

FAST FASHION: COMPULSIVE BUYING BEHAVIOUR IN INDIAN APPAREL INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

In India, Fast Fashion is emerging as an important and growing category in garment retail. Fast fashion brands like Zara, Gap, H&M, and Forever 21 have entered India's retail market in the last few years. Fast Fashion has rapid fashion cycles, what is "in" is always changing, causing consumers to feel pressure to continually update their wardrobes (Cwerner, 2001). Compulsive buying entails consumers who buy frequently, often without controlling their urges (Muller, et al., 2015). This is an international phenomenon that is spreading around the world and has a significant percentage of people qualify as "excessive shoppers" who show traits of compulsive shopping behaviour (Greenpeace International, 2017). According to the article in Quartz Media LLC (US), Fast Fashion's sad cycle of compulsive shopping, guilt, and regret has spread to Asia recently.

We assess current literature in the context of customer buying behaviour, fast fashion, values, and psychographic traits. We attempt to find out the gap in research both in academic and marketing aspects regarding the Compulsive buying behaviour of Fast Fashion consumers concerning values and psychographic traits. The study will also define research questions and build a conceptual framework according to the research gap.

Theoretical and Practical Implications: *By understanding compulsive shopping tendencies, fast fashion retailers can strategize their merchandise in a way that stimulates consumers' urges. Furthermore, researchers should continue to investigate fast fashion consumers values and psychographic traits to develop a better understanding of consume*

Keywords: *Compulsive Buying Behavior, Fast Fashion, Psychographic traits, Values, etc..*

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, fashion trends are changing rapidly and fast fashion brands like Zara, Gap, H&M, and Forever 21 are capitalizing on them through their efficient supply chains. The fast fashion model is a "streamlined system involving new design, production, distribution, and marketing" (Cohen 2011). The fast fashion brand strategies help retailers to provide customers with the important and emerging trends rapidly and quickly (Choi, et al., 2010). From point of view of operations, fast fashion requires a quick response to new and emerging trends and frequent assortment changes (Caro & Martinez de Albeniz, 2014). As fast fashion clothing gets into store within the shortest lead time possible, it has resulted in an increased number of "seasons" and reduced shipping time. (Mintel, 2002 a, b).

Many international fast fashion brands have entered India in the last few years. Spanish brand, a pioneer in fast fashion, Zara, entered India in 2010. Inditex Trent is the joint venture between Zara brand owner Inditex and Tata Group Retail owns 20 stores. (Fashion united 2017). Swedish fast fashion brand H&M entered India in 2015 and has increased its number of stores from 15 to 27, due to rapid openings in tier II cities during the year (Live mint 2018). American fast fashion brand [Forever 21](#), entered India in 2016. [Aditya Birla](#) Fashion and Retail Ltd. acquire Forever 21 India business from its current franchisee, Diana Retail Private Ltd. Forever 21 strengthens its foothold with 15 stores in India. (ANI 2017) American fast fashion brand Gap has a franchise agreement with textile and apparel major Arvind Lifestyle Brands in India. It entered India in 2015 has 11 stores. Other fast fashion brands like Next, Mango, etc. have also started stores in India recently and are doing well.

Malls are allocating prime spaces to fast fashion retailers in the premises. The mall prefers fast fashion brands over others, due to higher purchase values and footfalls they can generate for the mall. It is expected that fast fashion retailers are going to increase further in India. (Images, Business of Fashion, April 2017). Also, many international retailers like the Japanese brand Uniqlo will enter the Indian market in near future.

As fast fashion brands are doing well in India, many domestic brands are also adapting their business model. Domestic retail giant, The Future Group launched the brand Cover Story, which is its fast fashion format, in Aug 2017. Cover Story opened its first standalone store in Mumbai for women's western wear. Future Group plans to add 50 such stores in the next two years. Arvind Retail launched the online fast fashion brands, Prym and Shuffle late last year for young women. These domestic and international brands are trying to tap into the growing opportunities and exploiting the potential of the Indian consumer consumption story.

The low cost, latest trends, and many seasons of fast fashion present an opportunity for consumers to purchase increase quantities of apparel. Because of rapid fashion cycles and many seasons, what is "in" is keeps changing, causing consumers to feel pressure to continually update. (Cwerner, 2001). Consumers are buying apparel, on an average eight to ten times a year now compared to a few years back, when it was less than half a dozen times. (Images, Business of Fashion, April 2017).

