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Tendency to Regret and Compulsive Buying Among Fashion Adoption Groups

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Keywords: Tendency to regret, compulsive buying, fashion adoption groups

Conceptual Framework. Marketing research often focuses on the consumer's decision-making process. But the consumer's emotional state after a purchase or non-purchase has been ignored (Delacroix & Jourdan, 2007). This state is strongly affected by regret, a negative emotion that can lead to negative attitudes about a product, create dissatisfaction and negative word of mouth, and diminish the intention of buying the brand again (Tsiros & Mittal, 2000). Tendency to regret is "a personality trait that reflects the frequency of experiences of regret within the context of consumer decisions" (Delacroix & Jourdan, p. 28). A *model of post-purchase evaluation* (Inman, Dyer & Jia, 1997), used as a framework for this study, includes evaluation of the option selected as well as options not selected. Because there is risk in early adoption of new styles, earlier (vs. later) adopters may have a greater tendency to regret. Earlier adopters are more likely to buy impulsively; there is a strong correlation between impulsive and compulsive buying (Shahjehan et al. 2012). Compulsive buying is repetitive buying in response to negative events or feelings (Faber & O'Guinn, 1992). Because tendency to regret is a negative feeling, there may be a link between compulsive buying and tendency to regret. Women are more likely than men to be compulsive buyers; compulsive buyers are more interested in fashion, more conscious of their appearance, and more involved in a quest for possessions than non-compulsive buyers (e.g., Faber & O'Guinn, 1992; Park & Burns, 2005). Thus, men and women and fashion adoption groups may differ in tendency to regret and compulsive buying.

Purpose of the study. The purpose of the study was to compare tendency to regret and compulsive buying tendencies among fashion adoption groups and by gender. Hypotheses were as follows: Fashion adoption groups will differ in (1) tendency to regret, and (2) compulsive buying. Women and men will differ in (3) tendency to regret, and (4) compulsive buying. (5) High (vs. low) scorers on compulsive buying will score higher on tendency to regret.

Method: A questionnaire contained demographic items and items measuring compulsive buying (Faber & O'Guinn, 1992), fashion innovativeness and opinion leadership (Hirschman & Adcock, 1978), and tendency to regret (Delacroix & Jourdan, 2007). Participants were students at a US mid-western university (105 women, 122 men, 2 missing data; mean age=21.77). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha reliability, and M/ANOVA. Scale reliability was acceptable--Cronbach's alpha ranged from .67 to .89.

Results: The average score on compulsive buying tendency was .51 (SD=1.87), range=-7.03 to 3.61. Following Faber and O'Guinn's (1994) procedure, 38 respondents (16.6 %; 16 men, 22 women) were classified as compulsive buyers. A scale score of -1.34 is the cutoff point. Lower numbers indicate a higher compulsive buying tendency. Using the mean and standard deviation on fashion innovativeness and opinion leadership, participants were categorized as

change agents (n=38), early adopters (n=78), late adopters (n=68), and reluctant adopters (n=43). Also, compulsive buying tendency scores were divided into two groups (high/low) based on median (.68). MANOVA with fashion adoption groups and gender as independent variables, and tendency to regret and compulsive buying tendency as dependent variables was significant [$F(6, 438)=5.86, p<.000$] and [$F(2, 218)= 5.288, p<.006$]. ANOVA as a follow-up procedure revealed differences among the fashion adoption groups in tendency to regret ($p<.000$). Change agents scored highest on tendency to regret followed by early adopters, late adopters and reluctant adopters. There were differences among the four groups in compulsive buying tendency ($p<.003$). Reluctant adopters had the least compulsive buying tendency differing significantly from change agents, early adopters and late adopters. H1 and H2 were supported. ANOVA showed that women scored higher than men on tendency to regret ($p<.003$). Men and women did not differ on compulsive buying tendency. H3 was supported, but not H4. Those who scored high (vs. low) on compulsive buying scored higher on tendency to regret. H5 was supported.

Discussion & Implications: Findings of this study support that in post-purchase evaluation, earlier fashion adoption groups (vs reluctant fashion adoption group) had a greater tendency to regret and were more likely to have compulsive buying tendency. Women had a greater tendency to regret than men. Those who scored higher (vs. lower) on compulsive buying had a greater tendency to regret. Results provide new implications to researchers and practitioners. From a research viewpoint, results make a significant contribution to fashion adoption group literature by discovering differences in post-purchase evaluation and compulsive buying tendency. Further, results can provide insights to clinical psychologists for treatment of compulsive buying behaviors focusing on the role of tendency to regret. For further research, it would be meaningful to investigate a wider variety of post-purchase behavior among fashion adoption groups. Finally, it would be noteworthy to examine fashion adoption groups' post-purchase and compulsive shopping behavior within and across cultural contexts.

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