis.

Conclusion

Our research, completed for The Honors Project in Business Administration course at The University of Akron (UA) College of Business (CoB), examined the viability of regularly hosted Pop-Up Thrift Shops in increasing revenues for our client, Goodwill Industries of Akron (GIA). Through four phases of research – *Phase I: Contextualization*, *Phase II: Stakeholder Discussions*, *Phase III: Focus Group*, and *Phase IV: Experimentation* – we discovered the general and target market's existing perceptions regarding thrift shopping and pop-up shops through surveys, gained insight as to the existing specialty operations of our client and how those initiatives have been successful or not successful in increasing revenues through discussions with

key stakeholders, engaged directly with individuals of the target market to learn of their specific desires when thrift shopping and how that could translate to a Pop-Up Thrift Shop via a focus group, and hosted an experimental Pop-Up Thrift Shop to give our client an idea of how this business unit concept could realistically operate. In completing this research and reflecting on its results, six recommendations were enacted for the client to complete to optimize initial experimental results in the event they decide to move forward with this business proposal. Ultimately, however, after pro-forma statement generation and financial analysis, should the raw net sales of our experimental Pop-Up Thrift Shop be duplicated for each future Pop-Up Thrift Shop, a total of 250 Pop-Up Thrift Shops would have to be hosted each year to meet the goal of \$250,000 of sales to support our client's enhanced transportation initiative project. Hosting Pop-Up Thrift Shops at such frequency would result in customers losing the appeal of the limited-time, impulse-purchase, treasure-hunt allure of a pop-up shop, not to mention requiring a completely new business unit needing to be created with its own dedicated staff. The original concept for this proposal was that Pop-Up Thrift Shops could be conducted relatively infrequently, but still predictably, to boost revenues significantly. However, our results yielded different results, and we now recommend that our client couple the use of Pop-Up Thrift Shops with another supplemental business unit to achieve the sales goal they desire to support their new community support initiative.

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Appendix A

Phase 1: Contextualization

Document A1: Student Opinions on Thrifting Survey

Student Opinions on Thrifting

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. We are group of students completing an Honors Project in Business Administration at the University of Akron College of Business and are interested in hearing about your thrift store shopping habits.

Please fill out the survey in its entirety and include your email when prompted to have the chance to win a **\$25 Goodwill gift card!**

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Caitlin Croston at cec122@uakron.edu.

* Indicates a required question

Default Question Block

Q1 How likely are you to shop at thrift stores? *

- Extremely Unlikely (1)
- Unlikely (2)
- Neither likely or Unlikely (3)
- Likely (4)
- Extremely Likely (5)

CONDITIONAL LOGIC

If Q1 response = Extremely Unlikely (1), Unlikely (2), display "No Block". Otherwise, display "Yes Block" Rejoin at "Blue Block"

No Block

Q11 What are some reasons that you don't thrift shop? *

- Quality Concerns (1)
- Limited Choices (2)
- Other (3) _____

Q12 Would you consider shopping at thrift stores if the carried more in-style pieces? *

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Maybe (3)

Yes Block

Q2 What is the biggest reason that you shop at thrift stores? *

- Affordable Products (1)
- Environmentally Friendly (2)
- Unique Items (3)
- Other (4) _____

Q3 What do you buy at thrift stores? *

- Business/Formal Clothing (1)
- Athletic Clothing (2)
- Casual Clothing (3)
- Vintage Clothing (4)
- Other (5) _____

Q4 How much money do you spend in one trip to a thrift store? *

- \$0-10 (1)
- \$11-20 (2)
- \$21-30 (3)
- \$31-40 (4)
- \$41-50 (5)
- \$50+ (6)

Q5 What brands do you look for when thrift shopping?

Blue Block**Q6 Are you familiar with *blue*, A Goodwill Boutique? ***

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

blue, A Goodwill Boutique is a thrift store that features upscale clothing, jewelry, shoes and accessories at a fraction of retail prices.

Q7 How likely are you to shop at the following locations? *

	Extremely unlikely (1)	Somewhat unlikely (2)	Neither likely nor unlikely (3)	Somewhat likely (4)	Extremely likely (5)
Normal Thrift Store (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>blue</i> , A Goodwill Boutique (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Pop Up Shop Block

Q8 Do you prefer to stick to your shopping list or do you like to browse? *

- Shopping List (1)
- Some Browsing (2)
- Browse (3)

A Pop-up shop is a small, transportable store opened by a business that sells a selection of specially picked items for a short period of time at various locations.

