

THESIS

AN EXPLORATORY INVESTIGATION OF THE DECISION PROCESSES AND  
PSYCHOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS  
OF FAST VERSUS SLOW FASHION CONSUMERS

Submitted by

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WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER OUR SUPERVISION BY MAEGAN ZARLEY ENTITLED AN EXPLORATORY INVESTIGATION OF THE DECISION PROCESSES AND PSYCHOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF FAST VERSUS SLOW FASHION CONSUMERS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING IN PART REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE.

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## ABSTRACT OF THESIS

### AN EXPLORATORY INVESTIGATION OF THE DECISION PROCESSES AND PSYCHOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF FAST VERSUS SLOW FASHION CONSUMERS

The purpose of the present study was to explore the differences between fast fashion and slow fashion consumers in regards to their consumer decision process stages (i.e., purchase/consumption, post-consumption evaluation, and divestment). More specifically, the objectives of this study are threefold. First, this study attempts to characterize fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers by potentially defining them based on their decision-making characteristics and perceptions of fast (vs. slow) fashion. Second, this study investigates whether fast fashion and slow fashion consumers differentiate on the consumer decision process stages and several psychographic dimensions (i.e., fashion orientation, conspicuous consumption, and self construal). Finally, this study proposes two scales to quantitatively measure fast fashion and slow fashion consumers, which will allow for these consumers to be characterized based on their decision-making. The consumer decision process (CDP) model is used as the theoretical foundation for the study. The key areas under evaluation in this study are purchase/consumption, post-consumption evaluation, and divestment.

A mixed method research design was utilized for this study. The researcher distributed surveys and proctored focus groups to profile fast fashion consumers and created a quantitative means to measure consumers' tendency to consume fast (vs. slow) fashion. An exploratory mixed method design with a concurrent nested strategy was implemented. Thirty-eight female participants with a mean age of 21.2 were recruited. Three groups of themes emerged based on the purchase and post-purchase stages of the CDP model. Results show that participants were different based on those themes, but not different on the psychographic variables explored.

The results of this research procured definitions for both slow fashion and fast fashion consumers. Future research can continue to explore fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers during all seven stages of the consumer decision process model. Theoretical and managerial implications and limitations of the study are discussed.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### *Justification*

The present study was an exploratory investigation into the concepts of both fast fashion and slow fashion. Three individual characteristic variables were utilized to gain a deeper understanding of fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers. Specifically, the researcher examined fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers' purchase/consumption, post-consumption evaluation, and divestment behavior of fashion apparel.

The two central concepts chosen for this study were fast fashion and slow fashion. Fast fashion is most commonly referenced as a business strategy that creates an efficient supply chain in order to produce fashionable merchandise rapidly while quickly responding to consumer demand (Levy & Weitz, 2008). Slow fashion is suggested to be the opposite of fast fashion; however, it has no formal definition. Slow fashion is a stigma given to retailers who produce long-lasting clothing that is typically not in response to quickly changing fashion trends. These concepts were chosen because they have been minimally researched from a consumer perspective in academia (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006). Additionally, these concepts were chosen because fast fashion's quickness to the market and revenue growth has allowed them to outperform many department and specialty stores (Karr, 2009). This quickness and success justifies their importance and continued presence in the fashion market.

While there is little consumer research regarding fast fashion, the following section discusses how past researchers have introduced fast fashion in the consumer context. Morgan and Birtwistle (2009) studied young fashion consumers' disposal habits. These researchers reference fast fashion to justify the need for their research. According to Morgan and Birtwistle (2009), the concept of fast fashion encompasses several reasons to address the issue of textile waste. Some of these reasons include fast fashion retailers' ability to send products from the design stage to store shelf within two weeks; encouraging consumers to buy vast quantities of low-priced goods every week (Keynote, 2008). These levels of consumption indicate that fast fashion consumers may have an excess of lower quality clothing they need to divest. The researchers argue that the increase in 15 –29 year-old consumers, whom are style hungry and in low socio-economic groups, will expand the popularity of fast fashion (Intel, 2007; Morgan & Birtwistle, 2009). These researchers found that young fashion consumers are unaware of the need for clothing recycling (Morgan & Birtwistle, 2009). Additionally, these researchers did not examine whether fast fashion consumers may have different disposal habits compared to other consumers. These findings justify the importance of researching fast fashion and its probable implication in unsustainable clothing disposal. Further, fast fashion and slow fashion are antitheses of each other; this provided valuable comparable data that may explain the consumer behavior surrounding these concepts. Fast fashion retailers need to gain a better understanding of their consumers because market analysts suggest that price-led marketing strategies for fast fashion companies are no longer going to work (Gorman, 2007). Women are buying twice as much clothing as they were in 1995, thus continually reducing prices is not going to stimulate needed

demand (Gorman, 2007). If fast fashion retailers have a deeper understanding of their consumers, non-price based marketing strategies can be created and implemented.

In order to compare fast (vs. slow) fashion, the purchase and post-purchase stages of the consumer decision process (CDP) model were utilized (Blackwell, Miniard, & Engel, 2006). Past studies mostly have focused on the beginning stages of the model where consumer choice is the main focus (e.g., Chen-Yu & Kincade, 2001). Chen-Yu and Kincade (2001) examined product image, in the context of sweatshirts, and discovered how image affected the decision stages of alternative evaluation, purchase, and post purchase. The present study went one step further and focused on the purchase/consumption, post-consumption evaluation, and divestment stages. Research, which ignores the final three stages of the decision process model, forgoes discovery of important consumer decision processes. The inclusion of the divestment stage can help formulate ways that consumers can be more sustainable in their disposal choices. Divestment is important to research in the context of fast fashion because some consumers of fast fashion purchase with the intent of disposal (Murphy, 2005). For example, a consumer stated this comment while shopping at a fast fashion store: “They’re inexpensive and fun. I buy H&M for fun, to have a good time. Then I throw it away. It’s not the same thing when you buy a Vuitton” (Murphy, 2005, p. 1). This quote indicates an unsustainable disposal stigma that surrounds fast fashion. No previous studies have evaluated the final three stages of the CDP model in regards to fast (vs. slow) fashion. The three aforementioned stages of the CDP model were chosen because the researcher proposes there will be differences between consumers of fast (vs. slow) fashion apparel during the purchase/consumption, post-consumption evaluation, and

divestment stages of the model. Examination of the final three stages allowed the researcher to concentrate on the behavior *after* the product choice has been made and will subsequently be consumed, evaluated, and divested. Focusing on these stages will allow the researcher to discover if there is a difference in the reasons for purchase/consumption, the satisfaction levels, and the divestment behavior between consumers of fast (vs. slow) fashion; if there are, what are the differences?

In order to achieve a greater understanding of these consumers, three individual characteristics were also investigated to determine their influences on the consumer's decision process stages. The decision to use psychographic analysis is derived from the idea that psychographic variables are more successful when explaining socially responsible behavior and recycling patterns (Domina & Koch, 1998). This will be especially beneficial when discussing the divestment stage, for recycling is a probable venue for the disposal of clothing. The psychographic variables chosen have both intrapersonal and interpersonal components.

The following individual characteristics were chosen for evaluation: fashion orientation, conspicuous consumption, and self construal. The first individual characteristic to be evaluated was fashion orientation. An individual's fashion orientation is how concerned one is with others' perceptions of their clothing (Gutman & Mills, 1982). Fashion orientation can be measured with four dimensions. Discovering the difference in fashion orientation between consumers of fast (vs. slow) fashion will be another guiding factor towards the answer of *why* consumers choose fast (vs. slow) fashion. Conspicuous consumption was the second characteristic to be studied. Conspicuous consumption was chosen because its application to the consumption of

apparel has not been widely studied in the context of consumer decision processes or fast (vs. slow) fashion consumption. Conspicuous consumption has evolved, just as retailers' business strategies and societies' social classes have evolved. This concept may be applicable to fast (vs. slow) fashion, not in the context of price, but in the context of prestige and the ability to obtain fashion items while they simultaneously become "in style." The third individual characteristic being evaluated was self construal.

Discovering the participant's identity with (or without) a group may also explain their choice between fast (vs. slow) fashion. Developing the realm to which self construal may explain fast (vs. slow) fashion will also discover *why* consumers choose what they buy. Ultimately, discovering the divestment behavior of fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers will explain what happens to clothing that is meant only to be worn for one season (fast fashion). When a fast fashion company has up to 20 "seasons" in a year, a significant amount of clothing is being produced, consumed, and divested (Christopher, Lowson, & Peck, 2004). What does the consumer do with this clothing when the next "season" arrives?

The aforementioned variables were strategically chosen to help discover and explain the consumer behavior surrounding fast (vs. slow) fashion. The three variables have interpersonal and intrapersonal characteristics that make them appropriate to be used together. A consumer's fashion orientation, conspicuous consumption, and self construal all depend upon others' views. In the present study, participants self-reported their fashion orientation, conspicuous consumption, and self construal via a survey developed in the context of fashion apparel. These variables have not been explored together or measured in the context of fast (vs. slow) fashion. Psychographic variables

that have both interpersonal and intrapersonal components were chosen because past studies focused more on personality characteristics such as affect and hedonism in regards to apparel consumption (Dawson, Bloch, & Ridgway, 1990; Sullivan & Heitmeyer, 2008). When examining the decision stages of purchase/consumption, post-consumption evaluation, and divestment, in the context of fast (vs. slow) fashion, it is appropriate to examine interpersonal variables that are affected by others' views and opinions. It is evident that social factors may play a role in these stages and past research has left this to be discovered.

### ***Purpose***

The purpose of the present study was to explore the differences between fast fashion and slow fashion consumers in regards to their consumer decision process stages (i.e., purchase/consumption, post-consumption evaluation, and divestment). More specifically, the objectives of this study were threefold. First, this study attempted to characterize fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers by potentially defining them based on their decision-making characteristics and perceptions of fast (vs. slow) fashion. Second, this study investigated whether fast fashion and slow fashion consumers differentiate on the consumer decision process stages and several psychographic dimensions (i.e., fashion orientation, conspicuous consumption, and self construal). Finally, this study proposed two scales to quantitatively measure fast fashion and slow fashion consumers, which will allow for these consumers to be characterized based on their decision-making. This scale will be potentially useful to researchers and retailers to better understand their target markets. This research strived to understand if and how individual characteristics influence the consumption of fast (vs. slow) fashion; and whether these influences

differentiate between fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers. A mixed method research design, incorporating surveys, personal interviews and focus group discussions, was utilized for the study.

### ***Research Questions***

The purpose of the present study was to explore the differences between fast fashion and slow fashion consumers in regards to their consumer decision process stages. Based on the specific objectives, the study will answer the following research questions.

1. What are some of the defining characteristics of fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers?
2. Do consumers of fast (vs. slow) fashion products differ in their purchase/consumption, post-consumption evaluation, and divestment of fashion apparel? If yes, how?
3. Do fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers differentiate based on individual characteristics (i.e., fashion orientation, conspicuous consumption, and self construal). If yes, how?
4. What are some of the items that can quantitatively measure fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers?

### ***Significance***

Past research has demonstrated the importance of understanding the supply chain and business model aspect of fast fashion (Levy & Weitz, 2008; Lopez & Fan, 2009; Sull & Turconi, 2008). However, to our best knowledge, no empirical studies have been conducted that examine the decision-making process of fast (vs. slow) fashion from a consumer perspective. This study will add to the body of knowledge by providing

definitions for fast fashion and slow fashion consumers and how they may be different in terms of their consumer decision-making.

### ***Theoretical Framework***

#### ***Consumer Decision Process Model***

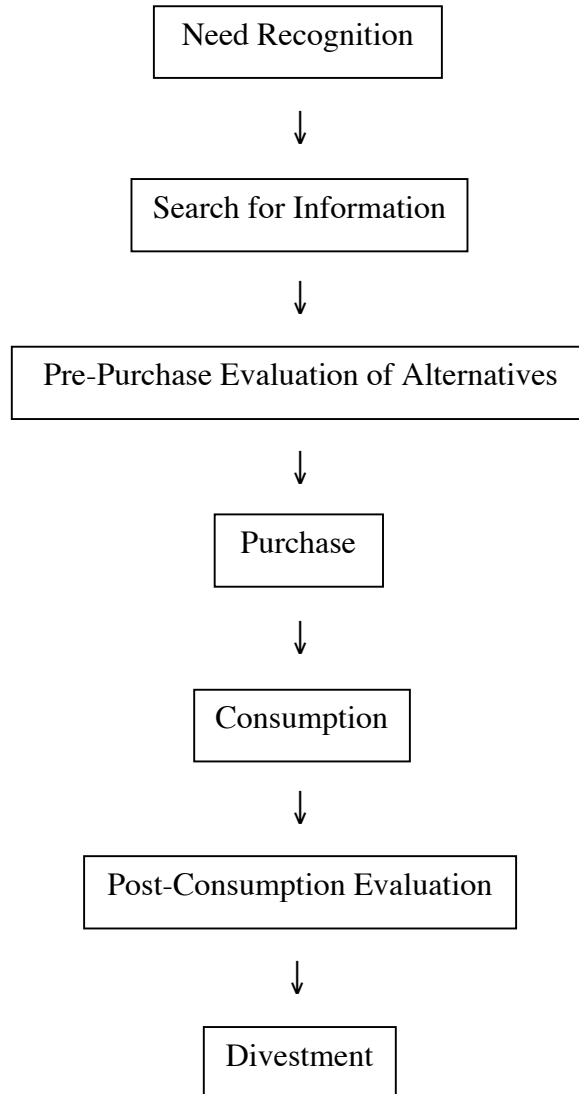
The consumer decision process (CDP) model (Figure 1), developed by Blackwell, Miniard, and Engel (2006), helps to map how fashion orientation, conspicuous consumption, and self construal will aid in examining the consumption of fast (vs. slow) fashion. The CDP model formats the activities that occur when decisions are made and shows how different internal and external factors affect consumers' decisions (Blackwell et al., 2006). The model includes seven stages, starting at need recognition, and followed by search for information, pre-purchase evaluation of alternatives, purchase, consumption, post-consumption evaluation, and divestment. The first three stages are called the pre-purchase stage, followed by the purchase stage, and then the post-purchase stage. There are a number of factors that may influence the consumer when they go through any or all of the stages. The internal and external factors that may influence a consumer's decision process include retrieving knowledge from memory and collecting information from peers, family, and the marketplace (Blackwell et al., 2006). Marketers and managers can use this map to guide product mix, communication, and sales (Blackwell et al., 2006).

