

The Role of Impulse Buying, Hedonism, and Consumer Knowledge Towards Sustainable Consumption of Fast Fashion

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Keywords: sustainability, fast fashion, consumer knowledge, impulse buying, hedonism

Research, Purpose, and Significance: Today, consumers face overwhelmingly different choices of consumption from fast fashion retailers. This consumption transforms matter and energy, and therefore, is environmentally consequential (Hiller, 2011). On average, 68 pounds of textile products per person go to landfills each year, with additional solid waste coming from packaging, cleaning, and the manufacturing process (Hiller, 2011). The fact that clothing is consumed by everyone, every day, making it even critical to address its repercussions on our environment. While consumers are becoming aware of alternates such as recycle, re-use, donate, and buy second-hand clothing; they still need to have a broader knowledge of benefits of sustainable consumption of fast fashion (here after referred to as SCFF).

In this study, we explore the impact of *impulse buying* and *hedonism* on attitude and intentions toward SCFF. In addition, consumers' knowledge is an important aspect that influences high-quality decision making. Research has found that as consumer's knowledge increases they are more apt to purchasing more timeless garments, recycle clothing, extend the wearable life of garments by taking better care of them, prefer natural fibers when selecting clothing and purchasing second-hand apparel (Hiller, 2011). Previous research has suggested that consumers' environmental concern plays a role in predicting SCFF (Butler & Francis, 1991), there is relatively little research about consumer knowledge and its (mis)calibration (i.e., the correspondence between accuracy and confidence). While consumers have shown an increased acceptance for sustainable products, it does not translate to their actual purchases due to factors such as consumers' lack of involvement with fashion, conformity to the group, and consumer knowledge (Butler & Francis, 1997).

This research attempts to broaden our understanding of role of 'knowledge' construct in addressing the key question—how much do we know about sustainable consumption of fast fashion? Specifically, this research aimed to investigate (i) the association between consumer characteristics (i.e., *impulse buying tendency and shopping enjoyment or hedonism*), with *attitudes*, and *intentions* toward sustainable consumption of fast fashion, (ii) moderating effect of *consumer knowledge* in predicting the relationship among aforementioned variables, and (iii) the direct effects of consumer characteristics on intentions toward SCFF.

Methods: Data were collected through an online questionnaire using convenient sampling from 176 students in three sophomore-level classes in a southeastern university in the U.S. Subjects responded to a set of questions based on the following established scales: *Impulse Buying Tendency* (Han, Morgan, Kotsiopoulos, & Kang-Park, 1991), *Shopping Enjoyment* (Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994), *Knowledge* (Flynn & Goldsmith, 1999; Shen, Richards, & Liu, 2013), *Attitudes* (Kang et al., 2013), and *Intentions Toward Sustainable Consumption of Fast Fashion*

adapted from Kang et al. (2013). All measurement items are on seven-point Likert scales anchored by “strongly disagree” and “strongly agree”. SPSS 21 and Mplus 6 were used for statistical analyses. To test the model, structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed. First, confirmatory analysis (CFA) was conducted, which resulted in adequate fit (using random parceling technique; see Little, et al., 2002). Followed by causal modeling, which also resulted in adequate fit.

Results and Discussion: The findings follow: hedonism was positively related to favorable attitude ($\beta=0.78, p=0.03$); impulse buying was negatively related to favorable attitude, but failed to reach statistical significance ($\beta=-0.443, p=0.24$); and attitude was positively related to purchase intentions ($\beta=-0.86, p=0.00$). To test for moderation, two-group SEM was conducted. Upon comparing constrained and unconstrained models; we found that measurement invariance was established ($\Delta\chi^2=13.28; \Delta df=8$; knowledge construct was split in to two: low and high median split). The moderation effect of the knowledge construct was prominent between attitude and purchase intentions. We found that knowledge construct positively moderated the relationship (low ($n=86$): attitude \rightarrow intention $\beta=0.78, p=0.00$; high ($n=90$): attitude \rightarrow intention $\beta=0.89, p=0.00$). On the other hand, knowledge construct did not moderate the relationship between impulse buying \rightarrow attitude relationship or hedonism \rightarrow attitude relationship. In general, the proposed model explained 75.4% of the variance in the terminal construct ($R^2=.754, p=0.00$).

Theoretical and Practical Implications: This study extends research into sustainable consumption of fast fashion brands, which essentially are two sides of the same coin. Interestingly, this study signifies that impulse buying tendency has a negative influence while hedonism has a positive influence toward attitudes toward SCFF. Consumers who become instantly aroused with a desire to possess a fashion item do not consider sustainable options (such as buying less or overcoming their urge to immediate gratification) and tend to make affect-based (rather than cognitive and affect based) choices more likely. On the other hand, consumers who believe in sense of gratification as a long term philosophy tend to make sustainable choices when consuming fast fashion. The results make further theoretical contributions by showing that consumer knowledge is a significant moderator in the relationship between attitudes and intentions toward SCFF. Practitioners who seek to effectively market sustainable practices among consumers should make efforts in providing them with relevant and up-to-date knowledge about facts, consequences, advantages, issues etc. specific to fashion industry.

Note: Due to the page limit, the full list of references will be provided by the authors upon request.