Q9 How likely are you to buy clothing at a pop-up shop? *

- Extremely unlikely (1)
- Somewhat unlikely (2)
- Neither likely nor unlikely (3)
- Somewhat likely (4)
- Extremely likely (5)

Q10 Would you stop at a clothing pop-up shop on a college campus? *

- Yes (1)
- Maybe (2)
- No (3)

Start of Block: Demographic Block

Q13 What is your gender? *

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Non-binary / third gender (3)
- Prefer not to say (4)

Q14 What is your age? *

- Under 18 (7)
- 18-25 (1)
- 26-35 (2)
- 36-45 (3)
- 46-55 (4)
- 56-65 (5)
- 65+ (8)

Q15 What is your employment status? *

- Full-time (1)
- Part-time (2)
- Intern (3)
- Unemployed (4)

Q16 Please enter your email to qualify for the \$25 Goodwill gift card raffle.

Start of Block: Focus Group Block

Q17 Would you be interested in participating in a focus group for an additional \$25 Goodwill gift card? *

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Document A2: External Opinions on Thrifting Survey

External Goodwill Survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. We are group of students completing an Honors Project in Business Administration at the University of Akron and are interested in hearing about your thrift store shopping habits.

Please fill out the survey in its entirety and include your email when prompted to have the chance to win a **\$25 Goodwill gift card!**

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Caitlin Croston at cec122@uakron.edu.

* Indicates a required question

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q1 How likely are you to shop at thrift stores? *

- Extremely Unlikely (1)
- Unlikely (2)
- Neither Likely or Unlikely (3)
- Likely (4)
- Extremely Likely (5)

Q2 What is the biggest reason that you shop at thrift stores? *

- Affordable Products (1)
- Environmentally Friendly (2)
- Unique Items (3)
- Other (4) _____

Q3 What do you buy at thrift stores?

- Business/Formal Clothing (1)
- Athletic Clothing (2)
- Casual Clothing (3)
- Vintage Clothing (4)
- Other (5) _____

Q4 What brands do you look for when thrift shopping?

Q5 How much money do you spend in one trip to a thrift store? *

- \$0-10 (1)
- \$11-20 (2)
- \$21-30 (3)
- \$31-40 (4)
- \$41-50 (5)
- \$50+ (6)

Blue Block**Q6 Are you familiar with *blue*, A Goodwill Boutique? ***

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

blue, A Goodwill Boutique is a thrift store that features upscale clothing, jewelry, shoes and accessories at a fraction of retail prices.

Q7 How likely are you to shop at the following locations? *

	Extremely unlikely (1)	Somewhat unlikely (2)	Neither likely nor unlikely (3)	Somewhat likely (4)	Extremely likely (5)
Normal Thrift Store (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>blue</i> , A Goodwill Boutique (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Pop Up Shop Block**Q8 Do you prefer to stick to your shopping list or do you like to browse? ***

- Shopping List (1)
- Some Browsing (2)
- Browse (3)

A Pop-up shop is a small, transportable store opened by a business that sells a selection of specially picked items for a short period of time at various locations.

Q9 How likely are you to buy clothing at a pop-up shop? *

- Extremely unlikely (1)
- Somewhat unlikely (2)
- Neither likely nor unlikely (3)
- Somewhat likely (4)
- Extremely likely (5)

Start of Block: Demographic Block

Q10 What is your gender? *

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Non-binary / third gender (3)
- Prefer not to say (4)

Q11 What is your age? *

- Under 18 (7)
- 18-25 (1)
- 26-35 (2)
- 36-45 (3)
- 46-55 (4)
- 56-65 (5)
- 65+ (8)

Q12 What is your employment status? *

- Full-time (1)
- Part-time (2)
- Intern (3)
- Unemployed (4)

Q13 Please enter your email to qualify for the \$25 Goodwill gift card raffle.

Table A1: GIA Shopper Opinions on Thrifting Survey Results

<i>Goodwill Industries of Akron (GIA) Shopper Opinions on Thrifting Survey Results</i>		
	Extremely Unlikely	Unlikely
1 How likely are you to shop at thrift stores?	18	Unlikely
7.1 How likely are you to shop at the following locations? - Normal Thrift Store	5	Unlikely
How likely are you to shop at the following locations? - blue, A Goodwill	15	Unlikely
7.2 Boutique	11	Affordable Products
9 How likely are you to buy clothing at a pop-up shop?		Environmentally friendly
2 What is the biggest reason that you shop at thrift stores?	90	
3 What do you buy at thrift stores?		Business/Formal Clothing
5 How much money do you spend in one trip to a thrift store?	\$0-10	Athletic
8 Are you familiar with blue, A Goodwill Boutique?	14	\$11+
6 Do you prefer to stick to your shopping list or do you like to browse?	99	Some shopping list
10 What is your gender?	1	Female
11 What is your age?	12	Under 18
12 What is your employment status?	0	Full-time
	60	Part-time