Consumers may also purchase impulsively or compulsively. Consumers who purchase impulsively purchase with reckless abandon, forgoing any self-control that they may possess (Rook, 1987). In addition, compulsive buying includes consumers who will buy frequently, usually without controlling their urges (Muller, et al., 2015). According to the article in Quartz Media LLC (US), the fast fashion sad cycle of compulsive shopping, guilt, and regret has spread to Asian markets recently. Compulsive fashion shoppers regularly overspend on new clothes despite not being able to use them, with post-shopping excitement often turning into guilt after less than a day. This is an international phenomenon that is spreading around the world, according to representative surveys commissioned by Greenpeace. A significant percentage of people qualify as "excessive shoppers" who show traits of compulsive shopping behaviour. (Greenpeace International, 2017. The pressure of the Fast Fashion market makes shoppers particularly vulnerable to these compulsive purchasing tendencies (Johnson & Attmann, 2009).

In the next section (2), we cover the literature related to compulsive buying, fast fashion, values, and psychographic traits followed by the purpose of study in section (3). Then sample research questions are presented in section (4). The theoretical framework is presented in section (5) followed by conclusion (6) and limitations (7).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Compulsive buying and Fast Fashion

Compulsive buying is recurring chronic buying behaviour as it becomes the initial response to negative events or feelings in consumers (Park & Burns, 2005). The compulsive consumer makes purchases that are often triggered by stress and anxiety. The purchases made are meant to temporarily alleviate the negative feeling in consumers, however, the same purchases are more often followed by the additional negative feeling of shame or depression. Additional outcomes of compulsive buying behaviour may include family and/or marital discord, anxiety, financial debt, and frustration. (Christenson, et al.,1994).

It is the pressure of the fast fashion brand market, which makes shoppers vulnerable to the compulsive purchasing tendencies in consumers (Johnson & Attmann, 2009). Consumers may feel compelled to buy frequently to keep up with the current and latest fashion as the fashion is cyclical and is changing at a very rapid pace, which often leads to the accumulation of clothes (Johnson & Attmann, 2009), ultimately. There is a connection between fast fashion purchasing frequency (FFP) and compulsive, impulsive and hoarding behaviours. (VerticaBedford, Sergio C Hustvedt, Gwendolyn Bhardwaj.). Fast fashion is particularly attractive to compulsive consumers as it continually provides them with new fashion clothing merchandise (Johnson & Attmann, 2009).

2.2 Values and buying behaviour

The first one is the values that are the basic motives and guide to a specific behaviour in shopping. (Dittmar, 2004; Goldbart et al., 2004; Richins, 2004) According to Vinson, Scott, and Lamont (1977), personal values are highly involved with buying pattern and behaviour of consumers. Chang et al. (2011) also check the direct and indirect relationship of physical vanity with compulsive buying with the mediating role of buying motives. But there is a difference between buying motives and values in the shopping environment (De Ferran & Grunert, 2007).

According to Beatty, Kahle, and Homer (1991), the aims and goals of the society are shown by the individual's values and also hint at the way the society often operates. The individuals' behaviour is affected by values, which eventually influence the consumer purchase behaviour. Schwartz (1992; 2006) discussed the 'value theory' with the conclusion that values are the standards and assist in the selection or assessment of plans, actions, strategies, and happenings.

(Rokeach 1973: 24) Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell (1968) were the first ones to propose the central role of values in consumer behaviour. However, the importance of studying the values of a consumer in the understanding of consumer behaviour received due attention in marketing (Vinson et al., 1977) Social values have a significant impact on hedonic motives and which ultimately result in impulsive buying intention or/and compulsive buying behaviour. (Attiq, S. 2013).

Shopping for clothes reflects the broader values and interests of the consumers (Tatzel, 1982). Although the empirical relationship which exists between personal values and behaviour is usually low and different constructs were suggested in the past to bridge the gap between the two variables(e.g., Goldsmith et al., 1997; Homer and Kahle, 1988).

It is clear from the literature review that values play an important role in individual behaviour, which finally influences consumer buying behaviour. So, a study can be done to find out the effect of values on compulsive buying behaviour.

