

How Resilient Coping Influences Goals and Sustainable Fashion Consumption Moving Toward the Next Phase of COVID-19

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Introduction

COVID-19 has dominated the world that plunged the global economy into a deep contraction. Undoubtedly, it has altered people's lifestyles and consumption values (McKinsey & Company, 2021). By undergoing COVID-19 and moving toward its endemic phase, people have developed resilient coping skills and the ability to recover from adverse experiences and overcome difficulties in life (Martínez-González et al., 2021). The resilient coping associated with the pandemic has been extensively discussed in the mental health field (e.g., distress, anxiety, fear, etc.) (Rahman et al., 2020). However, there is a lack of understanding of resilient coping's role in people's life goals (i.e., intrinsic and extrinsic) (Sheldon et al., 2004) and subsequent influences on their consumption orientations. Although prior studies have proven that consumers' overarching intrinsic goals promote sustainable behaviors (Steg et al., 2016; Van Der Linden, 2015), the crucial role of resilience in relation to the pandemic has not been considered. Thus, this study examines how resilient coping influences fashion consumers' life goals and how their goals relate to their sustainable consumption values.

Literature Review and Hypotheses

Resilience refers to an ability to recover from hard times and overcome challenges in life, and it has been studied focusing on the recovering and adapting process, called resilient coping (Sinclair & Wallston, 2004). As for life goals, this study adopts one of the sub-theories of the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), the Goal Content Theory (GCT), to explain the relationship between resilient coping and consumers' intrinsic and extrinsic life goals. Intrinsic goals are related to self and inherent psychological needs (i.e., personal growth, relatedness, and helpfulness), while extrinsic goals are pertinent to external rewards (i.e., financial success, fame, and appearance) (Kasser & Ryan, 1996). A previous study found that dispositional resilient coping influenced goal motives during novel and stressful situations (i.e., pandemic) (Martínez-González et al., 2021). While experiencing the pandemic, consumers might tend to achieve extrinsic goals as compensation to cope with their mental distress (Zheng et al., 2021). Simultaneously, consumers' resilient coping might help boost their intrinsic goals by enabling them to acquire skills to manage adversities, such as pandemics (Sheldon et al., 2004). Consumers might have also learned how crucial it is to have connections with others and communities (Kirk & Rifkin, 2020). Moreover, several studies have shown a positive

relationship between intrinsic goals and sustainable consumption within the pandemic context (Severo et al., 2021; Van Der Linden, 2015). This study adopts the Consumer Sustainability Orientation framework (CSO) with its three sub-dimensions (i.e., ecological, social, and economic orientation) to investigate how each goal affects fashion consumers' sustainable consumption values. Ecological, social, and economic orientations are related to the environment, workers, and companies, respectively (Roth & Robert, 2013). Intrinsic goals value the relationship between the self and others/ the environment, which subsequently would positively affect fashion consumers' ecological and social sustainability orientations. Extrinsic goals are related to material values, which would negatively affect fashion consumers' ecological and social orientations but boost their economic orientation (Roth & Robert, 2013; Severo et al., 2021). Thus, this study proposes the following hypotheses.

- H1.** Consumers' resilient coping will positively affect their intrinsic goals.
- H2.** Consumers' resilient coping will positively affect their extrinsic goals.
- H3.** Consumers' intrinsic goals will positively affect their (a) ecological and (b) social sustainable orientations but will negatively affect (c) economic sustainable orientation.
- H4.** Consumers' extrinsic goals will negatively affect their (a) ecological and (b) social sustainable orientations but will positively affect (c) economic sustainable orientation.
- H5.** Resilient coping will indirectly affect fashion consumers' (a) ecological, (b) social, and (c) economic sustainable consumption orientations through intrinsic goals.
- H6.** Resilient coping will indirectly affect fashion consumers' (a) ecological, (b) social, and (c) economic sustainable consumption orientations through extrinsic goals.

Methods

The survey participants were consumers aged 18 or above living in the United States. A total of 503 usable responses were collected through Amazon MTurk. The sample population consisted of Caucasians (76%), followed by Asians (9%), African Americans (7%), and Hispanic/Latinos (5%). The survey measurement items were adapted from previous literature and measured using a 5-point Likert scale (Sinclair & Wallston, 2004; Sheldon et al., 2004; Roth & Robert, 2013). The data were analyzed using R 4.1.2, and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was conducted.

Results

A Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) confirmed a good fit for the measurement model, and the SEM results also indicated a good model fit: $\chi^2(237) = 696.71, p < .001, CFI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.06$. The path analysis confirmed that consumers' resilient coping positively influenced their intrinsic and extrinsic goals (H1: $\beta = 0.64, p < .001$, H2: $\beta = 0.44, p < .001$). These imply that consumers who developed their resilient coping skills during the pandemic are likely to pursue both goals and the goals become salient while overcoming challenging circumstances. With

respect to the relationship between intrinsic goals and sustainable fashion consumption, the results indicated that intrinsic goals are positively related to ecological and social sustainable orientations (H3a: $\beta = 0.73, p < .001$; H3b: $0.75, p < .001$). However, there was no significant association between intrinsic goals and economic sustainable orientation, rejecting H3c. Regarding extrinsic goals and sustainable consumption, extrinsic goals negatively influenced ecological and social sustainable orientations (H4a: $\beta = -0.35, p < .001$; H4b: $-0.55, p < .001$), and positively influenced economic sustainable orientation (H4c: $\beta = 0.23, p < .01$). As for the indirect relationships, resilient coping positively influenced ecological and social sustainable orientations through intrinsic goals (H5a: $\beta = 0.46, p < .001$; H5b: $0.48, p < .001$), but there was no significant indirect relationship between resilient coping and economic sustainable orientation through intrinsic goals, rejecting H5c. In terms of the mediating role of extrinsic goals, resilient coping had negative indirect effects on ecological and social sustainable orientations (H6a: $\beta = -0.16, p < .001$; H6b: $\beta = -0.24, p < .001$), but had a positive indirect effect on economic sustainable orientation (H6c: $\beta = 0.10, p < .01$).

Discussion and Conclusion

This study provides scholarly and managerial implications. First, this study combines the GCT with the CSO framework to explore how fashion consumers' resilient coping has caused them to have salient life goals, which boosts sustainable fashion consumption behavior within the current transition from pandemic to endemic. Second, it helps fashion retailers understand the goals that have become of primary importance to their target consumers while dealing with the pandemic and how each goal has boosted their sustainable consumption orientation's three aspects, thereby helping communicate with consumers when providing sustainable marketing messages.

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