THE VIABILITY OF POP-UP THRIFT SHOPS

		Unlikely	Neither Likely nor Unlikely	Likely	Extremely Likely
1		0	5	10	112
7.1		4	5	14	117
7.2		24	28	51	27
9		24	42	50	18
	Environmentally Friendly				
2	Athletic Clothing	6	35	14	
3	Casual Clothing		112	43	
	Vintage Clothing				
3	\$11-20	53	\$21-30	\$31-40	
5		42	46	19	\$41-50
	No				5
6	Some Browsing	46	Browse		
8		31	113		
	Female				
10	Non-Binary / Third Gender		Prefer not to say		
10	133	0	0		
	18-25	26-35	46-55		
11		9	15		56-65
	Part-time		30		38
12	Intern	0	60		
	Unemployed				

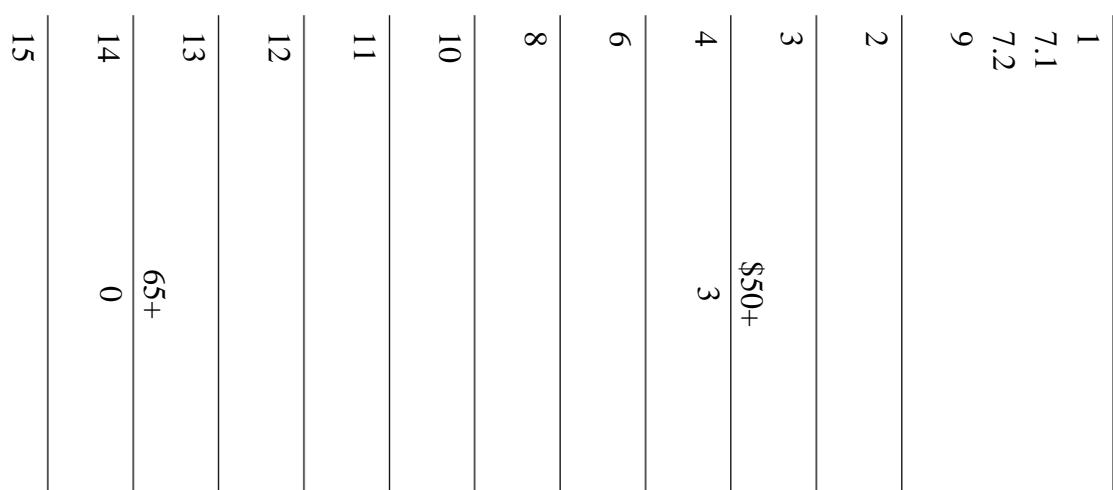
	Extremely Likely
1	112
7.1	117
7.2	27
9	18
2	Other
3	52
	\$41-50
5	5
	\$50+
6	19
8	
10	56-65
	65+
11	38
12	35

Table A2: Student Opinions on Thrifting Survey Results

<i>Student Opinions on Thrifting Survey Results</i>		Extremely	Unlikely
1	How likely are you to shop at thrift stores?	8	35
7.1	How likely are you to shop at the following locations? - Normal Thrift Store	15	27
7.2	How likely are you to shop at the following locations? - blue, A Goodwill Boutique	9	36
9	How likely are you to buy clothing at a pop-up shop?	11	43
<hr/>		Affordable Products	Environmental
2	What is the biggest reason that you shop at thrift stores?	79	12
<hr/>		Business/Formal Clothing	Athletic Cl
3	What do you buy at thrift stores?	69	53
<hr/>		\$0-10	\$11-2
4	How much money do you spend in one trip to a thrift store?	11	51
<hr/>		Yes	No
6	Are you familiar with blue, A Goodwill Boutique?	91	117
<hr/>		Shopping List	Some Bro
8	Do you prefer to stick to your shopping list or do you like to browse?	11	115
<hr/>		Yes	No
10	Would you stop at a clothing pop-up shop on a college campus?	121	11
<hr/>		Quality Concerns	Limited C
11	What are some reasons that you don't thrift shop?	18	14
<hr/>		Yes	No
12	Would you consider shopping at thrift stores if they carried more in-style pieces?	12	10
<hr/>		Male	Femai
13	What is your gender?	80	124
<hr/>		Under 18	18-24
14	What is your age?	0	186
<hr/>		Full-time	Part-ti
15	What is your employment status?	46	109

THE VIABILITY OF POP-UP THRIFT SHOPS

	Unlikely	Neither Likely nor Unlikely	Likely	Extremely Likely
1	35	20	73	72
7.1	27	20	71	75
7.2	36	40	92	31
9	43	45	84	25
Environmentally Friendly	Unique Items	Other		
2	12	67	7	
Athletic Clothing	Casual Clothing	Vintage Clothing	Other	
3	53	131	93	21
	\$11-20	\$21-30	\$31-40	\$41-50
4	51	66	27	7
No				
6	117			
Some Browsing	Browse			
8	115	82		
No		Maybe		
10	11	76		
Limited Choices	Other			
11	14	11		
No		Maybe		
12	10	21		
Female	Non-Binary / Third Gender	Prefer not to say		
13	124	3	1	
	18-25	26-35	46-55	56-65
14	186	11	1	0
Part-time	Intern	Unemployed		
15	109	21	32	65
				0



