



The risk or fun: Identifying the motivations and barriers to clothing swap for Chinese consumers

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Introduction: Current consumption of clothing and textiles has caused great environmental concerns among the society (Fletcher, 2012). Consumers' needs for newness and novelty have encouraged them to purchase more, which generate more wastes at the end. Especially in China, the country with the largest population in the world produces much of the material that ends up in landfills. Approximately, 26 million tons of textile wastes were generated in China annually, which make up about 3.5% to 4% of the world's waste materials (Xue, et al., 2014). This phenomenon is more evident with the popularity of fast fashion, which makes it easy for consumers to purchase apparel products more frequently. Many apparel products are replaced quickly by new styles that are underused (Joy et al., 2012). A great environmental benefit can be achieved by increasing the lifespan of clothing. Clothing swap provides a way for consumers to always have something "new" to wear by swapping with others, as well as reduce the consumption of new items.

Clothing swap is a give and take process where consumers exchange clothing items without monetary exchange (Straaten, 2010), and it does occur among family or friends and through social swap events as well. Swapping with family or friends has existed for utilitarian reasons (exchanges and dispose of used clothing). In addition, attending clothing exchange social events is becoming more popular among consumers because of both utilitarian considerations and hedonic motivations (socializing eating & drinking) (Armstrong et al., 2015). However, nowadays not many people have been involved in this type of transaction. Especially, no studies have been done to identify the motivations and barriers for clothing swap.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is expected to fill this research gap; and to determine the factors that influence Chinese consumers' intention to swap clothing among family or friends and by attending swap events. This research is the first attempt to examine the relationship of shopping values and perceived risks with the intention to swap clothing products. The results of this research will provide managerial insights for the promotion of swap events.

Research methods: Data were collected in China. An online survey was set up on a Chinese online research website called *Wenjuanxing*. Participants were recruited by sending the survey link to potential participants via *WeChat*, a popular Chinese social media app having over 864 million active users in 2016. A total of 322 usable responses were collected and used in the main analysis. Demographically, the sample was aged 18-35(67.0%), 36-50 (27.7%) and 51-69 (5.3%), with an education of some college or lower (20.9%), college graduate (49.2%) and graduate school (29.9%). Regarding income, the sample comprised less than US\$12,000 (26.2%), \$12,001-16,000 (20.7%) and greater than \$16,001 (53.1%). Majority of them were female (63.9%). Multi-item scales were used to evaluate the variables, utilizing a 5-point Likert scale with "1=strongly disagree, to 5 = strongly agree." *Hedonic social shopping motivation* ($\alpha = .884$) was measured by three items. *Utilitarian achievement shopping motivation* ($\alpha = .854$) was measured by four items. Both *perceived enjoyment of sharing* ($\alpha = .970$) and *frugal shopping* ($\alpha = .804$) were measured by five items. Three items were adopted to measure *perceived*

performance risk of swapping ($\alpha = .845$). *Perceived social risk of swapping* ($\alpha = .930$) was measured by four items. In addition, one hypothetical scenario statement was developed for fashion swap event, and participants were requested to rate the level of willingness to attend the swap event by responding to the question, “I intend to attend the swap event and exchange clothing with others within the next 12 months?” To examine the intention toward swapping with family and friends, participants were also requested to evaluate their willingness to swap clothing with family and friends by responding to the question, “I prefer to swap my unwanted clothing with my family and friends.”

Results: A structural equation model (SEM) was then conducted to examine the proposed hypotheses. The statistic results revealed an acceptable model fit ($\chi^2_{(df=273)} = 682.622$, $p < 0.000$, $\chi^2/df = 2.50$; RMSEA = 0.068; CFI = 0.935; TLI = 0.922; SRMR = 0.064). The statistical result indicated that hedonic social value was positively associated with both perceived enjoyment ($\beta = 0.198$, $p < 0.001$) and frugal shopping ($\beta = 0.121$, $p < 0.005$); the positive relationships between utilitarian achievement value and perceived enjoyment of sharing ($\beta = 0.279$, $p < 0.000$) and frugal shopping ($\beta = 0.132$, $p < 0.012$) were also confirmed. In addition, both frugal shopping behavior ($\beta = 0.250$, $p < 0.013$) and performance risk ($\beta = -0.331$, $p < 0.001$) were also found to be significantly related to perceived enjoyment. In regard to swapping options, only hedonic social value ($\beta = 0.180$, $p < 0.004$) and perceived enjoyment of sharing ($\beta = 0.616$, $p < 0.000$) were significantly associated with the intention to attend swap party for clothing swapping in a positive way. Differently, in addition to the positive impacts of hedonic social value ($\beta = 0.256$, $p < 0.000$) and perceived enjoyment ($\beta = 0.476$, $p < 0.000$) on the intention to swap with family and friends, the negative influences of social risk ($\beta = -0.208$, $p < 0.003$) and performance risk ($\beta = -0.381$, $p < 0.000$) on the intention to swap with family and friends were also confirmed. However, there is no significant influence of frugal shopping was found on either the intention to attend swap party or swap with family or friends. Though, neither utilitarian achievement value nor frugal shopping was significantly associated with the intention to attend swap party in a direct way, the indirect relationships between frugal shopping ($\beta = 0.154$, $p < 0.016$) and utilitarian achievement value ($\beta = 0.172$, $p < 0.001$) with the swap party intention mediated by perceived enjoyment was confirmed.

Discussion: Overall, this study contributes to existing literature by identifying the motivations and barriers for clothing swapping among Chinese consumers. Evidence from the study indicates that consumer being interested in clothing swapping is encouraged by obtaining new items with free of charge and the enjoyment of the social interaction with people who have the same interest. However, having concerns about the performance of exchanged clothing and social influence on their personal image may impede their intention.

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