



Exploring College Students' Shopping Motivation for Secondhand Clothing

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Trade and use of secondhand clothing has been a norm of the western society since antiquity. Today, popularity of vintage fashion, desire for uniqueness and conspicuously low prices of branded luxury used clothes has given rise to a range of consignment stores, boutiques, and high-street concessions that resell previously worn garments (Hansen 2010). Although trade of secondhand clothing is on increase, there is lack of research done on motives that drive consumers to purchase secondhand clothing. In order to fill this gap, this study is designed to empirically investigate motivations that encourage consumers in times of fast fashion to keep up with the tradition of buying secondhand clothing.

Shopping has been known to provide emotional satisfaction and enjoyment catering to the hedonic needs of the consumers. Shopping for secondhand clothes is associated with adventure shopping where the thrill of finding something of great value at a cheaper cost poses as a motivation for the shoppers (Weil, 1999). Economic factors have often been seen as a critical point for purchase decision. Farrant (2010) argued that clothes reuse can significantly help to reduce the environmental burden of clothing disposal. Emotional attachment leads to acquiring used clothing from one's friends and family. However, previously owned clothes trigger concerns about contamination and germs (Belk, 1988), transfer of disease, misfortune (Groffinan, 1971), and fading sense of self (Erikson, 1968).

College students spend about \$6 billion annually on clothing and footwear in the US (Joung and Parkpoaps, 2011). Additionally, it is believed that college students are more fashion-oriented and big consumers of 'fast fashion' clothing (Seckler, 2005). Although college students' clothing consumption is significant, only a few studies have investigated their buying behavior of secondhand clothing, which may be appealing to college students due to the conspicuous low price points. This study focuses on exploring college students' motivations for shopping at thrift stores in times of fast fashion.

Based on the results from a focus group study conducted to identify possible reasons for colleges students' secondhand clothing, a survey questionnaire was developed and administered with a sample of 195 undergraduate students enrolled at a large university in the U.S.. Seven questionnaires were deleted due to incomplete responses, resulting in a total of 188 complete surveys for further analyses. Multiple 5-point Likert scales were adopted/modified to measure hedonic shopping value, economic shopping value, environmental value, consumption concerns, product related motivations, and descriptive norm. Three secondhand clothing purchase intentions were also measured: 1) shopping at thrift stores; 2) shopping on the internet; and 3) owning less clothing items rather than purchasing secondhand clothing. Frequency analyses results indicated that almost 95% of the subjects had purchased secondhand clothing before.

Around 63% of the participants would like to buy at thrift stores while only 37 of participants would like to shop online for secondhand clothing. Results also indicated that about 18% of the participants would rather own fewer items than purchasing secondhand clothing items.

A stepwise regression analysis was conducted on each of the three secondhand clothing purchase intentions with the following independent variables: hedonic shopping value, economic value, environmental value, consumption concerns, descriptive norm, and product related motivations. Results indicated that consumers' intention to shop at thrift stores was significantly influenced by the following factors: hedonic value ($\beta = 0.51$), product related motivations ($\beta = 0.26$), consumption concerns ($\beta = -0.23$), and descriptive norm ($\beta = 0.21$). For intention to purchase secondhand clothing online, descriptive norm ($\beta = 0.3$) and hedonic value ($\beta = 0.19$) were both found having significant influence. Consumption concerns for secondhand clothing ($\beta = 0.42$), descriptive norm ($\beta = -0.34$) and hedonic value ($\beta = -0.21$) showed significant influence on consumers' intention to own less clothing items rather than purchasing secondhand clothes.

This study indicated that hedonic value, product related motivation, and descriptive norm had significant and positive influence on college students' purchase intention for secondhand clothing while a negative influence from consumption concerns was shown. That is, the enjoyment of treasure hunting and seeing family members and friends shopping for secondhand clothing motivate college students to shop for secondhand clothing items. For shopping at thrift stores, being able to find unique, maybe vintage, items became another important motivation. Concerns for germ contamination or negative association of the item being owned by some other person made young consumers hesitant of shopping for secondhand clothing. Though economical benefit was mentioned as a major motivation for shopping for secondhand clothing from the focus group study, it was not shown as having any significant influence on their purchase intention based on the results from the survey. Also it was striking to note that environmental factors did not insert any influence on the participants' intention to shop for secondhand clothing. Future studies can further explore the influence of consumers' background, including demographics and psychographics.

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