Appendix B
Phase III: Focus Group

Document B1: Focus Group Questions

Clothing Preferences

- 1) Please tell us about your usual visit to a thrift store.
 - What kinds of goals do you have when visiting a thrift store?
 - How do you progress through your visit? What are your browsing habits?
- 2) What kinds of items catch your eye when you shop? What aisle would you most frequently stop in, even if you didn't plan to?
- 3) What types of clothing are you primarily seeking while thrift shopping?
- 4) What brands do you seek out when thrift shopping?

Price Sensitivity

- 5) Tell us about how you determine the quality of items during your thrift shopping.
 - Can you tell us about how quality concerns can impact your shopping experience?
- 6) What is your most frequently visited thrift/secondhand store?
 - What unique value does that store provide that makes it your preferred choice?
- 7) What price would you expect to pay for a pair of jeans in a regular thrift store versus a curated thrift store?

Pop-Up Shop Opinions

- 8) Tell us about what experience you've had with pop-up shops. [A Pop-Up Shop is a small, transportable store opened by a business that sells a selection of specially picked items for a short period of time at various locations]
- 9) What locations would you be most interested in stopping at a pop-up shop?
- 10) If a pop-up shop specialized in clothing and accessories, would you prefer casual clothing or more unique pieces?
- 11) What specific items would you be interested in seeing at a clothing & accessories pop-up shop?
- 12) How much would you be comfortable spending on a single visit to a pop-up shop?

Appendix C

Phase IV: Experimentation

Document C1: Pop-Up Shop Style Guide

Pop-Up Shop Style Guide Contributor Consultants

WOMEN'S CLOTHING
Our demographic looks for causal, comfortable, every day, slightly unique pieces which are of good condition and reasonably priced. The biggest categories of interest were college apparel, jeans, hoodies/crewnecks, and t-shirts.

COLLEGE APPAREL should be from our university (The University of Akron; Akron Zips; Akron; Zips; Z) or larger "crowd favorite" universities such as Ohio State. The best items will be unique in style and vintage in age, so long as they are in good condition (minimal pilling, no staining).



JEANS/PANTS should have minimal, tasteful distressing or be completely plain. Jeans that are high rise (have a high waistline that rises to or above the bellybutton), are straight-legged, and are black are all sought-after styles. Paperbag pants (pants with a built-in belt with scrunches/pleating at the waistline) are also a popular style.

Best Brands – Levi's, Madewell, American Eagle, Abercrombie & Fitch



Best Styles – High rise, Straight-Leg/Mom/Boyfriend jeans, black jeans, paperbag pants



1

Pop-Up Shop Style Guide Contributor Consultants

HOODIES/CREWNECKS should be minimalist/plain/simple; solid colors work best. Hoodies that have an inspirational or encouraging message written on the back can satisfy a need for uniqueness. Avoid hoodies that have a full zipper down the front and opt for pull-over ones instead. Avoid hoodies that have large brand names written on the front, except when Nike, Adidas, or luxury brands.

Best Brands – Nike, Champion, Fila, Vintage or no-label



Best Styles – Pullover, Minimalistic (small brand logo), Solid Color



T-SHIRTS should either have large, colorful graphics or be relatively minimalist, but not completely plain. Stick to every-day, casual, circular necklines instead of v-necks, button-downs, or other styles. Trends to look for include drawstring.

Best Brands – Vintage or no-label, American Eagle, Forever21, Brandy Melville, Nike



Best Styles – Large prints, Minimalist, Cropped



2

Pop-Up Shop Style Guide Contributor Consultants

OTHER ITEMS such as sweaters, dresses, long-sleeve shirts, jackets, etc. should keep in mind the desire for causal, comfortable, and unique clothing.

Women's Best Brands – Champion, Nike, Levi's, Lululemon, American Eagle



Women's Best Styles – Casual, Every-day, Comfortable, Unique

Current Unique Item Trends:

- Short, pleated skirts
- Dainty floral patterns
- Ruching
- Over-sized blazers
- Bucket hats
- Puffy sleeves
- Midi dresses
- Matching sets
- Biker shorts

3

Pop-Up Shop Style Guide Contributor Consultants

MEN'S CLOTHING
Our demographic looks for causal, comfortable, every-day pieces which are of good condition and reasonably priced. We believe some good items for men include college apparel, hoodies/crewnecks, pants, and casual button-downs.

COLLEGE APPAREL should be from our university (The University of Akron; Akron Zips; Akron; Zips; Z) or larger "crowd favorite" universities such as Ohio State. The best items will be unique in style and vintage in age, so long as they are in good condition (minimal pilling, no staining).