The CDP model separates the stages of purchase and consumption; however, for the purpose of this study the researcher will ensure the participants have purchased and consumed the fashion items. The key areas under evaluation in this study are purchase/consumption, post-consumption evaluation, and divestment. The internal



factors that affect these specific stages include individual differences such as consumer resources, motivation, knowledge, attitudes, personality, values, and lifestyle (Blackwell et al., 2006). The consumption stage occurs when the consumer has possession of the item and subsequently utilizes it (e.g., wears a shirt). Consumption can occur immediately or be delayed. How a consumer uses and maintains a product may determine how long a product will last and subsequently affect repurchasing motives (Blackwell et al., 2006). The post-consumption evaluation stage is where the consumer can either experience satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Satisfaction occurs when the expectations of the consumer match the product's perceived performance (Blackwell et al., 2006). Dissatisfaction occurs when the expectations of the consumer fall short of perceived performance (Blackwell et al., 2006). The most important determinant of satisfaction is how the consumer uses the product; if used incorrectly dissatisfaction may occur (Blackwell et al., 2006). The final stage, divestment, considers several options consumers have for discarding products; disposal, recycling, or remarketing (Blackwell et al., 2006). During the divestment stage, personal concerns regarding the environment and recycling play a role in the consumer's divestment decisions (Blackwell et al., 2006). Past studies have examined consumer behavior at various stages of the decision-making model in a variety of contexts including apparel (Chen-Yu & Kincade, 2001; Farley, Lehmann, Winer, & Katz, 1982; Hart & Dewsnap, 2001; Shao, Lye, & Rundle-Thiele, 2008; White, 2009).

**Figure 1. Consumer Decision Process Model (Blackwell et al., 2006)**

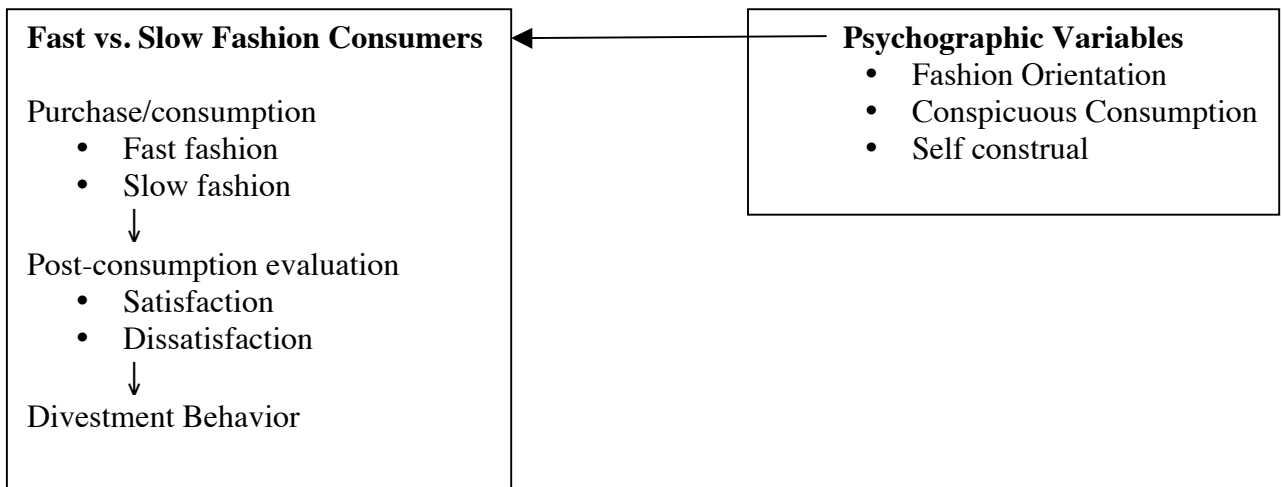


***Theoretical Framework for the Present Study***

In this study, the purchase and post-purchase stages of the model are the main focus; they will be explored in the context of fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers. This model is important for the purpose of this study because the researcher will evaluate how the various individual variables (i.e., fashion orientation, conspicuous consumption, and

self construal) may help differentiate fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers (Figure 2). These variables were chosen because they may help explain the motivations of the individuals as to why they purchase/consume fast (vs. slow) fashion apparel. Fashion orientation, conspicuous consumption, and self construal (all of which are expanded upon in subsequent sections) are interpersonal variables that influence why individuals consume. When researching fast (vs. slow) fashion, these independent variables will assist in explaining the consumers' behavioral differences in the CDP model.

**Figure 2. Theoretical Framework for the Present Study**



The variables for this study were chosen based on their potential correlation with fast and slow fashion consumption as well as their interrelation to each other. The creation of variable linkages through research will help evaluate how specific individual characteristics define and differentiate different fashion consumers. Discovering divestment behavior will evaluate why some consumers choose to be sustainable (recycle or reuse products) and why others choose to throw them away. Additionally, through research, we can discover which factors may influence apparel disposal and how retailers can strive to encourage sustainable divestment.

The theoretical framework for this study will incorporate three variables including fashion orientation, conspicuous consumption, and self construal. Fashion orientation is how concerned an individual is with others' perceptions of their clothing (Gutman & Mills, 1982). Conspicuous consumption is evident when a consumer is motivated by a desire to impress others with their ability to pay high prices for prestige items (Mason, 1983). This consumption is motivated by social influences rather than economic or physiological utility of products (Mason, 1983). Self construal defines how people perceive themselves to be linked or not linked to other people (Zhang & Shrum, 2009). For example, those with an independent self construal see themselves as unique and distinct from social groups. Individuals with interdependent self construal see themselves as valuably connected to members of their social group (Zhang & Shrum, 2009). Thus, these two ideals share the idea that people consume to either identify with, or differentiate from, different social groups. Belk (1988) argues that people consume in order to construct their self-concepts, which enables the creation of self-identity. Possessions often satisfy emotional needs, which can include the identification of self-concept by determining if and how you identify with a group (Belk, 1988). When broken down into simplified concepts, the two theories of conspicuous consumption and self construal combine the same elements. This study used this conceptual framework to examine how certain individual characteristics (i.e., fashion orientation, conspicuous consumption, and self construal) help differentiate fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers.

### *Definition of Terms*

Conspicuous consumption: Consumption that is motivated by a desire to impress others with the ability to pay high prices for prestige items that show wealth (Mason, 1983; Veblen, 1899).

Consumer decision process model: A model that maps the activities that occur when consumers make decisions and the internal and external forces that affect how consumers think, evaluate, and act (Blackwell et al., 2006).

Fashion orientation: How concerned an individual is with others' perceptions of their clothing; measured by four dimensions: fashion leadership, fashion interest, importance of being well dressed, and antifashion attitude (Gutman & Mills, 1982).

Fast fashion: A business strategy that creates an efficient supply chain in order to produce fashionable merchandise rapidly while quickly responding to consumer demand (Levy & Weitz, 2008).

Independent self construal: A view of the self where individuals see themselves as unique and autonomous from social groups; others are less centrally involved with the self, and they hold traits, motives, beliefs, and desires as property of the individual (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Zhang & Shrum, 2009).

Interdependent self construal: A view of the self where individuals see themselves as valuable, identifiable members of a social group. These individuals include others in the context of the self and accommodate others in many aspects of their behavior (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Zhang & Shrum, 2009).

Self construal: How people perceive themselves to be linked or not linked to other people (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994; Zhang & Shrum, 2009).

Slow fashion: A business strategy under which clothing is produced that may be timeless, high quality, and worn through a variety of seasons (Fletcher, 2007).

Veblen effects: A willingness to pay a higher price for a good that is of equal functionality for the wealth that it signals (Bagwell & Bernheim, 1996).

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### *Fashion Consumers*

Fashion consumers have been studied from many perspectives in a variety of contexts (e.g., Birtwistle & Moore, 2007; Domina & Koch, 1998; Grant & Stephen, 2005; Prendergast & Wong, 2003). Fashion consumers were chosen for the context of this study because female fashion consumers are generally enticed to shop at fast fashion stores (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006). Specifically, fashion consumers have been studied in the apparel context by several researchers (e.g., Morgan & Birtwistle, 2009; Workman & Caldwell, 2007). Fashion consumers have been categorized into the following groups: fashion innovators, fashion opinion leaders, innovative communicators, and fashion followers (Workman & Caldwell, 2007). Fashion innovators are the first to buy and wear new fashions. Fashion opinion leaders influence others to adopt new fashions. Innovative communicators are among the first to adopt styles and also influence others' fashion decisions. Fashion followers wait until a fashion is at its peak of acceptance to buy and wear new fashions (Workman & Caldwell, 2007). Workman and Caldwell (2007) found that fashion consumer groups differed in their need for uniqueness and centrality of visual product aesthetics. This study indicated the complexity of fashion consumers and their differentiating needs for product attributes. Morgan and Birtwistle (2009) studied young fashion consumers' disposal habits. These researchers found that young fashion consumers are unaware of the need for clothing

recycling (Morgan & Birtwistle, 2009). Many participants in the study felt that fast fashion encourages a throwaway culture where products are disposed of before their real life cycle has ended (Morgan & Birtwistle, 2009).

### ***Fast Fashion vs. Slow Fashion***

The concept of fast fashion has been coined primarily in reference to its unique business model. A retailer who adopts a fast fashion strategy has developed its supply chain to quickly respond to emerging fashion trends and consumer demands by delivering fashionable merchandise to stores with a lead time in or around one month (Levy & Weitz, 2008; Sull & Turconi, 2008). The lead time for a fashion item is the amount of time it takes for a product to go from the design stage to the store shelf (Kunz, 2005). A few examples of fast fashion stores are Zara (Spain), H&M (Sweden), TopShop (UK), and Forever 21 (U.S.) (Levy & Weitz, 2008). Some key characteristics of fast fashion stores are electronic communication, frequent deliveries, and minimal markdowns. The electronic communication used in fast fashion allows the store employees to inform the home office designers what items consumers are requesting so they can quickly be produced. Utilization of a short lead time allows fast fashion retailers to deliver their customers' product demands in as little as four weeks (Lopez & Fan, 2009).

Additionally, communication to and from the factory is also electronic, thus items can immediately begin production on automatic production machines (Levy & Weitz, 2008). Fast fashion retailers make frequent deliveries to their stores; this ensures that items do not go out of stock and that new items arrive in time to meet customer demand (Levy & Weitz, 2008). The shelf life of fast fashion products is greatly reduced because newer fashion items are continually replacing them. This greatly minimizes markdowns to



15%, compared to the industry average of 50% (Sull & Turconi, 2008). Fast fashion retailers can have up to 20 *seasons* in a year (Christopher et al., 2004). Zara, for example, turns out 10,000 new designs and 40,000 new SKUs each year; in comparison, the average high-fashion designer has around 250 new designs each year. Specifically, Zara, H&M, and Forever 21 will be discussed more in depth to gain a deeper understanding of the fast fashion concept.

Zara is owned and operated by Inditex, the second largest clothing retailer in the world. The owner of Inditex, Amancio Ortega, claims that the goal of Zara is to democratize fashion by offering the latest fashion in medium quality at affordable prices (Lopez & Fan, 2009). For Spain, Zara was an extreme departure from what the country previously knew about fashion because Zara offers innovatively designed clothing that can be bought by a vast number of incomes (Bonnin, 2002). As previously mentioned, a key characteristic of fast fashion is the unique business model. Zara's business model has two key characteristics, time and store information. To reduce lead time, Zara produces more than half of its products within close proximity to its headquarters giving them flexibility for additions and changes, while turning out products quickly (Sull & Turconi, 2008). Zara's vertical integration allows them to quickly respond to customers' changing demands, by having expedited control over the majority of operations (Lopez & Fan, 2009). Inditex owns 17 manufacturing subsidiaries in La Caruna and Barcelona, in addition to expanding production to several other countries in Europe. Operating stores in 59 countries, Zara relies on individual store management to assist in adapting to specific market demands (Lopez & Fan, 2009). For example, when opening a store in

France, Zara sought French management who would better understand the demands of the target market.

