



Consumer Compulsive Buying and Hoarding in a World of Fast Fashion

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Powerful, uncontrollable urges to shop and purchase characterize compulsive buying (Johnson & Attmann, 2009). By definition, fast fashion is a clothing category that is designed to cater to the impulse purchase by being fashion-forward and relatively inexpensive. People who compulsively shop do so to generate positive feelings; buying will eliminate the blue mood however it is often followed by feelings of depression. However, kept unworn clothes have been considered a sign of excess consumer culture, and could even suggest a shopping addiction, such as compulsive shopping (Banim & Guy, 2001).

As many as 75% of people who hoard engage in compulsive buying tendencies (Frost, et al., 2009) and tend to have difficulty discarding possessions (Steketee & Frost, 2003). Hoarding symptoms include clutter disorganization, acquisition, and saving tendencies which are associated with excessive positive emotion with low-value possessions (approach) and anxiety, fear, or sadness associated with loss of possessions (avoidance). Since women often have an emotional attachment to clothing (Banim & Guy, 2001), do they tend toward some degree of hoarding? This study sought to determine why some women are reluctant to discard clothing. Is it because fast fashion makes it easy to acquire a lot of different styles relatively inexpensively? Because a simple interest in fashion creates an enjoyment of clothing acquisition akin to reaction? Is there a social media influence with the prevalence of fashion blogs and visual venues such as Pinterest?

Method. A total of 232 adult female American consumers with an interest in fashion completed surveys via a consumer panel from Qualtrix. Participants had an average age of 36.6 (range = 21-46) and 58% were married. Compulsive buying was measured with Edward's (1993) Compulsive Buying Scale that was adapted for clothing purchase by Johnson and Attman (2007). Hoarding tendency was measured with the Saving Inventory-Revised scale from www.ocfoundation.org.

Findings. All findings presented in this abstract are significant at $p < .05$. Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis found significant relationships between fashion interest and the use of social media, particularly fashion blogs ($r = .636$), Instagram ($r = .474$), Twitter ($r = .361$) and Pinterest ($r = .303$). A strong correlation was also computed between fashion interest and involvement with fast fashion ($r = .799$).

Positive correlations were found between compulsive clothing buying and the use of fashion blogs ($r = .448$), Instagram ($r = .280$) and Twitter ($r = .220$), fashion interest ($r = .672$) and clothing acquisition ($r = .691$). In order to identify more specifically the relationship between these variables, tendency toward compulsive buying was divided into three categories: low, medium and high. ANOVA was computed ($F = 72.043$, $p < .0001$) and Scheffe' post hoc analysis indicated that, predictably, participants with high compulsive buying tendencies had a higher

level of fashion interest and had higher levels of clothing acquisition ($F=27.092$, $p<0001$). A strong significant correlation was also found between high compulsive clothing buying tendencies and fast-fashion involvement ($r=.659$). ANOVA ($F=63.638$, $p<.0001$) indicated that high compulsive shoppers were more likely to have high levels of involvement with fast fashion when compared to medium- and low compulsive shoppers.

If consumers who have a high fashion interest and high fast-fashion involvement are more prone to compulsive clothing buying tendencies, do they exhibit wardrobe clutter disorganization? Our data found that they do ($r=.429$, $p<.0001$). Respondents who indicated they had greater wardrobe clutter disorganization indicated a tendency to compulsively buy clothing ($r=.429$) and a reluctance to discard it ($r=.480$). ANOVA suggested that respondents with lower compulsive buying tendencies also indicated lower levels of wardrobe clutter disorganization.

Conclusions. The fast fashion market provides a very tempting shopping experience for the compulsive shopper. With low prices and rapid cycles, the compulsive shopper is continually drawn into the shopping experience. This evidence supports the idea that fast fashion environments are especially attractive to compulsive clothing buyers. The data from this study support the hypothesis that social media and fashion interest play major roles in the consumers' potential to compulsively shop and hoard clothing.

While it is somewhat intuitive that high fashion interest would correlate with fast fashion involvement and the more visual forms of social media, it is worthy to note that high fashion interest also correlates positively with compulsive buying tendencies, reluctance to discard, and wardrobe clutter disorganization. These three variables are symptomatic of hoarding tendency (Frost, 2010). Consumers in this study appeared to have an easier time acquiring new clothing than discarding it.

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