HOODIES/CREWNECKS should be minimalist/plain/simple; solid colors work best. Thick, heavy hoodies/crewnecks should be sought after. Unique finds include outdoor brands (Patagonia, Eddie Bauer, Columbia) and streetwear style.

Best Brands – Nike, Champion, Adidas, Patagonia, Vintage or no-label



Best Styles – Pullover, Branded, Solid Colors, Quarter Zip/Quarter Button-Up



4

Pop-Up Shop Style Guide Contributor Consultants

PANTS should casual and/or athletic style to satisfy the need for comfort. Frequently, this will include jogger pants (sweatpants with a tapered ankle).

Best Brands – Nike, Champion, Adidas, Under Armour



Best Styles – Joggers



BUTTON-DOWN long sleeve tops should be very casual and feature a plaid/flannel design. If you are unsure if a button down is casual enough, a good way to tell is if it has general sizing (ex. S, M, L, XL, XXL) instead of collar and sleeve length measurements/sizing (ex. 15-32, 16 1/2-32). Unique finds include fleece- or sherpa-lined/quilted flannel "jackets".

Best Brands – Uniqlo, Patagonia, Original Penguin



Best Styles – Flannel/Plaid print, heavyweight/lined flannel "jackets"



5

Pop-Up Shop Style Guide Contributor Consultants

OTHER ITEMS such as sweaters, jeans, short and long-sleeve tops, and jackets can be set aside, provided they are comfortable, casual, and every-day styled.

Men's Best Brands – Patagonia, Champion, Carhartt, Nike



6

Pop-Up Shop Style Guide Contributor Consultants

ACCESSORIES

Jewelry
Our demographic looks for unique, statement jewelry. Instead of focusing on the brand, we prefer to focus on the uniqueness and quality of the accessory. Gold, silver, or rose-gold pieces are all acceptable. Layered necklaces, chain necklaces, very simply dainty necklaces with small charms or centerpieces, thin adjustable bracelets, simple hoops or stud earrings, and ring sets would be great.

Best Brands – N/A

Best Styles – Layered necklaces, Dainty Necklaces, Earring/Ring Sets



Bags
Plain, functional, and versatile bags (backpacks, purses, fanny packs, miniature bags) that are well made and can match nearly all outfit worn are most desirable for our demographic. Thus, we generally do not identify with heavily patterned bags (ex. Vera Bradley) unless the pattern is a modern take on a luxury brand's logo or abbreviation (ex. Fendi), so it is best to stick to solid colors for bags.

Best Brands – Fjallraven Kanken, Herschel, North Face, Kate Spade



Best Styles – Backpack, Fanny Pack, Miniature Purses/Backpacks



7

Pop-Up Shop Style Guide Contributor Consultants

Shoes
Quality/Condition is the biggest factor to consider when selecting shoes. Shoes must be in gently used or better condition with minimal wear (no scuffing, staining, holes, tears, dirt, worn-down tread) for our demographic to consider purchasing them. In terms of shoe styles to look for, pick every-day, casual shoes, sneakers, or simple boots – not heels, wedges, or sandals.

Best Brands – Converse, Nike, Doc Martens, Vans, Adidas, Timberland



Best Styles – "Chucks" (Converse), Chunky Boots, Plain sneakers with a pop of color



8

Document C2: blue Inventory Review

blue Inventory Review

Contributor Consultants

WOMEN'S CLOTHING

Tops

Akron Gear Casual, Name Brand (American Eagle) Trend - Ruching, Square Neckline

Business Wear (Note: We would like to have a few, good quality business wear items – especially matching sets since they are hard to find – but our focus will be casual items!)

Unique Pattern Functional, 2-Piece Functional, 2-Piece

blue Inventory Review

Contributor Consultants

Coats

Trend: Puffer Jacket Trend: Long Puffer Jacket, Name Brand (Michael Kors) Name Brand (Calvin Klein)

Dresses/Skirts

Casual Casual Trend: Puffy Sleeves
Unique Piece, Trend: Square Neckline Unique Piece, Name Brand (Urban Outfitters) Trend: Pleated Skirt, Name Brand (Forever21)

blue Inventory Review

Contributor Consultants

MEN'S CLOTHING

Tops

Name Brand (North Face) Style: Oversized, Lined Flannel Style: Casual Flannel

Tops – Hoodies

Name Brand (Adidas), Athletic-Casual Name Brand (North Face) Casual, Style: Crewneck
Name Brand (Carhartt) Local Team Name Brand (Harley Davidson), Unique Piece

blue Inventory Review

Contributor Consultants

Business Wear (Note: We would like to have a few, good quality business wear items – especially matching sets since they are hard to find – but our focus will be casual items!)