Zara's concept has allowed them to quickly and strategically become one of the biggest international brands at the forefront of the fashion industry; turning out 11,000 new items every year (Ghemawat & Nueno, 2003). Their impact on the industry has urged major fashion conglomerates such as Gucci and Burberry to also increase the rotation of their goods and develop sister brands to expand their customer base (Lopez & Fan, 2009). Additionally, luxury brands are doing whatever they can to differentiate themselves and become more competitive with fast fashion retailers. Passariello (2006) suggests that brands such as D&G and Emporio Armani, which are diffusion brands of Dolce and Gabbana and Giorgio Armani respectively, need to compete with fast fashion labels such as Zara and H&M because of their speed to the market.

In terms of market share, one of Zara's main competitors is the Swedish company H&M (Hennes & Mauritz). H&M is located in 22 countries, operating 1,193 stores, and producing around 500 new designs each year (Lopez & Fan, 2009). H&M is more internationalized than Zara, with 90 % of its turnover coming from overseas markets (Lopez & Fan, 2009). H&M does not have the same vertically integrated business model as Zara, thus they outsource all of their production to 700 different suppliers (Lopez & Fan, 2009). It is reasonable to assume that this model slows their lead time, thus explaining the decrease in new product production compared to Zara. However, this model sufficiently enables them to keep the store concept of offering "fashion and quality at the best price" (Lopez & Fan, 2009, p. 290).

Finally, Forever 21 is a primary fast fashion retailer for this study because it is located in the geographic area from which the participants will be recruited. Forever 21 is characterized as a rapidly growing, fast fashion retailer that offers cheap and chic apparel for women and juniors (Yahoo Finance, 2009). Forever 21 utilizes a fast fashion business model and strategically delivers fashion items, seen on the runway, to their stores in as little as one month (Earnest, 2008). A majority of their production is private label and made in Southern California (Yahoo Finance, 2009). Their target consumers are fashion and price conscious women who are drawn to their 20 dollar or less clothing (Pennington, 2004). Forever 21 operates 450 stores in the United States and Canada but is looking to expand in Asia, United Kingdom, Spain, Middle East and Japan (Kaiser, 2009; Yahoo Finance, 2009). The chief executive officer (CEO) of Forever 21, Don Chang, claims that the store is the fastest growing retailer in the United States. The CEO and the executive vice president project that Forever 21's international expansion will constitute a third of its revenue coming from international markets. Forever 21's success has been tainted by infringing copyright laws more than 50 times in the past three-and-a-half years (Kaiser, 2009). Zara, H&M, and Forever 21 operate business models and produce clothing that are the epitome of fast fashion. For that reason they are the key references for fast fashion in this study.

There are many benefits to being a fast fashion retailer. The main benefit is the increased profit margins of 16 % versus the industry average of seven percent (Sull & Turconi, 2008). Additionally, being competitive in today's fashion industry means having a fast response to the consumer's ever changing fashion demands (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006). Fast fashion retailers target fashion conscious consumers who desire

new styles frequently throughout the season. These consumers habitually buy new apparel, discarding old items after only a few months (Levy & Weitz, 2008). Thus it is reasonable to posit that fast fashion consumers may have unique divestment behavior, as well as for other consumer decision processes, in comparison to slow fashion consumers.

Slow fashion items are those that are not produced under the ideals of a fast fashion business model, and are generally not in response to quickly changing fashion trends. Celeste and Anthony Lilore, the storeowners of Restore Clothing, constitute their store as slow fashion and describe it as “nothing in excess and everything in balance” (“Restore clothing”, 2009, p. 1). Slow fashion items are becoming popular as designers begin to forgo the high frequency fashion industry and adopt flexible, seasonless designs (Cordero, 2008). Fletcher (2007) described slow fashion as not time based but quality based. Many of slow fashion’s concepts have been borrowed from the slow food movement, which was founded in Italy in 1986 (Fletcher, 2007). The slow food movement hoped to instill slow values and improve citizens’ quality of life (Fletcher, 2007). This relates to the slower production methods and increased quality of slow fashion. Slow fashion is a shift from quantity to quality, which is why seasonless pieces, that can be worn almost year round, identify slow fashion.

There are few stores that fully encompass the ideals of slow fashion. Project No. 8, Atelier New York, and Zoica Matei have been identified as slow fashion stores (Cordero, 2008). Zoica Matei’s mission statement states, “Our slow fashion philosophy is reflected through our every day conscious choices, while creating timeless pieces, sustainable luxury, which embrace simplicity of form and focus on detail” (Zoica Matei, 2009). Zoica Matei aspires to incorporate the concepts of green, recycled, and fairtrade

into their trans-seasonal clothing (Zoica Matei, 2009). For the purpose of this study, slow fashion will be described not only by specific stores, but also by the value of seasonless clothing. Consumers who strive to purchase clothing that can be worn through several seasons are prime participants for this study. In addition to the aforementioned stores, Eileen Fisher, Abercrombie and Fitch, Burberry, and James Perse all carry clothing pieces that may be considered slow fashion. The differentiating characteristics of fast and slow fashion make them ideal variables for research in regards to the decision process model. Three individual characteristics will be utilized to determine consumer psychographics of fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers. These individual characteristics are fashion orientation, conspicuous consumption, and self construal.

### ***Individual Characteristics***

#### ***Fashion Orientation***

The first individual characteristic to be investigated is fashion orientation. Gutman and Mills (1982) defined fashion orientation as how concerned an individual is with others' perceptions of their clothing. Fashion orientation is measured by four dimensions. The first dimension is fashion leadership. A consumer's fashion leadership is determined by constructs such as importance of being a fashion leader and their perceptions of others' ability to recognize them as the first adopters of a fashion. The second dimension is fashion interest. Fashion interest is measured by the amount of time and money spent on clothing and fashion; and also the purchase of at least one new fashion item each season. The third dimension is the importance of being well dressed. This is measured by evaluating whether the consumer thinks it is vital to be well dressed to get ahead in life. Additionally, the consumer believes what you think about yourself is

reflected by what you wear. The fourth dimension is antifashion attitude. This attitude can be evident when a consumer resents being told what to wear by fashion experts. Additionally, consumers with an antifashion attitude purchase clothing they like regardless of the current fashions. After measuring these dimensions, those consumers who have a high fashion orientation rate high on leadership, interest, and importance, and low on anitfashion attitude (Gutman & Mills, 1982).

Other concepts, such as fashion involvement, have been utilized to study apparel consumption. It is important to note that fashion orientation was chosen in this study, instead of fashion involvement, because fashion orientation encompasses both intrapersonal and interpersonal components. Fashion involvement can be defined as the aggregate effect of fashion behavioral activities. These activities are: fashion innovativeness, fashion interpersonal communication, fashion interest, fashion knowledgeability, and fashion awareness (Tigert, Ring, & King, 1976). These dimensions capture personal characteristics of fashion behavior such as how early one adopts a fashion (fashion innovativeness) and how one educates others about fashion (fashion interpersonal communication). The dimensions of fashion orientation; however, will aid the researcher in discovering both *intrapersonal* and *interpersonal* elements.

The fashion orientation scale, created by Gutman and Mills (1982), was proven to be both reliable and useful for determining individual characteristics that affect consumption behavior (Chung, 1996; Lee, Lennon, & Rudd, 2000). Chung (1996) utilized Korean subjects to study college women's clothing and shopping orientation and market behavior. Chung verified the four same dimensions of fashion orientation as Gutman and Mills (1982). Lee et al. (2000) also identified these dimensions when

studying how TV home shopping impacts fashion lifestyle on the purchasing of fashion goods.

Park and Burns (2005) utilized fashion orientation as a theoretical framework to study credit card use and compulsive buying of apparel. The study utilized the fashion orientation scale proposed by Gutman and Mills (1982). The methodology was quantitative and the researchers used multi-item questionnaires to measure fashion orientation, credit card use, and compulsive buying of apparel of women over 20 years of age. The results indicated that fashion interest (one of the dimensions of fashion orientation) positively influenced compulsive buying and indirectly influenced credit card use in the same positive manner (Park & Burns, 2005). This study is significant to note because it indicates the direct affect of fashion orientation on fashion apparel consumption. Fashion orientation was also used to study compulsive buying and binge eating by Trautmann-Attmann and Johnson (2009). Trautmann-Attmann and Johnson measured compulsive buying, eating disorders, and fashion orientation (using the dimensions created by Gutman and Mills (1982)) to determine correlations between the three. A survey with Likert-type scales was utilized and distributed to female college students in the United States. The researchers found a positive relationship between the importance of being well dressed and fashion interest, and also between fashion interest and compulsive buying of apparel. The researchers suggested that female compulsive shoppers may utilize fashion apparel as symbols to increase self-confidence and project a certain image. This study shows the usefulness of measuring fashion orientation in the context of clothing consumption.

Fashion orientation will be useful when differentiating and defining fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers because it can help identify the possible reasons (e.g., fashion interest and importance of being well dressed) for purchasing fashion apparel. In addition for its discovery of the purchase and consumption stages, it may also aid in understanding consumer satisfaction with apparel purchases and why they choose certain disposal methods. Measuring the participants on the four dimensions of fashion orientation will create profiles that can be utilized to explore whether these constructs can help differentiate the decision processes of fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers.

When measuring the dimensions of fashion orientation, personal characteristics (such as fashion interest and importance of being well dressed) were found to have significant effects on apparel consumption in the aforementioned studies (Gutman & Mills, 1982; Park & Burns, 2005; Trautmann-Attmann & Johnson, 2009). However, fashion orientation also has a significant interpersonal or social aspect because a high fashion oriented consumer is concerned with how *others* perceive their clothing. These aspects make fashion orientation an interesting variable to examine because it can provide individual information, as well as their societal ties, in regards to fashion and clothing choices. The social aspect of fashion orientation leads to an examination of conspicuous consumption, which is the next individual characteristic under investigation.

### ***Conspicuous Consumption***

Different dimensions of conspicuous consumption will be explored in order to evaluate consumer's purchasing decisions as they are influenced by an ostentatious desire to consume. A brief evolution of conspicuous consumption will be provided, followed by the intrapersonal and interpersonal characteristics of conspicuous consumption.



The founding researcher of conspicuous consumption, Thorstein Veblen, presented neoclassical concepts of consumption that are still pertinent today. In his book, *Theory of the Leisure Class*, written in 1899, Veblen argued that individuals emulate consumption patterns of people who are a higher social class than they. He also argued that consumers engage in conspicuous consumption to visibly show their wealth (Veblen, 1899). The concept of conspicuous consumption has certainly evolved and has been studied by many researchers today. It is argued that today's conspicuous consumption is much more subtle (O'Cass & McEwen, 2004). Shipman (2004) took an economical perspective on conspicuous consumption and suggested that consumers may purchase products they do not need, simply for display. Shipman (2004) also suggested that conspicuous consumption is now evolving and is different from how it was in the industrial phase. This researcher discussed the concept of branding and how branded products create an image that allows a premium price to be placed on branded goods (Shipman, 2004). Shipman (2004) also discussed the objectives of buying a branded product. Consumers may buy branded products for their superior quality even though they have the same characteristics of cheaper versions (Shipman, 2004). Consumers may also buy branded products to show the wealth needed to pay for superior quality (Shipman, 2004). These concepts have an interesting relation to the concept of fast fashion. Fast fashion goods are generally purchased because they are in style, not because they are brand name products. This study will evaluate whether fast fashion consumers are urged to consume by conspicuous tendencies. Shipman (2004) presents current researchers with a unique opportunity to take his idea that conspicuous consumption is changing and discover new realms of conspicuous consumption.

Measuring conspicuous consumption in the present study will evaluate if and how the consumers of fast (vs. slow fashion) conspicuously consume.

First to be explored are the intrapersonal components of conspicuous consumption, or more specifically, the individual characteristics of conspicuous consumers. Bagwell and Bernheim (1996) suggest that Veblen effects, which are a willingness to pay a higher price for a good that is of equal functionality for the wealth that it signals, must be produced endogenously. This suggests that the drivers of conspicuous consumption come from within the consumer's identity. For the purposes of Bagwell and Bernheim's (1996) study, when consumer's wealth signaling was measured, participants could either pay more for a visibly labeled conspicuous good or consume a large quantity of goods at a lower price. These findings suggest a potential relationship between conspicuous consumption and fast fashion. Consumers who purchase fast fashion items generally indulge in an abundance of goods at a lower price.

