Compulsive and Impulsive Shoppers: Hoarding of Fast Fashion Products

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Research Purpose and Significance: Fast fashion, low cost clothing often replicating high end designer trends, has allowed consumers to purchase more clothing and has driven the fashion industry to shorten fashion cycles in order to compete with these retailers using quick response systems (Joy, Sherry, Venkatesh, Wang, & Chan, 2012). It is important to understand how consumers evaluate fast fashion garment quality as it affects their purchasing decisions and commitment to repurchasing a brand based on previous experiences (Gitimu et al., 2013). Although anecdotal evidence suggests that fast fashion is made of low quality materials, little research has been done to understand how perceptions of fast fashion quality affects consumer purchasing frequency. In a time where the economy has shown slower opportunities for growth, consumers have shifted their perceptions and ultimately their attitudes towards lower quality products (Apeagyei et al., 2013).

The low cost and frequent seasons of fast fashion also presents an opportunity for some consumers to purchase increase quantities of apparel. Consumers who purchase impulsively typically purchase with reckless abandon, forgoing any self-control that they may have (Rook, 1987). In addition, compulsive buying entails consumers who buy frequently, often without controlling their urges (Muller, et al., 2015). Furthermore, studies have identified that compulsive and impulsive shopping is tied to hoarding behavior including difficulty discarding and value oriented hoarding (Frost et al., 1998). However, the connection between fast fashion purchasing frequency (FFP) and compulsive, impulsive and hoarding behaviors has not been, a gap in the research which this study sought to fill.

Methods: To understand impulsive and compulsive consumers' FFP and the effects that the apparel quality had on hoarding behaviors, an online survey was conducted with a random nationwide sample of 500 women ages 18-59. This homogenous sample was evenly distributed across ages and the resulting racial ethnicities closely represented US population. The survey employed established scales to measure each construct. Multiple regression analyses were conducted, and FFP frequency was tested using Baron and Kenny's (1986) mediation/moderation tests.

Results and Discussion: Impulsive (IMP) and compulsive (CMP) shopping tendencies were found to significantly predict FFP [$R^2 = .185$, $F(2, 369) = 41.967$, $p < .05$]. IMP and CMP were also found to significantly predict value oriented hoarding (VOH) [$R^2 = .187$, $F(2, 497) = 57.214$, $p < .000$]. In addition, FFP was found to be a significant predictor of VOH [$R^2 = .058$, $F(1, 370) = 22.929$, $p < .000$]. However, FFP did not show any moderation in the relationship between IMP and VOH [$\Delta R^2 = .002$, $\Delta F(3, 368) = .699$, $p=.40$] or CMP and VOH [$\Delta R^2 = .000$, $\Delta F(3, 368) = .061$, $p=.80$]. Analysis found that IMP, CMP and FFP were predictor variables for VOH [$R^2 = .18$; $F(2, 497) = 57.21$, $p<.000$]. Mediation tests were performed, and the Sobel test

(1982) results showed that FFP did not mediate the link between IMP and VOH (z=1.879, p= .06) or CMP and VOH (z=1.644, p=.10).

Attitudes towards fast fashion quality (QAL) were found to significantly predict FFP [R^2 = .054; $F(2, 369)$ = 10.604, p<.000]. QAL was also found to significantly predict VOH [R^2 = .141; $F(2, 496)$ = 40.729, p<.000]. In addition, FFP did not show any moderation in the relationship between QAL and VOH [ΔR^2 = .001, $\Delta F(1, 368)$ = 3.279, p=.07] but positively moderated the relationship of VOH and fast fashion care (CAR) [ΔR^2 = .011, $\Delta F(3, 368)$ = 4.678, p=.03]. Mediation tests were also performed, showing that FFP mediated the link between QAL and CAR with VOH (z=2.744, p < .05; z=2.187, p <.05, respectively).

Shopping tendencies (IMP and CMP) were found to significantly predict difficulty discarding (DD) apparel products [R^2 = .187, $F(2, 497)$ = 57.214, p< .000]. In addition, FFP was found to be a significant predictor of DD [R^2 = .31, $F(1, 370)$ = 11.816, p < .05]. However, FFP did not show any moderation in the relationship between IMP and DD [ΔR^2 = .000, $\Delta F(1, 368)$ = .35, p=.55] or CMP and DD [ΔR^2 = .000, $\Delta F(1, 368)$ = .193, p=.66]. Analysis showed IMP, CMP and FFP were predictor variables for DD [R^2 = .174; $F(3, 368)$ = 25.848, p<.000]. Mediation tests were performed, and the Sobel test (1982) results showed that FFP did not mediate the link between IMP and DD (z=.728, p= .47) and compulse (z=.728, p =.86).

Attitudes towards fast fashion quality were found to predict DD [R^2 = .022; $F(2, 496)$ = 5.549, p<.05]. In addition, FFP did not show any moderation in the relationship between QAL and DD [ΔR^2 = .000, $\Delta F(1, 368)$ = .162, p=.69] or CAR [ΔR^2 = .000, $\Delta F(3, 368)$ = .228, p=.63]. Mediation tests were also performed, showing that frequency mediated the link between QAL and CAR with DD (z=2.463, p < .05; z=2.012, p <.05, respectively).

The results suggest FFP is increased by both CMP and IMP shopping tendencies and QAL. Consumers who display these shopping tendencies also turn to VOH, and CMP shoppers often display DD. In addition, FFP mediated the relationship between hoarding behaviors and QAL.

Theoretical and Practical Implications: The findings align with existing literature that identifies compulsive behaviors as an attribute in hoarding behavior. Specifically, consumers who display compulsive traits often hoard, experiencing anxiety and stress when having to discard items. This study contributes to understanding consumer behavior as it relates to fast fashion by exploring how consumers hoard. Fast fashion retailers can increase marketing strategies to reach these consumers. By understanding impulsive and compulsive shopping tendencies, fast fashion retailers can merchandise in a way that stimulates consumers' urges. In addition, quality can be evaluated as a method to further increase consumer purchasing. Research should examine hoarding tendencies of fast fashion apparel, exploring other factors that might cause this phenomenon. Furthermore, researchers should continue to investigate fast fashion consumers' quality perceptions and develop a better understanding of consumers' limited understanding of quality.

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