Functional, 2-Piece Functional, 2-Piece Functional, 2-Piece

Bottoms

Style: Jogger Name Brand (Lucky Brand)

blue Inventory Review

Contributor Consultants

ACCESSORIES

Bags

Trend: Mini Bag Trend: Mini Backpack Trend: Mini Bag

Name Brand (Steve Madden), Functional, Plain Unique Piece Trend: Mini Backpack, Name Brand (Herschel)

Hats

Crowd Favorite Team Unique Piece Name Brand (Calvin Klein)

blue Inventory Review

Contributor Consultants

Men's Shoes

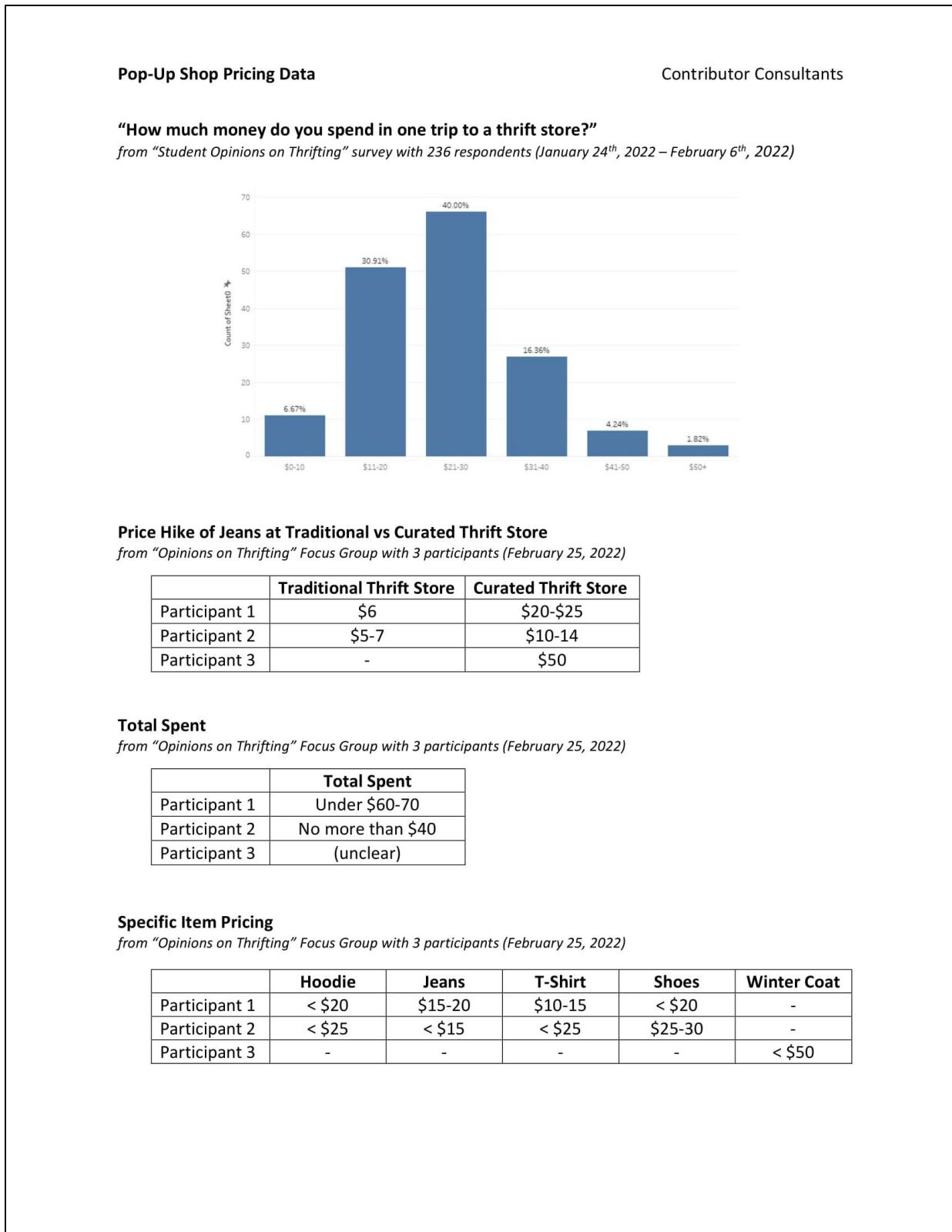
Name Brand (Converse), Casual Name Brand (Nike), Athletic Name Brand (Adidas), Athletic

Name Brand (Adidas), Casual Casual Name Brand (Converse), Casual

Women's Shoes

New Condition, Functional Name Brand (Bearpaw/Ugg)

Document C3: Pop-Up Shop Pricing Data



Document C4: Pop-Up Shop Reviews Survey

Pop-Up Shop Reviews

Thank you for visiting the Goodwill Industries of Akron x The University of Akron College of Business Pop-Up Thrift Shop! This event was the culmination of research conducted by five honors students completing their Honors Project in Business Administration and we are curious about your experience to better inform our final business recommendation.