The conspicuous consumption of goods relates to the symbolic meaning that they hold. Belk (1988) argued that the symbolic properties goods hold help establish identity and prestige for the consumer. Status goods, such as clothing, commonly have symbolic value rather than functional value, which makes apparel a good candidate to measure conspicuous consumption (Phau & Lo, 2004). Shopping's symbolic value is greatest in societies where there are visible wealth inequalities (Shipman, 2004). A society where conspicuous consumption is evident needs to have differentiating social groups so that differentiation can be achieved. Those who conspicuously consume do so to differentiate themselves from the others. Their wish to differentiate themselves comes from the desire to show their wealth and show separation from the class below. Belk (1988) stated that

consuming conspicuously helps consumers satisfy social needs such as prestige. When consuming conspicuously, status goods are the most targeted items (O’Cass & McEwen, 2004). Status goods are those that have high-perceived quality, luxury, prestige, and/or high class attached to them (O’Cass & McEwen, 2004). These goods yield brand status that an individual’s peer groups can recognize. These brands can visually indicate conspicuous consumption and therefore differentiate the wearer from others, sufficing their need for individuality. This construct introduces the idea of exclusivity and conformity. Amaldoss and Jain (2005) examined the idea that consumers purchase to satisfy their desire to either be exclusive or conform. The two terms, snobs and followers, were utilized to evaluate this concept. Snobs are consumers whose utility decreases as more people consume the same product, and followers are consumers whose utility increases as more people consume a product (Amaldoss & Jain, 2005). The researchers found that as prices increase, snobs buy more even if there is no value or quality difference (Amaldoss & Jain, 2005). This is evidence of conspicuous consumption because these consumers are buying goods strictly because they cost more and the price tag delivers satisfaction of their conspicuous needs.

Wong (1997) examined the relationship of individualism and collectivism and its relationship to materialism and conspicuous consumption. The methodology of this study was quantitative and the researchers surveyed 200 undergraduate university students. The results indicated when utilizing the individualism-collectivism scale and measuring items such as individual achievement, competitiveness, group goals, and harmony, participants who were high materialists valued things and achievement (individualist tendencies) over people and relationships (collectivist tendencies). Wong

(1997) then explained that materialists can justify their desire to display success and arouse envy in others with behaviors related to conspicuous consumption. The results of this study are an ample illustration of the individual components of conspicuous consumption and how these personal factors influence one's desire for conspicuous goods.

Second to be explored were the social or interpersonal constituents of conspicuous consumption which examines conspicuously consuming to conform to a group. A few examples illustrating the social component of conspicuous consumption are first, ostentatious consumption is rewarded by preferential treatment by societal contacts (Bagwell & Bernheim, 1996), and second, social signaling is achieved through consumption and occurs as soon as a conspicuous product is purchased (Veblen, 1899). O'Cass and McEwen (2004) executed a study on conspicuous consumption and found very intriguing qualities that are pertinent today that have not been in the past. Today, people's conspicuous tendencies are heavily influenced by self-monitoring and reference groups. This suggests that individuals use conspicuous consumption to fit into different situations (O'Cass & McEwen, 2004). For example, a person may wear a pair of sunglasses, not to block UV rays, but to signal identity with a group or a particular brand (O'Cass & McEwen, 2004). However, it is important to note that people who consume conspicuously, and those who consume for status, use products in different ways (O'Cass & McEwen, 2004). The authors suggested that one difference is the use of products. People may either consume to identify with a group (status consumption) or consume to indicate wealth (conspicuous consumption) (O'Cass & McEwen, 2004). These researchers provide evidence that status consumption and conspicuous consumption are

different constructs; however, status consumption influences conspicuous consumption which enhances a consumer's image and communicates status to others (O'Cass & McEwen, 2004).

Research conducted by Ordabayeva and Chandon (2009) suggested that conspicuous consumption is driven by status gains. The researcher's created two groupings of consumers. The first grouping was composed of low status individuals in a dense population of consumers who were of a higher status than the participants (low status individuals). The second grouping was still composed of low status individuals but the population of higher status individual was less dense. Therefore, they were able to measure if consumption decisions changed based on the presence of other higher status individuals. When studying low status consumers and the effects of the density of status distribution on conspicuous and inconspicuous consumption, the researchers found that low status consumers spend more money in a dense distribution of higher status individuals, but were less envious. Thus, their findings indicate that the consumer's spending was not driven by envy but by a desire to conspicuously consume (Ordabayeva & Chandon, 2009). The findings from both studies support the conclusion that conspicuous consumption is used by individuals to enhance an image or status in regards to other individuals in a given population.

A recent study by Chen, Yeh, and Wang (2008) examined conspicuous consumption today. The researchers suggested that in addition to the ostentation of wealth, conspicuous consumption involves also portraying symbolic meaning to reference groups in attempts to gain recognition (Chen et al., 2008). Drawing upon past literature in economics, sociology, and marketing, the authors provided a comprehensive

definition of conspicuous consumption. The definition reads, “the extent of one’s behavioral tendency of displaying one’s social status, wealth, taste or self-image to one’s important reference groups through consumption of publicly visible products” (Chen et al., 2008, p. 686). Marcoux, Filiatrault, and Cheron (1997) developed the scale, for research in Poland, based on the purposes of buying, meaning of consumption, and consumption values. The scale was tested for reliability by the researchers. The researchers found that status demonstration and interpersonal mediation (two variables from the meaning of conspicuous consumption scale) are two important variables for determining attitudes towards Western products (Marcoux et al., 1997). The scale’s purpose is to measure the meanings of conspicuous consumption, thus the items in the scale will be adjusted to align with the purposes of the present research.

The concept of conspicuous consumption has been studied in the apparel context but with varying results and implications. Social consumption motivation was researched by Prendergast and Wong (2003) in the context of apparel. The researchers surveyed mothers, in Hong Kong, who purchased luxury apparel for their infants. The researchers used a four item scale to determine the mother’s social consumption motivation. The goal was to see if the mothers had a high sensitivity to the social visibility of consumption. The results indicated that mothers are not motivated by social visibility when buying luxury brands for their infants. However, the more materialistic mothers were motivated to spend more on luxury brands for their infants. The researchers informed us that the mother’s lack of conspicuous tendencies were unexpected, especially for Hong Kong, and did not align with the findings regarding materialistic mothers.

Therefore, additional research needs to be performed regarding conspicuous consumption in the context of apparel.

O’Cass and McEwen (2004) also measured conspicuous consumption in an apparel context but the goal of the study was to differentiate between and define the concepts consumer status and conspicuous consumption. The researchers utilized a survey which measured each respondent’s status consumption tendencies, conspicuous consumption desires, self-monitoring tendencies, reference group influences, evaluation of the brand’s status, and the desire to consume the brand conspicuously. The two product categories chosen for the study were fashion clothing and sunglasses because these goods can visibly signal status (Goldsmith, Flynn, & Eastman, 1996). The sample consisted of students 18-25 years. The results indicate that status consumption and conspicuous consumption are different; however, status consumption influences conspicuous consumption. The important aspect of this study is that fashion apparel is a successful product category to utilize when measuring conspicuous consumption. The aforementioned researchers concluded that fashion styles can indicate status and image. The present study further evaluated this idea in the context of fast fashion.

Evaluating conspicuous tendencies will provide information used to differentiate and characterize fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers. Consumers with conspicuous consumption tendencies may have very defining consumption characteristics. A person’s conspicuous tendencies influence what they purchase and consume in regards to ostentatious goods that show wealth, status, or brand loyalty. These factors are important to conspicuous consumers and will influence what and how they consume. Additionally, conspicuous consumption may influence a consumer’s post-consumption evaluation. The

researcher hopes to discover this evaluation by determining if consumers are satisfied or unsatisfied with the conspicuous goods they consume. This satisfaction may come from the audience's reaction to the good rather than the functional qualities (O'Cass & McEwen, 2004). Finally, a consumer's conspicuous tendencies may have implications on their divestment behavior. For example, how does a consumer divest a good that has significant meaning for them in regards to status and reference group belonging?

The social component of conspicuous consumption leads to a discussion regarding the third variable in the study, self construal. The social components of conspicuous consumption such as self monitoring and reference groups address a related, but significantly different, concept of interdependent (vs. independent) self construal.

### *Self- Construal*

How people perceive themselves to be linked, or not linked, to others involves their construal of the self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Leading research by Markus and Kitayama (1991) aimed to delineate how the views of the self (interdependent vs. independent) influence aspects of cognition, emotion, and motivation. The researchers reviewed past literature in psychology and anthropology, organizing the differences between American cultures and Eastern or Asian cultures in regards to how they view the self. The researchers then categorized qualities of interdependent and independent self construal. Their findings integrated theories of the self to provide a detailed definition of interdependent and independent self construal. An interdependent self construal includes others within the context of the self. These individuals have a sense of belonging to others and thus adjust and accommodate others in many aspects of their behaviors (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). For an independent self construal, others are less centrally



involved with the self. An independent self hold traits, motives, beliefs, and desires as property of the individual self and are less concerned with being receptive to these characteristics in others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). An independent self can be intrinsically rewarded by standing out from a group. This individuality produces ego focused emotions that help self-esteem (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). The study has significant implications in specifying the precise role of the self in mediating and regulating behavior (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

An individual's culture can heavily influence their view of the self (interdependent vs. independent). Cultural influences on the self were explored by both Markus and Kitayama (1991) and Singelis (1994). Markus and Kitayama (1991) explained that independent self construal is a common feature of American cultures, whereas interdependent self construal is a characteristic of Asian, Latin American, European, and African cultures. These differences can also be explained by the concepts collectivist culture (Asian) and individualist culture (Western) (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Singelis (1994) expanded upon Markus and Kitayama's initial exploratory research and developed a scale aimed to measure individual self construal. It is argued that individuals can hold both views of the self, thus the scale aims to measure which dimensions of the self are most prominent. Singelis' self construal scale will be utilized in the present study to measure the participants' self construal. The scale was developed on ethnically different groups of students and tested for reliability and validity. Singelis (1994) argued that it is important to make isomorphic attributions across cultures as well as be able to successfully modify behavior when moving across cultures. Successful utilization of his scale can help achieve these factors. Singelis (1994) makes implications

to the field by allowing *individual* self construal to be measured as opposed to collectively unifying one culture as either interdependent or independent. Researchers can now utilize Singelis' scale and determine different self construal within one culture, or specifically one target market. This research utilized this scale to determine the self construal for each individual participant in an American culture.

The following section discusses how self construal influences consumption behavior. Evaluating past literature provides linkages that may explain how a consumer's self construal may influence purchase/consumption, post-consumption evaluation, and divestment. Self construal plays an interesting role in a consumer's brand identity. Singelis' scale was used by Escalas and Bettman (2005) to measure consumer's self construal to determine its effects on self-brand connectedness. The researchers found that for independent self construal, the negative effect of outgroup brand associations on self-brand connections is stronger (Escalas & Bettman, 2005). This finding provides evidence that independent selves are negatively affected by out-groups who portray brands that the independent self identifies with. The authors attribute this effect to the idea that consumers with an independent self construal have a need to differentiate themselves from outgroups.

Additionally, self construal has been found to have a causal influence on impulsive consumption (Zhang & Shrum, 2009). Zhang and Shrum (2009) measured male and female undergraduate business students' self construal and beer consumption in a laboratory experiment. The researchers found that peer pressure increases impulsive consumption for independent selves and decreases impulsive consumption for interdependent selves. This result may be related to an interdependent self's desire to fit

in and follow social norms, whereas the independent self wishes to stand out and act based on internal feelings. This study's examination of peer pressure may explain how people with different self construal choose to divest their fashion goods in the final stage of the decision process model. For example, if consumers wish to fit in with a group labeled *green consumers*, they may choose to reuse or recycle their fashion goods.

Self construal has also been measured to evaluate consumer risk taking. Mandel (2003) measured the self construal of 91 undergraduate students in a laboratory experiment. The student's risk taking was also measured by asking questions regarding financial and social risk. In this study, social risk was characterized as apparel risk which was defined by the situation of wearing an inappropriate outfit to a family dinner. The goal of the experiment was to investigate whether people have different tolerance for risk depending on which self (independent or interdependent) is salient. The results indicated that those who have an interdependent self construal are willing to be more financially risky and less socially risky. These results may indicate that interdependent selves (because they are more aware of others) may remind the individuals to behave responsibly because their embarrassment can increase when shared with others (Mandel, 2003). This can be linked with the purchasing of fast (vs. slow) fashion. A consumer's self construal may influence whether they are willing to purchase fast (vs. slow) fashion clothing. Self construal may influence this decision because fast fashion's high style reputation may qualify it as a social risk and slow fashion's quality, production methods, and price may qualify it as a financial risk. Mandel (2003) also found interdependent participants felt pressure to conform. This finding is parallel with the results from Zhang

and Shrum (2009) and Escalas & Bettman (2005) who also found consumers who have interdependent selves behave in a way that connects them with a certain social group.

Self construal can also potentially play a role in the evaluation of products. An experiment by Lee and Shavitt (2006) indicated that self construal may play a role in whether store reputation affects product quality judgments. In an experiment, undergraduate business students were asked to evaluate microwaves after being primed with either an independent self construal or an interdependent self construal. The researchers chose stores that were extremely unfavorable (Kmart) and extremely favorable (Marshall Field's), and measured if these reputations affected the product evaluations. The results indicated that when an interdependent (vs. independent) self construal is salient, consumers are influenced by store reputation when evaluating products sold at the store (Lee & Shavitt, 2006). This finding is significant because it suggests that when self construal goals are salient, store image relevant information was factored into product evaluations. The research in the present study hopes to expand upon the findings of Lee and Shavitt (2006) by measuring self construal and determining whether store reputation (in terms of fashion styles and quality) plays a role in the evaluation of fashion products from fast (vs. slow) fashion stores.