2.3 Values, attitude and buying behaviour

These hierarchical features of values also help to distinguish them from attitudes. People's value forms an ordered system of value priorities that characterize them as individuals.

Values are guides and determinants of social attitudes and ideologies on the one hand and of social behaviour on the other. According to the study, behaviour is a manifestation of attitudes and values (Connor and Becker, 1975).

In the context of clothing purchase, values have been related to the purchase behaviour of clothing in earlier studies. At the individual level, using structural equation modelling, Homer and Kahle (1988) showed that the relationship between values and consumer behaviour is mediated via attitudes.

Values have internal and external orientation and provide valuable insight to retail managers regarding consumer purchase behaviour (Kropp et al, 2005). Although values-needs-purchase behaviour (Kim et al., 2002) and values-attitude-purchase behaviour have been investigated earlier (Allen et al., 2002). In a study on the urban college-goers of India Value-psychographic trait-clothing purchase behaviour was specifically examined (1Roy, Sudas Goswami, Paromita).

2.4 Psychographic traits, Fast Fashion Brands and Compulsive buying behaviour

Different studies have considered various psychographic traits on buying behaviour. Materialism, brand engagement in self-concept (BESC), status consumption, and brand loyalty traits were studied in clothing purchase behaviour by Goldsmith, Ronald E.Flynn, Leisa R.Clark, Ronald A in 2012. Relationship of social media with Fashion Consciousness in Consumer Buying Behaviour was studied by Shafiq, Muhammad, Shahzad, Hamid, Imran, Muhammad in 2014

Several studies are done with psychographic traits and compulsive buying behaviour. Fashion orientation and credit card use were studied in compulsive buying by Park, Hye-Jung Davis Burns, Leslie in 2005.

Studies are also done with psychographic traits and compulsive buying behaviour for fast fashion. Johnson and Attmann in 2009 include the variables neuroticism, materialism, and fashion interest, and focused on compulsive buying in the context of fashion clothing. Social Media, Fashion Interest, and Fast Fashion Involvement were psychographic traits studied with compulsive buying behaviour for fast fashion consumers by Higgins, Kathleen M in 2014. An additional variable, fast fashion involvement was added by Choi, Liu, Liu, Mak, & To in 2010 to the Clothes Hoarding Model to measure fast fashion's potential influence on compulsive clothing buying behaviour.

In one of the research, the List of values are studied with Psychographic traits. Traits of innovativeness and fashion-consciousness were intervening variables between values and clothing purchase behaviour by I.Roy, Sudas Goswami, Paromita in 2007.

From the review of different variables used in different studies, it was found that the most suitable variables to study the effect of values on compulsive buying behaviour with mediating effect of psychographic traits are Fast fashion involvement, Fashion-Consciousness, and Innovativeness for Fast Fashion brands.

However, no attempt has been made according to the Literature review to examine the effect of Values on the Compulsive Buying Behaviour of Fast Fashion Brands and to analyse the mediating effect of Psychographic Traits.

3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Compulsive buying behaviour has been studied extensively in recent times by economists and researchers but rarely in the context of Fast Fashion consumers. It is evident from the extensive review of literature that there is a lack of research both in academic and marketing regarding Compulsive buying behaviours of fast fashion consumers concerning value psychographic traits. Seldom study is done to this emerging and important market. As fast fashion is always considered a small part of the fashion industry, so the features of the fast fashion market and its consumer characteristics are ignored. Fast Fashion is very different from conventional fashion. Understanding compulsive shopping tendencies will help fast fashion retailers to merchandise in a way that stimulates consumers' urges (Bedford, S. C., Hustvedt, G., & Bhardwaj, V.2016).

So, our study will help the marketers to understand the values of compulsive buyers, their demographic profile, and psychographic traits, to be considered for consuming Fast fashion brands. The purpose of this study is to help Fast Fashion clothing retailers to frame their product and strategy in such a way that it appeals to the consumers with required values and psychographic traits. Thus, the current study intends to fill the gap and contribute to the existing literature on these issues besides improving the understanding of the academicians, psychologists, behaviourists, marketers, and retailers regarding the values and behaviour working behind CBB in the Fast Fashion world.

4. RESEARCH QUESTION

One may say that possession of certain psychographic traits leads to particular consumer behaviour. Again, values have been known to influence consumer behaviour (Schopphoven, 1991). **So, the research questions which are asked are-**

1. Whether values influence the Compulsive Buying Behaviour of Fast Fashion Brands? What is the hierarchy of such values?