Please fill out the survey in its entirety and include your email when prompted to have the chance to win a \$25 gift card of your choice!

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Caitlin Croston at cec122@uakron.edu.

General Satisfaction Block

Q1 How satisfied were you with the selection of items available for purchase at the Pop-Up Shop?

- Extremely dissatisfied (1)
- Somewhat dissatisfied (2)
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (3)
- Somewhat satisfied (4)
- Extremely satisfied (5)

Q2 How satisfied were you with the pricing of the products at the Pop-Up Shop?

- Extremely dissatisfied (1)
- Somewhat dissatisfied (2)
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (3)
- Somewhat satisfied (4)
- Extremely satisfied (5)

Q3 Did you enjoy the flat pricing system (wherein all jeans were \$__, all t-shirts were \$__, etc.) or would you prefer all items be individually priced to reflect their uniqueness?

- Prefer flat pricing (1)
- No preference (2)
- Prefer individual pricing (3)

Q4 How satisfied were you with the brands available for purchase at the Pop-Up Shop?

- Extremely dissatisfied (1)
- Somewhat dissatisfied (2)
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (3)
- Somewhat satisfied (4)
- Extremely satisfied (5)

Q5 Overall, please rate your satisfaction with the Pop-Up Shop.

- Extremely dissatisfied (1)
- Somewhat dissatisfied (2)
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (3)
- Somewhat satisfied (4)
- Extremely satisfied (5)

Q6 Based on your experience at the Pop-Up Shop today, how likely are you to shop at a Goodwill Industries of Akron Pop-Up Shop in the future?

- Extremely unlikely (1)
- Somewhat unlikely (2)
- Neither likely nor unlikely (3)
- Somewhat likely (4)
- Extremely likely (5)

Did you Purchase? Block**Q7 Did you purchase anything from the Pop-Up Shop?**

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

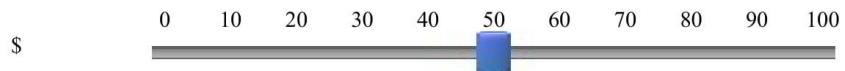
CONDITIONAL LOGIC

If Q7 response = Yes (1), display "DID Purchase Block". Otherwise, display "DID NOT purchase Block". Rejoin at "Final Comments Block".

DID Purchase Block**Q8 How many items did you purchase from the Pop-Up Shop?**

Q9 Please list the items that you purchased.

Q10 How much money did you spend at the Pop-Up Shop?



DID NOT purchase Block

Q11 Why did you not make a purchase from the Pop-Up Shop?

Q12 What kinds of items would you consider buying from a Goodwill Industries of Akron Pop-Up Shop in the future that would make you more likely to make a purchase?

Final Comments Block

Q13 Please provide any additional comments, concerns, or suggestions here.

Demographics Block

Q14 What is your gender?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Non-binary / third gender (3)
- Prefer not to say (4)

Q15 What is your age?

- Under 18 (1)
- 18 - 25 (2)
- 26 - 35 (3)
- 36 - 45 (4)
- 46 - 55 (5)
- 56 - 65 (6)
- 65+ (7)

Q16 What is your employment status?

- Full-Time (1)
- Part-Time (2)
- Intern (3)
- Unemployed (4)

Q17 Please enter your email to qualify for the \$25 gift card raffle [OPTIONAL]

Table C1: Pop-Up Thrift Shop Sales Report

<i>Pop-Up Thrift Shop Sales Report</i>							
Payment Method	Items Sold	Gross Sales	Items Refunded	Refunds	Discounts & Comps	Net Sales	Taxes
Cash	12	\$201.00	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$201.00	\$13.57
Card	44	<u>\$645.25</u>	-2	<u>(\$1.25)</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$644.00</u>	<u>\$43.45</u>
Total	56	\$846.25	-2	(\$1.25)	\$0.00	\$845.00	\$57.02

Image C1: Pop-Up Thrift Shop Layout (Labeled)



Image C2: Goodwill Pointer Sign



Image C3: Pop-Up Thrift Shop Advertisement

pop up

THRIFT SHOP

Tuesday, March 15th 11:00am-1:30pm
Jean Hower Taber Student Union Piano Lounge

Shop a curated selection of gently used clothing, shoes, and accessories at a fraction of retail prices at this limited-time only event!

Find name brands like Champion, Levi's, Nike, Converse, Patagonia, American Eagle, and North Face.

Cash and card payments accepted.



The University of Akron
College of Business

Sponsored by The University of Akron College of Business and Goodwill Industries of Akron. For questions, please contact Caitlin Croston at cec122@uakron.edu.