Finally, individuals use clothing to identify with, or differentiate from, a group. Piacentini and Mailer (2004) utilized in-depth interviews to discover how teenagers use the symbolic properties of clothes and brands. The researchers utilized two groupings of teenagers, young teenagers (12-13 years of age) and old teenagers (14-17 years of age) to understand why these groups use goods symbolically. The researchers found that clothing symbols are useful mechanisms for conforming (Piacentini & Mailer, 2004).

The teenagers used clothes to identify with a group and “fit in”. Additionally, teenagers rejected clothing symbols and use clothing to show their individuality (Piacentini & Mailer, 2004). These findings indicate that clothing is a good variable to utilize when attempting to understand a consumer’s self construal.

In conclusion, the variables fashion orientation, conspicuous consumption, and self construal were measured to determine specific individual characteristics of consumers who purchase fast (vs. slow) fashion items. These variables were also measured to gain a deeper understanding of fast (vs. slow) consumers and provide a richer consumer definition. Fashion orientation, conspicuous consumption, and self construal each have intrapersonal and interpersonal elements. Fashion orientation involves how you perceive yourself and how others perceive you in regards to your fashion choices. Conspicuous consumption’s intrapersonal and interpersonal components involve an endogenous need to display wealth or status as well as a social need to conspicuously show belonging to, or superiority over, certain social classes. Finally, depending on one’s self construal they may generally wish to identify with a group to have a sense of belonging or differentiate from a group to enhance individuality. Utilizing the scales for these three variables provided a level of objectiveness when studying an exploratory topic such as a consumer’s fast (vs. slow) fashion consumption behavior during the final three stages of the consumer decision process model.

### **CHAPTER III**

#### **METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of the present study was to explore the differences between fast fashion and slow fashion consumers in regards to their consumer decision process stages (i.e., purchase/consumption, post-consumption evaluation, and divestment). More specifically, the objectives of this study were threefold. First, this study attempted to characterize fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers by potentially defining them based on their decision-making characteristics and perceptions of fast (vs. slow) fashion. Second, this study investigated whether fast fashion and slow fashion consumers differentiate on the consumer decision process stages and several psychographic dimensions (i.e., fashion orientation, conspicuous consumption, and self construal). Finally, this study proposed two scales to quantitatively measure fast fashion and slow fashion consumers, which will allow for these consumers to be characterized based on their decision-making. The research strives to understand if and how fast fashion and slow fashion consumers differentiate during the final three stages of the consumer decision-making process of fast (vs. slow) fashion. Additionally, this research will differentiate fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers based on these decision processes differences as well as three psychographic variables. This section will discuss the research design, sample selection, data collection procedures, research instrument, data analysis, and scale development of the present study.

### ***Research Design***

A mixed method research design was utilized for this study. To achieve the exploratory objectives of the study, collecting both qualitative and quantitative data was necessary. An exploratory mixed method design with a concurrent nested strategy was conducted. The concurrent nested strategy was employed at the initial data collection phase of the study. The concurrent nested strategy involved collecting quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously (Creswell, 2003). The nesting in this study occurred during the focus groups when the quantitative data, including fashion orientation, conspicuous consumption, and self construal scales were embedded into the qualitative data to seek additional information about the consumer when qualitative exploration may not suffice. Morse (1991) noted that the concurrent nested model is useful to enrich the description of sample participants. This will help achieve the first objective of the study, to profile the consumers of fast (vs. slow) fashion on their decision making characteristics and perceptions of fast (vs. slow) fashion. The strengths of this strategy include the simultaneous data collection during one phase (Creswell, 2003). Additionally, by using both qualitative and quantitative data, the participants were explored on different levels thus making the data richer.

An exploratory mixed method design is a two-phase design where the first qualitative method can be used to inform the second quantitative method (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). This design is especially useful for exploration when data are needed to create a research instrument (Creswell, 2003). This study utilized surveys, personal interviews, and focus group discussions to profile fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers, evaluate individual characteristics differences, and create a quantitative

means to measure consumer's tendency to consume fast (vs. slow) fashion. Thus the instrument development model, in collaboration with the exploratory mixed method design, was utilized to satisfy the first, second, and third objectives of the study. The instrument development model was utilized to obtain themes from the participants during the qualitative stage and then the themes were used to develop two scales for a survey instrument (Creswell, 2003). This model helped utilize the qualitative data appropriately and create efficient items and scales (Creswell, 2003).

The qualitative data were collected via focus groups and personal interviews. Focus groups are characterized by the composition of people who possess certain characteristics. These people are chosen to help facilitate a focused discussion about a specific topic of interest (Krueger & Casey, 2000). Focus groups present a more natural environment for the consumers where their thoughts and opinions regarding consumption decisions are explored in the presence of others, just as these decisions would be made in a natural setting. Additionally, focus groups were chosen because they allow for the collection of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors (Fern, 2001). This research design is also beneficial because it assists theoretical applications due to the ability to discover, explain, and generate new theories (Fern, 2001). Focus groups allow creativity in both questioning and answering; this can provide an array of data enabling theory application. Personal interviews are a good tool to use when searching for opinions, perceptions, and attitudes toward a topic (Glesne, 2006). Interviews are also beneficial for exploratory topics where researchers can interview a sample of participants and turn what they have learned into items and scales (Glesne, 2006). Therefore, both focus groups and



interviews will assist in answering the research questions as well as developing survey scales for future research.

### ***Sample Selection***

Participants included 38 Colorado State University students who were recruited through a convenience sample in Fort Collins, Colorado. Flyers were used to procure consumers who have purchased and consumed either fast fashion goods or slow fashion goods in the last 12 months. The flyer listed contact information and the location of the focus groups (Colorado State University). It also explained the compensation for participation. The compensation was \$10 cash and a raffle entry for \$50 at each focus group. Flyer one listed examples of fast fashion stores, such as Zara, H&M, and Forever 21. The flyer emphasized that participants need to *most often* shop at fast fashion stores more than any other stores. Flyer two listed ideals of slow fashion stores, such as the appreciation of seasonless clothing. Several examples of stores that may carry slow fashion clothing were given such as Eileen Fisher, Abercrombie and Fitch, Burberry, James Perse, and J Crew. This flyer also emphasized that these participants must *most often* shop at slow fashion stores more than any other stores. Flyers were hung around the Colorado State University campus, select public retail locations, and posted on [www.craigslist.com](http://www.craigslist.com).

Participants were all female, given that several fast fashion stores only carry female clothing, as well as 18 years of age or older. Recruiting took place until four complete focus groups were filled. Each focus group consisted of four to 14 consumers and lasted approximately 60 minutes each. Each focus group was homogeneous and consisted of either fast fashion consumers or slow fashion consumers. The homogeneity

of focus groups helps to create a comfortable permissive environment where participants are open to share the information being sought by the researcher (Krueger & Casey, 2000). Focus groups were held in conference room 173 in Aylesworth Hall at Colorado State University during the winter of 2010. To accommodate those interested in the study but could not attend the focus groups personal interviews were offered. Thus the researcher conducted four personal interviews, two fast fashion interviews and two slow fashion interviews. Interview compensation was congruent with focus group compensation. Interviews were conducted via an internet chatting option chosen by the participant. To ensure participant confidentiality, participants were identified on their survey and focus group responses via a participant number.

#### ***Data Collection Procedure***

Data were collected via brief quantitative surveys followed by either a focus group discussion or a personal interview. Consent was obtained via a cover letter, attached to the surveys, distributed at the focus groups and interviews. The cover letter addressed that there were no known benefits to participating as well as no known risks for participating. Each participant read the consent form and then agreed based on their willingness to participate in the study; therefore, no signatures were obtained. The surveys were administered first, followed by either the focus group discussion or interview.

Several steps were taken during the data collection phase to ensure validity. The first of these steps was triangulation. The data was triangulated through the use of multiple data collection methods. The researcher utilized both quantitative surveys, which included individual characteristics scales, qualitative personal interviews, and

qualitative focus group discussions. The data were additionally triangulated through the use of multiple theories (i.e., fashion orientation, conspicuous consumption, and self construal). Secondly, during focus group discussions the researcher engaged in member checking (Glesne, 2006). After each question the researcher summarized, to the participants, her conclusions and participants were able to support, refute, or qualify the interpretation. This ensured that the researcher was making sound conclusions regarding the participant's decision processes. Thirdly, peer reviewing and debriefing was utilized through a secondary moderator who assessed the research process as well as took notes during each focus group. The researcher also reflected upon her own subjectivity so that it was monitored throughout data collection and analysis.

### ***Research Instrument***

The quantitative survey consisted of four sections that measured fashion orientation, conspicuous consumption, self construal, and demographic information for each participant (see appendix A). Fashion orientation was measured with a scale created by Gutman and Mills (1982). This 17 item scale measured the four dimensions of fashion orientation; fashion leadership, fashion interest, importance of being well dressed, and antifashion attitude on a seven point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Example items included, "It is important for me to be a fashion leader" and "It's important to be well dressed" (Gutman & Mills, 1982). The fashion orientation scale has proven to be both reliable and useful for determining individual characteristics that affect consumption behavior (Chung 1996; Lee, et al., 2000).

The second scale measured each participant's tendency to consume conspicuously. The researcher utilized a scale created by Marcoux et al. (1997). This was a 14 item Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), which was revised to measure consumer's conspicuous consumption. This scale addressed items such as: "I buy items to enhance my image" and "I buy products for uniqueness, to have products others do not own."

Finally, an individual self construal scale created by Singelis in 1994 was utilized. Singelis' scale measured 12 interdependent and 12 independent items on a Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The scale addressed interdependent items such as, "It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group" and independent items such as, "I act the same way no matter who I am with" (Singelis, 1994). Singelis measured his scale for content validity, construct validity, and predictive validity and found the validity and reliability to be adequate.

The final section included items measuring demographics such as participants' age, ethnicity, education level, and income level. In addition to the demographic questions, there were questions that asked how often the participants have purchased/consumed fast fashion or slow fashion items in the past year, and how much money they have spent on clothing in the past year. An open ended question asked the participants to list which specific clothing stores they most often shop. The survey was pre-tested, with three college students, to check for participant understanding of items as well as time length needed for completion.

The instrument utilized for the qualitative phase of data collection was a questioning route utilized during the personal interviews and focus group discussions (see

Appendix B). The questioning route provided a deeper understanding regarding the fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers' decision-making processes. Therefore, the questions sought discovery regarding the purchase/consumption, post-consumption evaluation, and divestment behavior of both fast and slow fashion consumers. The questioning route was pre-tested, and modified, with three personal interviews to ensure the accuracy of the questions and probes.

### *Data Analysis*

The qualitative data records included audio recordings and focus group notes. The qualitative data consisted of focus group and personal interview transcripts. The data record was first transcribed by the researcher, read several times, and then mapped according to decision process stage. The researcher utilized constant comparison between data sets (focus group discussions and personal interviews) during the data analysis phase (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The data were first analyzed with analytical notes that aided in the development of code trees utilized during open coding (Gibson & Brown, 2009). Additional ideas that emerged from the data during open coding were incorporated into the code trees. The data were then coded with focused codes. The researcher also engaged in dialectical tacking with the literature by examining relevant research and its congruence with the data (Gertz, 1983). Finally the data were coded with thematic codes which conceptualized the themes and patterns of the data. During data analysis several steps were taken to ensure the reliability of the data. The first of these steps was external auditing by a senior researcher. Validity was also ensured through negative case analysis when the researcher continually checked the data to look for unconfirming evidence for the themes (Glesne, 2006).

To establish dependability and trustworthiness, the researcher met with a senior researcher throughout the coding process. Codes, patterns, and themes were explored and discussed until a mutual agreement was made. Additionally, the senior researcher checked the application of the code trees. Disagreement regarding code placement in theme categories were negotiated between the researcher and the senior researcher. Interrater reliability was 84% and was calculated by taking the difference between the number of agreements and the number of disagreements divided by the number of agreements.

The survey data, acquired during the initial quantitative phase, were coded using SPSS. This determined each individual participant's fashion orientation, conspicuous consumption, and self construal. Factor analyses were conducted for multi-item scales. T-tests were then conducted to test whether and how fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers were different for each variable. Thus the researcher measured the fashion orientation, conspicuous consumption, and self construal for fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers. This allowed quantifiable distinctions to be made between the two groups. A participant number linked the focus group and interview responses to their survey data.

### ***Scale Development***

The qualitative data (focus group interviews) and quantitative data (individual characteristic surveys) were analyzed to obtain themes from the participants. These themes were incorporated into the development of two survey instrument scales, grounded in the views of the participants, which may be used to study fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers. Surveying a large sample, that is representative of a population, can then validate this instrument in future research.