Values also affect attitude, which in turn, affect behaviour (Henry, 1976). So, the next research question is-

2. Whether the relationship exists between Values and Psychographic Traits (Fast Fashion Involvement, Fashion-Consciousness and Innovativeness)?

The value-psychographic trait-behaviour (VPC) hierarchy was empirically studied concerning clothing purchase behaviour (Sudas Roy and Paromita Goswami, 2007). But no effort has been taken so far to test

the value-psychographic traits empirically for compulsive clothing buying behaviour of Fast Fashion Brands in India.

The next research Question is-

3. Whether Psychographic Traits (Fast fashion involvement, Fashion-Consciousness and Innovativeness) have an impact on Compulsive Buying Behaviour?

5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

5.1 Key theories

The deductive research approach is applied which uses existing theories. The theories explain the relationship between values, attitudes and consumer behaviour. The two theories which are used in the study are the Theory of reasoned action and Beliefs, Attitudes and Values theory

Theory of reasoned action (TRA) – “The theory aims to explain the relationship between attitudes and behaviours within human action. TRA is used to predict how individuals will behave based on their pre-existing attitudes and behavioural intentions. An individual's decision to engage in a particular behaviour is based on the outcomes the individual expects will come as a result of performing the behaviour.” (Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen in 1967)

Beliefs, Attitudes and Values Theory- “Indicates that a person's beliefs, attitudes, and values must be in harmony with one another and are interconnected with one another, and further explicates the importance of each aspect in the art of persuasion. He suggested that values are underlying dispositions for an individual's beliefs, attitude, and behaviour.” (Milton Rokeach in 1969)

5.2 Conceptual Framework.

The variables considered are List of values, compulsive buying behaviour, fast fashion involvement, fashion-consciousness and innovativeness. CCB is a dependent variable, LOV is independent variable and psychographic traits (fast fashion involvement, fashion-consciousness and innovativeness) are intervening variable.

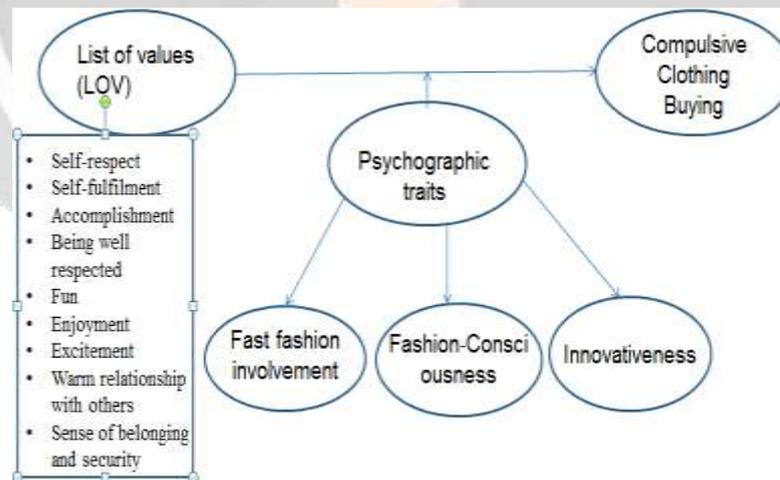


Fig -1: Conceptual Model

6. CONCLUSION

As Fast Fashion brands are important and an emerging segment of the Indian retail market for clothes, so it is necessary to reach out to the consumers appropriately. Understanding the values and psychographics of the target segment would help and enable the adoption of the correct positioning strategy by apparel or clothing marketers. A literature review suggests that the knowledge gap exists in understanding the role of psychographics as an intervening variable between values and purchasing frequency of clothing in the world of fast fashion. It was further hypothesized that the values of the individuals might impact the Compulsive buying behaviour. The psychographic traits of innovativeness, fashion-consciousness and

fast fashion involvement are selected as intervening variables which in turn affect compulsive clothing purchase behaviour in fast fashion brands.

7. LIMITATIONS

There are a few limitations that may have inhibited this study. The study is limited to Fast Fashion Brand stores of Bangalore This study could be extended to investigate more psychographic traits and their mediating effect on Compulsive buying behaviour. The study is being done for fast fashion brands and it can be extended to Fads and other low-cost brands.

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