Goodwill Serving Summit, Portage, Medina, Ashtabula & Richland Counties



Image C4: Pop-Up Thrift Shop ZipMail Publication

Pop-up thrift shop

Students from the College of Business completing their Honors Project in collaboration with Goodwill Industries of Akron will host a thrifted clothing and goods pop-up shop in the Jean Hower Taber Student Union Piano Lounge on **Tuesday, March 15, from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.**

Come see a collection of curated, second-hand pieces at a fraction of retail prices in this unique shopping experience, while helping current students complete their honors degree designation.

Proceeds benefit Goodwill Industries of Akron's mission to help individuals prepare for, find and retain employment. Cash and credit card payment will be accepted.

For questions, please contact **Caitlin Croston** at cec122@uakron.edu.

Appendix D
Financial Results

Document D1: Income Statement with Three Pop-Up Shop (PUS) Scenarios

		2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
INCOME STATEMENT						
Revenue						
Donated Goods	\$ 18,926,845.39	\$ 19,657,058.51	\$ 20,415,443.84	\$ 21,203,088.29	\$ 22,021,120.71	
Contract/Business Services	\$ 2,835,506.15	\$ 2,944,902.29	\$ 3,058,519.01	\$ 3,176,519.17	\$ 3,299,071.87	
Workforce Development	\$ 2,912,131.75	\$ 3,024,484.17	\$ 3,141,171.23	\$ 3,262,360.17	\$ 3,388,224.69	
Pop-Up Shop (PUS) Scenario 1	\$ 46,644.00	\$ 47,110.44	\$ 47,581.54	\$ 48,057.36	\$ 48,537.93	
Pop-Up Shop (PUS) Scenario 2	\$ 91,260.00	\$ 92,172.60	\$ 93,094.33	\$ 94,025.27	\$ 94,965.52	
Pop-Up Shop (PUS) Scenario 3	\$ 253,500.00	\$ 256,035.00	\$ 258,595.35	\$ 261,181.30	\$ 263,793.12	
Contributions	\$ 1,726,093.76	\$ 1,792,687.86	\$ 1,861,851.22	\$ 1,933,682.96	\$ 2,008,286.02	
Other	\$ 197,946.01	\$ 205,582.93	\$ 213,514.49	\$ 221,752.05	\$ 230,307.42	
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 26,598,523.06	\$ 27,624,715.75	\$ 28,690,499.79	\$ 29,797,402.65	\$ 30,947,010.71	
TOTAL REVENUE + PUS Scenario 1	\$ 26,645,167.06	\$ 27,671,826.19	\$ 28,738,081.33	\$ 29,845,460.01	\$ 30,995,548.65	
TOTAL REVENUE + PUS Scenario 2	\$ 26,689,783.06	\$ 27,716,888.35	\$ 28,783,594.12	\$ 29,891,427.91	\$ 31,041,976.24	
TOTAL REVENUE + PUS Scenario 3	\$ 26,852,023.06	\$ 27,880,750.75	\$ 28,949,095.14	\$ 30,058,583.95	\$ 31,210,803.83	
Expenses						
Program Services	\$ 23,176,102.59	\$ 24,070,255.51	\$ 24,998,905.58	\$ 25,963,383.72	\$ 26,965,072.22	
PUS Scenario 1	\$ 28,850.00	\$ 29,138.50	\$ 29,429.89	\$ 29,724.18	\$ 30,021.43	
PUS Scenario 2	\$ 53,250.00	\$ 53,782.50	\$ 54,320.33	\$ 54,863.53	\$ 55,412.16	
PUS Scenario 3	\$ 136,250.00	\$ 137,612.50	\$ 138,988.63	\$ 140,378.51	\$ 141,782.30	
Mgmt & General	\$ 2,468,392.09	\$ 2,563,624.67	\$ 2,662,531.40	\$ 2,765,254.03	\$ 2,871,939.78	
Fundraising	\$ 130,694.81	\$ 135,737.12	\$ 140,973.97	\$ 146,412.86	\$ 152,061.59	
Debt Service	\$ 53,704.05	\$ 55,761.50	\$ 57,898.19	\$ 60,117.17	\$ 62,421.61	
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 25,828,893.54	\$ 26,825,378.80	\$ 27,860,309.13	\$ 28,835,167.78	\$ 30,051,495.19	
TOTAL EXPENSES + PUS Scenario 1	\$ 25,857,743.54	\$ 26,854,517.30	\$ 27,889,739.02	\$ 28,964,891.96	\$ 30,081,516.62	
TOTAL EXPENSES + PUS Scenario 2	\$ 25,882,143.54	\$ 26,879,161.30	\$ 27,914,629.46	\$ 28,990,031.30	\$ 30,106,907.36	
TOTAL EXPENSES + PUS Scenario 3	\$ 25,965,143.54	\$ 26,962,991.30	\$ 27,999,297.76	\$ 29,075,546.29	\$ 30,193,277.49	