### ***Researcher's Perspective***

The researcher's role in the study was to serve as a listener, observer, and analyst. The researcher is a 23-year-old female who currently lives in Fort Collins, Colorado. The researcher has shopped at both fast fashion and slow fashion stores. The researcher's decision process behavior involves the purchase and consumption of mostly slow fashion goods. Her post-consumption evaluation involves dissatisfaction for fast fashion goods and satisfaction for slow fashion goods. Her divestment behavior involves both recycling and resale.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESULTS**

The exploratory study of fast fashion and slow fashion allowed the researcher to engage in an in-depth discovery process surrounding fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers. Exploring these concepts from a consumer perspective sheds inquiry upon the decision-making processes of these consumers. These consumers are not on two ends of the same spectrum; however, these consumers do appear to have opposite consumption ideals. These consumption ideals will be explained through thematic discussion of qualitative data analysis results. The following sections will discuss the participant profile, qualitative data results, and quantitative data results.

#### ***Profile of Participants***

A total of 38 participants completed the individual characteristic surveys; all surveys were complete and usable. There were 20 fast fashion participants and 18 slow fashion participants. Descriptive statistics for demographic data are shown in Table 1. The age of respondents ranged from 18 years to 32 years and the mean age of respondents was 21.2 years. The percentage of participants currently enrolled in a university totaled 97.4%. Of those 84.2% were pursuing an undergraduate degree, and 15.8% are pursuing a graduate degree. The respondents' individual income ranged from \$19,999 or less to \$49,999; 94.7% of the sample reported to earn less than \$19,999 per year. The amount of money participants spent on clothing in the past year varied greatly. The amount of money spent in the past year ranged from less than \$600 to more than



\$2,101. The majority of participants, 23.7%, spent less than \$600 on clothing in the past year. The amount of participants who spent more than \$2,101 was 15.8%. In regards to ethnicity 81.6% were white, 5.3% Asian-Indian, 5.3% Hispanic, and 5.3% Asian American. The ethnicity question procured one unit of unusable data. The most commonly shopped stores listed by fast fashion participants included: Forever 21, American Eagle, Charlotte Ruse, Buckle, Target, Urban Outfitters, and H&M. The most commonly shopped stores listed by slow fashion participants included: J Crew, Banana Republic, Abercrombie and Fitch, Barneys, MAX, Shopbop.com, Etsy.com, Rogan, Fred Segal, Saks Fifth Avenue, Nordstrom, Neiman Marcus, Barneys, and Bloomingdales.

**Table 1. Profile of Participants**

	Number	Percentage
Age M=21.2	38	
Education		
College graduate	1	2.6%
University student	37	97.4%
Undergraduate	32	84.2%
Graduate	6	15.8%
Income		
\$19,999 or less	36	94.7%
\$20,000-\$34,000	1	2.6%
\$35,000-\$49,999	1	2.6%
\$ Spent on clothing in year		
\$600 or less	9	23.7%
\$601-900	8	21.1%
\$901-1,200	7	18.4%
\$1,201-1,500	2	5.3%
\$1,501-1,800	4	10.5%
\$1,801-2,100	2	5.3%
\$2,101 or more	6	15.8%
Ethnicity		
Asian American	2	5.3%
Hispanic or Latino	2	5.3%
White	31	81.6%
Asian Indian	2	5.3%
Unusable data	1	2.6%

### *Qualitative Data*

The themes and corresponding codes can be viewed in Table 2. The themes are organized sequentially following the purchase and post-purchase stages of the consumer decision process model (i.e., purchase/consumption, post-consumption evaluation, and divestment). The themes include buyer's remorse avoidance, utilitarianism, hedonism, style/self-image congruence, instant satisfaction vs. continued satisfaction, consumer expectation confirmation, and divestment frequencies, reasons, and approaches.

**Table 2. Themes and Corresponding Codes**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Fast Fashion</b>	<b>Slow Fashion</b>
<b>Buyer's Remorse Avoidance</b>	Impulse Inexpensive	Planned purchase Price/quality
<b>Utilitarianism</b>	Inexpensive Quantity	Versatility Fit Consistency Quality Investment
<b>Hedonism</b>	Experience Atmosphere Social Quantity Hunt	Love for couture Art
<b>Style/Self-image Congruence</b>	Unique Trendy Color Variety	Basic Classic Timeless Fit Silhouette Color
<b>Instant Satisfaction vs. Continued Satisfaction</b>	Novelty Quick style turnover Brand focus Likelihood for purchase Superfluity	Timeless Investment Wardrobe building Non-trendy
<b>Consumer Expectation Confirmation</b>	Inexpensive Short lifespan Disposable Replaceable Low quality	Fit Quality Long lifespan Low maintenance Extra money Versatility
<b>Divestment Frequencies</b>	Amount of time clothing is kept	Amount of time clothing is kept
<b>Divestment Reasons</b>	Fit Damage Boredom	Fit Damage
<b>Divestment Approaches</b>	Donate Resale Pass along Reuse Throw away	Donate Resale Pass along Reuse Keep

## ***Purchase/Consumption Themes***

### ***Buyer's Remorse Avoidance***

*Buyer's remorse avoidance* is a term used to describe consumers' attempts to avoid feelings of remorse or guilt after purchasing clothing. Buyers' remorse is a common post-consumption feeling felt by consumers. Thus, it is not surprising that many fast fashion and slow fashion consumers attempted to avoid buyer's remorse at the purchase stage. However, the buyer's remorse avoidance approaches were different for both types of consumers. It is important to note that each type of consumer buyer's remorse avoidance techniques influenced why they chose to purchase and consume fast or slow fashion. Therefore, the buyer's remorse avoidance theme is being discussed in association with the purchase/consumption stage of the CDP model.

Fast fashion consumers avoided buyer's remorse through purchasing clothing that was inexpensive. The inexpensive price tag of the clothing kept the post-consumption guilt to an acceptable level. The discussions revealed that many fast fashion consumers had impulsive consumption tendencies. Impulse buying is a purchase that is unplanned in which the product creates an irresistible urge to buy; this purchase behavior is hedonically complex because the emotions occur when the consumer first views the product and subsequently makes a purchase to satisfy an emotional need (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998; Hausman, 2000; Piron 1993; Wood, 2005). Impulse purchasing can lead to buyer's remorse. It appears that fast fashion consumers counteract their impulsive tendencies by buying goods that are inexpensive to avoid guilt. Participant 19 discussed how she avoided buyer's remorse when she bought a garment she intended to only wear one time:

*“It’s [fast fashion] more something for a special occasion if you go to Forever 21 the day before New Year’s Eve it’s packed so everyone is getting a cute top or cute dress so it’s more like you have something going on and you want something new you can go and buy without having the buyer’s remorse that you won’t ever wear it again” (Participant 19).*

The following is an example of a participant who knew she was buying clothing she did not need but justified her purchase by the inexpensive price tag:

*“They have their 21 items for that day that are going to be a little bit less and that is totally like an impulse thing, oh that is really cute and it’s only like \$4 dollars today and it’s normally \$12 so I buy it even if I don’t really need it” (Participant 10).*

This similar story was found several times throughout the focus groups. Fast fashion consumers are able to avoid regret when they shop at fast fashion clothing stores because of the inexpensive price tag. Additionally, the markdowns commonly seen at this particular fast fashion store aid in avoiding buyer’s remorse:

*“I feel like myself personally, I’m more likely to buy something that has only been marked down three dollars because it’s been marked down as opposed to something that’s full price because then I feel guilty because I bought something full price because I don’t need it” (Participant 21).*

The previous quote shows the consumer’s true connection between low price and buyer’s remorse avoidance. Buyer’s remorse may also be avoided when these consumers are able to “wear out” their clothing:

*“Um I have the worst buyer’s regret ever when I buy stuff, I’m like why did I buy that I will never wear it, so um... I will go through the entire store and it will take me so long and I will find a couple things I really like that I know I will wear a lot until they wear out and it’s ok if they wear out because I wore them enough that I got the value out of it” (Participant 10).*

Participant 10 was one consumer who indicated that she plans before she makes a purchase; however, it is evident that while this helps her avoid feeling guilty she ultimately knows she really likes a garment when it wears out. Fast fashion clothing is

likely to wear out, thus she avoids buyer's remorse. Participant 10 was one negative case to fast fashion impulse purchasing. The way fast fashion consumers and slow fashion consumers avoid buyer's remorse appeared to be quite different. Slow fashion consumers avoid buyer's remorse by making planned purchases:

*"I usually tend to be pretty satisfied with my purchase just because I am a slow shopper so I usually think about my purchase before I buy them in the first place... it's really important to me to not just spend something on a dumb piece that was fun for the minute... hardly ever do I regret [have buyer's remorse] something" (Participant 24).*

Slow fashion consumers utilize their slow ideal to make purchases that complement their style and wardrobe. The fact that slow fashion consumers feel that they can keep their clothing for an extended period of time helps them to avoid regret after purchasing and consuming.

Additionally, slow fashion consumers avoid buyer's remorse by focusing on the concept of quality over quantity. The slow fashion participants discussed the idea of quality over quantity several times:

*"I buy a lot of my slow fashion because I want them, I prefer quality over quantity" (Participant 30).*

*"I tend to buy slow fashion things because I like quality over quantity" (Participant 29).*

When slow fashion consumers buy an item that may be more expensive, they avoid buyer's remorse because they know it is of high quality and will last several seasons.

### ***Utilitarianism***

*Utilitarianism* is the usefulness or utility of an action and is determined by the amount of happiness it brings to the person(s) affected by the action (Sen & Williams, 1984). This theme illustrates how fast fashion and slow fashion consumers maximize

utility differently. In the context of fast (vs. slow) fashion, the consumers are maximizing personal utility, thus determining the greatest amount of good they can achieve for themselves through their purchasing.

Fast fashion consumers maximize utility by buying a higher quantity of clothing at a lower price. Fast fashion consumers achieve the greatest amount of good for their clothing purchases by spending the least amount of money possible while buying the most amount of clothing possible. These participants explained their objective to buy in bulk without spending too much money:

*“I like it because you can get a lot for cheap, I can get 5 things for 50 dollars, buy things in quantity, I like things I can buy in quantity without putting a huge hole in my wallet” (Participant 9).*

*“I feel like Forever 21 and H&M they are cheap enough you buy something new each season and not feel like you are wasting money” (Participant 10).*

*“I just feel like Forever 21 is a really good place to get a lot for cheap” (Participant 17).*

Additionally, fast fashion consumers maximize utility by justifying purchases they do not wear or do not like by the minimal amount of money they spend to purchase the clothing:

*“I think that a lot of my satisfaction comes from not spending a lot, you get what you pay for, it’s like I’m satisfied because I didn’t spend a lot and if I don’t like or I wear it one time I don’t feel bad about it” (Participant 9).*

In the following example a fast fashion consumer explained how the more she bought, the happier she was. For many fast fashion consumers the ability, or likelihood, to buy in bulk increases their utility:

*“I mean I don’t really go in expecting to not look for a shirt that going to last forever I go in expecting to find a really cute shirt and I come out with 5 really cute shirts I’m just really happy” (Participant 14).*

Slow fashion consumers maximize utility very differently from fast fashion consumers. Slow fashion consumers receive the greatest amount of good out of their purchases by buying clothing that is versatile, fits well, consistent with their wardrobe, high quality, and an investment. One participant obtained the greatest amount of good out of her purchases by buying clothing that can be worn in various settings, thus getting more use out of her slow fashion purchases:

*“I guess I kind of like the more classic, getting to dress up practically and that’s why I like [slow fashion] and I like buying things that I can wear with more than one outfit, and I can use it multiple times in various settings from a professional to casual and just like mixing it up and I guess that’s what drives my purchases, I personally prefer how I am going to be able to utilize it” (Participant 26).*

As opposed to fast fashion consumers who increase utility by buying an abundance of clothing for little money, slow fashion consumers increase utility by spending a little extra money so they feel they have monetarily invested in their clothing:

*“I tend to be more willing to pay the extra money for an investment piece if I know it will last” (Participant 24).*

Investing in high quality clothing allows slow fashion consumers to utilize their clothing for a longer period of time, thus increasing personal utility:

*“Partly because of that feeling that I mentioned, that the clothing has come from a place of care and consideration... I feel strongly that quality is much more important than the lowest cost” (Participant 22).*

*“I feel that it is more practical to purchase items that rarely go out of style, and because of their quality, they will last longer than fashion items that are made with lower quality fabrics” (Participant 38).*

*“I buy a lot of my slow fashion because I want them I prefer quality over quantity I want something that is going to last a while so like my jeans I don’t mind spending a little extra money (Participant 30).*

Slow fashion consumers also increase personal utility by buying clothing pieces that add to their current slow fashion wardrobes. Many participants described slow



fashion clothing as being non-trendy and classic; this allows these consumers to build a versatile wardrobe that is long lasting in regards to style:

*“It is more important to me to have a stable wardrobe that I can use to apply to quicker trends that go through, so that’s why I pick more of the slower fashion just because it gives me more to work with” (Participant 24).*

### ***Hedonism***

The theme *Hedonism* illustrates the hedonic motives for both fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers, as well as how they achieve hedonism differently. Hedonic consumption involves a consumer’s multi-sensory images, fantasies, and emotional arousals; it is derived from hedonic goals that individuals may hold (Hirshman & Holbrook, 1982; Ramanathan & Menon, 2006). Two components of hedonic consumption are hedonic goals and hedonic products. Hedonic goals are needs to seek pleasure through any domain. In the context of fast (vs. slow) fashion these goals can be achieved through store environment/shopping experience or consumption of hand-made clothing. Hedonic products are items purchased or consumed for their ability to provide positive feelings or pleasure rather than their utilitarian value (Hirshman & Holbrook, 1982; Ramanathan & Menon, 2006). Fast fashion consumers achieve hedonism through hedonic goals. Fast fashion consumers achieve these fantasies and emotional arousals through shopping experience, stores atmosphere, social experiences, buying in large quantities, and “hunting” for goods. The hedonic shopping experience for fast fashion consumers is derived from the excitement felt from the clothing and the store atmosphere:

*“I feel like fast fashion is a little more exciting, it always draws you and other people into the stores because the stores are more... a little more... Like bright, as well the shopping experience in those stores” (Participant 4).*

Many participants agreed that fast fashion is exciting and the clothing and store experience draws them to consume fast fashion. The store atmosphere also aligns with the social experience, which they obtain by shopping with their friends:

*“I think for me it's just like we, me and my friends, we go to Forever 21 when we are together, we don't go to any other stores it's like the popular store” (Participant 7).*

Participants 6 and 7 discussed how the shopping experience and store atmosphere of Forever 21 provoked them to choose a fast fashion over Target because at Forever 21 everything in the store catered towards their demographic. They did not have to search through departments to find a section appropriate for their age group. Additionally, the shopping experience was more enjoyable because they were surrounded by people of a similar age. The hedonic goals of fast fashion consumers were more prominent when these consumers discussed the pleasure and fulfillment of shopping in bulk. The price point at Forever 21 allowed these consumers to buy a mass quantity of clothing at one time. The responses from the fast fashion participants indicated the hedonism experienced when shopping at a fast fashion store:

*“I just spend like 50 bucks and you walk out with a big huge bag of clothes and I'm just so happy” (Participant 15).*

Participant 17 discussed the thrill she got from fast fashion because of the clothing characteristics such as patterns and the ability to mix and match:

*“I think only a certain number of people can pull off their patterns and you know so I think that more boring consumers go to gap (hahahaha) I mean... it's fun to mix and match and so that's the thrill [of fast fashion]” (Participant 17).*

The hedonic goals of fast fashion consumers are commonly witnessed throughout the transcript. These consumers have an overwhelming joy when they buy fast fashion in bulk.

The hedonic consumption characteristics for slow fashion consumers are quite different from the fast fashion hedonism. Slow fashion consumers' hedonism is achieved through a love for couture and art. Throughout the transcript slow fashion hedonism was less apparent than fast fashion hedonism. The slow fashion consumers achieve their emotional arousal mainly through the hedonic products (slow fashion garments). One participant articulated feelings surrounding slow fashion and how these feelings prompt her consumption of slow fashion:

*“I think there is a general 'feel' to a garment that has nothing to do with the textiles used. I have various button-up shirts, some are really high quality fabric and some are just cotton flannel but I have this one from Rag & Bone that I love to wear the most because it just feels hand tailored. Also, I think the clothing itself is more genuine because the stitches are unique and hand worked and whenever there is hand sewing there's this visual effect of higher quality (as long as the sewing is really good!). And I swear, I can feel the difference in the textiles themselves when they are organic and/or processed by hand without chemicals” (Participant 22).*

When this participant discussed her experience with slow fashion, she was describing a feeling she got when using slow fashion goods. The hedonism that other slow fashion consumers may experience comes from the consideration and time that is put into a slow fashion good. Participant 38 explained her appreciation for the care and consideration of slow fashion:

*“Attention is paid to every detail of the assembly and construction process that's why prices are often so high because of the time it takes to make one piece” (Participant 38).*

Additionally, several slow fashion participants exclaimed that slow fashion is an art that should be appreciated. It was evident that their view of the fashion garments as an art exhilarated their hedonic goals:

*“I respect designers who participate in slow fashion because they look at fashion as an art and not just a business. These designers pay attention to every detail of the product that possesses their name” (Participant 38).*

*“Partly because of that feeling that I mentioned, that the clothing has come from a place of care and consideration. I also think it is important to keep all those couture skills alive and in business. I feel strongly that quality is much more important than the lowest cost. I also see apparel design as art and I suppose I'm snotty enough to say that there is little 'good' art around so when I find it I want to support it, like a collector” (Participant 22).*

*“I definitely agree even the design students here they go through a lot of training, and to learn how to make a garment properly... like at Forever 21 those are disposable clothing you're not going to have them for years... slow fashion... it's an art” (Participant 25).*

Fast fashion and slow fashions hedonism differences are important to exemplify because they help explain the consumer differences not only in regard to hedonism but also in regard to consumption decision and reasons for purchasing and consuming fast fashion. Fast fashion consumer purchase and consume due to their ability to “buy in bulk”. They obtain joy from an abundance of goods purchased in a store that caters towards their target market. Slow fashion consumers achieve their hedonism through consuming a quality garment. These hedonic products come from a place of care and consideration and this quality is what emotionally arouses slow fashion consumers.

### ***Style/Self-image Congruence***

The theme *style/self-image congruence* was developed to express how fast fashion and slow fashion consumers choose clothing that aligns with their self-image. Yoo and Lee (2009) suggest that self-image is linked to purchase intention, thus it is not surprising that the participants utilized self-image as a reason for choosing either fast or slow fashion. Fast fashion consumers discussed how they chose fast fashion because it complemented their looks and improved how they feel about themselves:

*“Also just the kind of like the image... then I’ll put it on and the fact that it did complement kind of like eye color or whatever, waist all that stuff if it looks good on and it’s cheap and I’ll know I’ll wear it” (Participant 8).*

*“I only wear them every 6 months or something like that when I’m going to a play or a party or a function and so its when their clothes do fit me the way that I like them to, they make me feel really pretty... and I think that’s important for all girls so that’s why I’m satisfied” (Participant 21).*

Choosing fast fashion also aligned with one participant’s image of herself as being a fashion innovator:

*“Usually because I like whatever the style might be and also because I like setting an example for friends etc as far as what to wear” (Participant 2).*

One participant explained how she felt more comfortable in fast fashion clothing because it was not expensive and she does not have to worry about ruining it when she wore it, thus she could express her style while aligning with her simplistic self-image:

*“I think [fast fashion] is a lot more comfortable; wearing clothing that you don’t worry about wearing but you can express your styles (Participant 18).*

For slow fashion consumers their ways to achieve self-image/style congruence were very similar. The difference between fast fashion vs. slow fashion was their view of self-image. Slow fashion participants have a non-trendy self-image, thus purchasing slow fashion allows them to align their self-image with their styles through their clothing purchases. One participant views herself as an individual, thus purchasing non-trendy items align with her personal style:

*“I do like some of the things that are trendy at the time just not all the trends I kind of think they are a little ridiculous sometimes. I sometimes prefer to be I guess be an individual and dress how I want to dress and not just follow all the trends and then be able to incorporate parts of trends I do like into my wardrobe really easily because I have such a versatile base to my wardrobe” (Participant 26).*

As mentioned previously many slow fashion participants choose slow fashion because they tend to be very pleased with the fit. Several participants believe that the good fit improves her self-image and confidence:

*“I think what the garment does for yourself image and your confidence I think is really important...if it fits well and you thought about it obviously it makes you feel good” (Participant 34).*

*“I love express, one just because they have the fit that flatters like a female figure I mean you can buy tops and skirts and stuff at a bunch of places but I feel like they don’t have the fit so I also buy things that work with my body shape and will look good” (Participant 30).*

Another participant explained that she picked slow fashion because she was able to support her self-image and style:

*“I pick more of the slower fashion just because it gives me more to work with... not just what everyone else is doing, I just want to wear clothing that I like and not what other people think are trendy” (Participant 24)*

Some participants feel more emotionally comfortable in slow fashion clothing because of the style and others feel physically comfortable:

*“For me it’s comfort too, not really bright or obnoxious” (Participant 25).*

For both fast fashion and slow fashion consumers the fact that the style of the clothing aligned with their self-image proved to be heavy influencer of purchase/consumption.

### ***Post-Consumption Evaluation Themes***

#### ***Instant Satisfaction vs. Continued Satisfaction***

*Instant satisfaction vs. continued satisfaction* illustrates how fast vs. slow fashion consumers experience satisfaction at different times of the decision process model.

When asked to discuss their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their clothing purchases, fast fashion consumers had a very complex post-consumption evaluation. Most participants explained that they were satisfied with the novelty of fast fashion, the quick

style turnover in stores, their likelihood of making a purchase when they visit a fast fashion store, and utilizing fast fashion as a superfluity. All of these elements provided fast fashion consumers with instant satisfaction while purchasing fast fashion. After analyzing the fast fashion participants' responses, it appeared that they were satisfied with the purchase of fast fashion, but not the consumption of fast fashion. The purchase phase occurs when the consumer chooses to buy a product. The consumption stage occurs when the consumer has possession of the item and subsequently utilizes it (e.g., wears a shirt) (Blackwell et al., 2006). The results support the idea that fast fashion consumers have satisfaction during and after the purchasing stage and dissatisfaction after the consumption stage:

*"It's satisfying when you first purchase it, I think after you wash it its started to get dissatisfying... its great if you find something you really like and you wish it could be a staple because you like it a lot and you wear it out but it wears out so quickly it's disappointing" (Participant 18).*

Additionally, fast fashion consumers appear to be satisfied with the store and the styles, but they are not satisfied with the amount of clothing they are buying:

*"I'm satisfied at first but then if I think about it now I don't know why I shop there, every item that I don't wear it but still keep for no reason is from Forever 21 I don't understand why I even bother but I will never wear it but um... H&M I think is more plain separates so they are trying to be staples but they are cheap staples so I love H&M and Forever 21, I love them for the trends it is not satisfying I mean its satisfying because it cheap, but it makes you buy so much waste its just terrible" (Participant 16).*

*"I think it's kind of a mix for me like I feel satisfied when I leaving and I like carrying many bags of clothes and its fun going home and being like oh look what I got and being able to wear new stuff for while but at the same time I feel like I get buyers remorse about buying stuff there just because of the fact that it does falls apart or being really careful about how I wash it" (Participant 11).*

The results are interesting because both sets of consumers stated to be satisfied at some point; however, the slow fashion consumers had continued satisfaction even after consumption took place:

*“I’m definitely very satisfied with my slow fashion purchases the fact that I can wear them so often and get so much use of them is important to me so I feel like I’m satisfied when I’m able to wear them so much” (Participant 30).*

The previous quote indicates that the continued satisfaction of slow fashion consumers comes from the ability to utilize a good to its full potential. This satisfaction is continued each time the consumer is able to wear the clothing item again:

*“But most often, if the piece is stitched well, washes well and is relatively easy to care for and clean, and is just as beautiful to me over time, then I know I’ve gotten something good. I don’t want to have to mend any buttons for years!” (Participant 22)*

The results show how very different fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers are in regards to the post-consumption evaluation stage. While both consumers stated they were satisfied, fast fashion consumers had many more cases of dissatisfaction. The cases of dissatisfaction were all found after the good was consumed. For slow fashion consumers satisfaction was evident after purchasing and after consuming the clothing several times.

### ***Consumer Expectation Confirmation***

*Consumer expectation confirmation* is the affirmation to the consumer that the good is performing as expected. The consumer expectation confirmation theme was developed to illustrate that both types of consumers have certain expectations, in terms of performance, for the fashion clothing they buy. Fast fashion consumers expect their clothing to fall apart; therefore, they are not dissatisfied when an item becomes damaged. Slow fashion consumers expect their clothing to last several years; thus, they are satisfied



with the value they receive from long-lasting clothing. This theme helps explain how fast fashion consumers can still be satisfied with their purchases because their purchases are confirming their expectations of the good. The following quote illustrates the expectation fast fashion consumers have for their clothing:

*“I kind of think it goes back to size again ya know I’m kind of satisfied if it fits and dissatisfied when it doesn’t and I kind of expect it to fall apart when I get home, if it lasts I’m excited but I expect it to happen so I guess I’m satisfied” (Participant 19).*

*“You know it shrinks and stretches funny, a shirt becomes a dress that’s not suppose to be, it pills, the front gets long and the back gets short, and it just ruins the style of the clothes” (Participant 18).*

It is evident that the consumers were not happy when their clothing fell apart, but the dissatisfaction with the construction did not outweigh the satisfaction with the look. The fast fashion consumers understand that they are not paying much money for the clothing thus being dissatisfied with the construction is not warranted; therefore, their expectation for their clothing to fall apart is confirmed:

*“I’m satisfied by the look but I’m bummed when it falls apart but you get what you pay for” (Participant 9).*

*I’m happy if I pay \$20 for a shirt from Forever 21 and it will last 6 months Shirts don’t even cost that much at Forever 21 they’re like \$12 –\$15; I’ve ran into stuff that \$30 and I’m like I’m not going to get this even though its kind of nice I know it will fall apart so if I don’t spend that much on it then I’ll be satisfied” (Participant 6).*

For slow fashion consumers the expectation confirmation theme illustrates that their satisfaction comes from their expectation that their clothing will last many years. Additionally, slow fashion consumers expect their clothing to be high quality, low maintenance, versatile, higher in price, and a good fit. When the consumers’ slow fashion clothing aligns with these expectations they are satisfied with their goods:

*“I also agree I’m satisfied I expect them to be better though because they are staples if it’s a sweater and it gets a hole then I’m more upset. So I guess I hold [slow fashion] to a higher standard” (Participant 37).*

It appeared that the most important indicator of satisfaction was the clothing lasting as long as the consumer expected it to:

*“I feel like I’m satisfied with all the items, I would say 90% of the items. I buy just because I will wear them until they have holes in them I got years and years of use out of it overall I get a lot more satisfaction out of the clothes I buy when they are slow fashion” (Participant 34).*

Finally, slow fashion consumers appreciate that they get more use out of their slow fashion because of the higher quality and better fit:

*“I’m generally satisfied. I find that I get a lot more wear and usage out of my slow fashion purchases than other purchases. I find that I don’t feel as obligated to wear non-slow fashion items because they usually don’t fit as well or hold up as long” (Participant 22).*

Fast fashion and slow fashion consumers have very unique post-consumption evaluations of their clothing. Even though fast fashion consumers appear to be dissatisfied with the damageability of their clothing, they are satisfied because the clothing is fulfilling their expectation. Slow fashion consumers are satisfied because the clothing is affirming their expectation of long-lasting quality. It is interesting that their expectation confirmation is influencing why they choose to purchase/consume fast fashion. It was not apparent that fast fashion consumers’ post-consumption evaluation, in any way, influenced why they choose to purchase/consume fast fashion. In fact, for many of the participants after talking about satisfaction/dissatisfaction they had trouble articulating why they still choose to purchase fast fashion after being dissatisfied after consumption:

*“I think I’m satisfied at first but then if I think about it now I don’t know why I shop there, every item that I don’t wear that I still keep for no reason is from*

*Forever 21. I don't understand why I even bother but I will never wear it... I mean it's satisfying because it cheap but it makes you buy so much waste it's just terrible (Participant 16).*

The consumer expectation confirmation theme illustrates the extreme differences between fast and slow fashion consumers, especially when articulating whether they are satisfied or dissatisfied.

### ***Divestment Themes***

#### ***Divestment Frequencies***

*Divestment frequency* is how often goods are being disposed of. The frequency of disposal is directly related to how long the consumers generally keep their fast and slow fashion goods. Through data analysis, it became evident that fast fashion consumers have a greater need for purchasing thus influencing the frequency of their divestment. The following quote illustrates a typical fast fashion description of when they decide to stop wearing their clothing:

*“Some things I don't wear throughout a while, I'll wear for a season and that's it, and not because it's not the style but just because I won't wear it... just because I'm over it. If I wore it this winter I probably won't wear it next winter” (Participant 4).*

It is evident that fast fashion consumers divest much more frequently than slow fashion consumers. This was determined by the amount of time they keep their fast fashion clothing. Several fast fashion consumers agree that they may keep their fast fashion for about three to five months. Others argued that the clothing may get damaged before that time, but they too get tired of the clothing around five months. Therefore, it appears that fast fashion clothing only lasts several months in terms of style and construction:

*“..It can even last less than 5 months” (Participant 19).*

Slow fashion consumers divest less frequently because they choose to keep their clothing for several years as opposed to several months. Additionally, slow fashion clothing lasts longer in terms of style and construction:

*“I know I have pieces in my wardrobe for four years now. I think it’s because and even then I think they were kind of trendy but it’s a more simplified version [of a style] and that’s what makes it last longer because the color I happen to choose is still in fashion and maybe the silhouette is as well” (Participant 27).*

Additionally the versatile nature of slow fashion clothing allows it to last longer because it can be worn through a variety of seasons:

*“I have probably had mine for a few years too because you umm you know because you can wear them in winter and summer” (Participant 29).*

The frequency of divestment for fast and slow fashion consumers is different due to the nature of the clothing. Fast fashion consumers divest more frequently because the clothing damages faster and goes out of style more quickly. Slow fashion consumers divest their clothing less frequently than fast fashion consumer because the construction and style lasts longer.

### ***Divestment Reasons***

*Divestment reasons* are the occurrences that prompt consumers to divest their clothing. For fast fashion consumers, the reasons for divestment were damage and boredom:

*“If it has holes and stuff and isn’t wearable” (Participant 9).*

*“We probably just get tired of it, they still fit, I’m just sick of it (Participant 3).*

For slow fashion consumers the reasons for divestment were that the clothing no longer fit or they felt that the clothing was too worn:

*“I rarely dispose of my slow fashion items. The only reason I would do so is because it no longer fits” (Participant 38).*

*“If has a hole or something I’ll use it as a rag sometimes” (Participant 32).*

Few slow fashion participants mentioned their slow fashion clothing going out of style, if they did feel that something was no longer in style, they would keep it until it came back in style:

*“My slow fashion things are more like my staple items... so I guess I think they are solids, if for some reason they do go out I’ll put them to the side in case they come back, but for the most part my slow fashion is more expensive more quality and will last a lot longer (Participant 36).*

The reason for divestment appears to be directly related to the characteristics of the clothing. Fast fashion clothing is generally lower quality and more trendy; therefore, the reasons for divesting this clothing are damage and style boredom. Slow fashion clothing generally lasts longer because of the quality and is not as trendy so it does not go out of style quickly. Therefore, slow fashion clothing is most often divested because it does not fit.

### ***Divestment Approaches***

*Divestment approaches* are the ways that consumers choose to dispose of their clothing. Fast fashion and slow fashion consumers both chose to divest their clothing through donation, resale, pass along, and reuse. Donation involves bringing clothing to establishments such as Goodwill or The Salvation Army. When participants choose to resell their clothing, they may sell it on eBay or take the goods to a consignment shop. Passing along clothing involves giving clothing to friends or family so someone else can make use of it. Reusing clothing involves utilizing it in new way such as cutting up the material to make something new or using the clothing as a cleaning rag. The following quotes illustrate how fast fashion consumers choose to divest their clothing:

*“My friends and I all have clothing swaps at the end of the seasons, we all bring our stuff that we don’t want and we just share it we probably just get tired of it” (Participant 3).*

*“I give it to friends of family or like friends who are over well be getting ready and they say ‘can I wear this’ and I’ll just ay keep it and I have a lot of girl relatives and I’ll just give it to them” (Participant 9).*

*“You can like cut and reuse the material” (Participant 16).*

As mentioned previously slow fashion consumers also choose to donate or sell their clothing. In the following example the participant explained how the condition of the clothing determined how she planned to divest her clothing:

*“I do a little bit of both I guess it just depends on how worn it is, if it’s pretty worn I just give it away, if it’s in good condition I’ll just sell it, I always have trouble selling to Plato’s closet because they say my clothes are too mature, but there is a new place on college they carry higher end stuff I’ve been able to sell there” (Participant 24).*

The divestment approaches theme also illustrates the two extreme differences for fast fashion and slow fashion consumers. Fast fashion consumers frequently throw their clothing away:

*“If it’s just completely falling apart, I’ll throw away” (Participant 8).*

It is noticed that slow fashion consumers tend to keep their clothing, which is not something that was mentioned by the fast fashion consumers. One slow fashion participant stated that she has never divested her clothing:

*“I haven’t yet disposed of anything! I don’t think I will need to for a long time” (Participant 22).*

The divestment approaches show a true difference between the fast fashion and slow fashion consumers. The characteristics of the clothing allow them to adopt two very different divestment methods that align with their reasons for purchasing and consuming fast fashion.

### *Quantitative Data*

For the purposes of this study, three individual characteristics were also explored. Fashion orientation, conspicuous consumption, and self construal were chosen to engage in a psychographic analysis of fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers. The reliability (Cronbach's Alpha) for the four dimensions of the fashion orientation scale were as follows: fashion leadership, .91; fashion interest, .72; importance of being well dressed, .75; and antifashion attitude, .34. Reliability for the conspicuous consumption scale was .88. The reliability for the interdependent self construal scale was .78 and the reliability for the independent self construal scale was .71 (see Table 3). Mean scores for the factors were obtained for further analysis. Independent sample t-tests were conducted to determine the psychographic differences between fast fashion and slow fashion consumers.

Results (see Table 4) showed that participants were not different on the four dimensions of fashion orientation (fashion leadership:  $M_{fast}=4.73$  vs.  $M_{slow}=4.41$ ,  $p > .05$ ; fashion interest:  $M_{fast}=5.02$  vs.  $M_{slow}=4.79$ ,  $p > .05$ ; importance of being well dressed:  $M_{fast}=5.51$  vs.  $M_{slow}=5.19$ ,  $p > .05$ ; and anti-fashion attitude:  $M_{fast}=4.38$  vs.  $M_{slow}=4.35$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Participants were also not different in regards to their tendency to consume conspicuously ( $M_{fast}=3.62$  vs.  $M_{slow}=3.68$ ,  $p > .05$ ). These low mean scores indicate that the group of participants, as a whole, had a low tendency to consume conspicuously. Concerning the two types of self construal the participants were also not significantly different (interdependent:  $M_{fast}=4.79$  vs.  $M_{slow}=4.92$ ,  $p > .05$ ; independent:  $M_{fast}=5.28$  vs.  $M_{slow}=5.05$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Discussion of these results and explanations for lack of significance can be found in the Discussion section.

**Table 3. Multi-Item Scale Reliabilities (N=38)**

Items	Reliability
<p><b>Fashion Orientation</b></p> <p>Dimension 1: Fashion leadership</p> <p>It is important for me to be a fashion leader.            I am aware of fashion trends and want to be one of the first to try them.            I am confident in my ability to recognize fashion trends.            Clothes are one of the most important way I have of expressing my individuality.            I am the first to try new fashion; therefore, many people regard me as being a fashion leader.</p> <p>Dimension 2: Fashion interest</p> <p>Because if my active lifestyle, I need a wide variety of clothes.            I always buy at least one outfit of the latest fashion.            I never read fashion magazines or pay attention to fashion trends.            I spend a lot of time on fashion related activities.</p> <p>Dimension 3: Importance of being well-dressed</p> <p>It's important to be well dressed.            If you want to get ahead, you have to dress the part.            What you think of yourself is reflected by what you wear.            Wearing good clothes is part of leading the good life.</p> <p>Dimension 4: Antifashion attitude</p> <p>I resent being told what to wear by so-called fashion experts.            Fashion clothing is just a way to get more money from the consumer.            I buy clothes I like regardless of the current fashion.</p>	<p>.91</p> <p>.72</p> <p>.75</p> <p>.34</p>
<p><b>Conspicuous Consumption</b></p> <p>I buy products to enhance my image.            I buy products for uniqueness, to have products other do not own.            I buy products to be fashionable.            I buy and use certain products to please others.            I buy certain products to feel more important.            I want to have products that are owned by my friends and colleagues.            I want to have products that are owned by my neighbors.            I want products that are owned by everybody.            I want products that are social status symbols.            I want products that symbolize success and prestige.            I want products that indicate wealth.            I use products that increase my own value from the point of view of others</p>	<p>.88</p>



**Table 3. Continued**

<p><b>Conspicuous Consumption Continued</b>          I use products that allow popularity among friends and colleagues.          I buy products only because they are more expensive than other products.</p>	
<p><b>Self Construal</b>  <b>Dimension 1: Interdependent</b>          I have respect for authority figures with whom I interact.          It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group.          My happiness depends upon the happiness of those around me.          I would offer my seat in a bus to my professor.          I respect people who are modest about themselves.          I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit f the group I am in.          I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important the my own accomplishments.          I should take into consideration my parents advice when making education/career plans.          It is important for me to respect the decision made by the group.          I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I am not happy with the group.          If my brother or sister fails, I feel responsible.          Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument.</p> <p><b>Dimension 2: Independent</b>          I'd rather say "No" directly, then risk being misunderstood.          Speaking up during a class is not a problem for me.          Having a lively imagination is important to me.          I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards.          I am the same person I am at home that I am at school.          Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me.          I act the same way no matter who I am with.          I feel comfortable using someone's first name soon after I meet them, even when they are much older than I am.          I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I've just met.          I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.          My personal identity independent of others, is very important to me.          I value being in good health above everything else.</p>	<p>.78</p> <p>.71</p>

**Table 4. Mean Differences of Psychographic Variables between Fast (vs. Slow) Fashion Consumers**

	<b>Fast Fashion (M)</b>	<b>Slow Fashion (M)</b>	<b>t-value</b>
Fashion Orientation			
Fashion Leadership	4.73	4.41	0.72
Fashion Interest	5.02	4.79	0.64
Importance of Being Well-Dressed	5.51	5.19	1.15
Antifashion Attitude	4.38	4.35	0.09
Conspicuous Consumption	3.62	3.68	-0.18
Self Construal			
Interdependent	4.79	4.92	-0.53
Independent	5.28	5.05	1.13

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION**

The purpose of the present study was to explore the differences between fast fashion and slow fashion consumers in regards to their consumer decision process stages (i.e., purchase/consumption, post-consumption evaluation, and divestment). More specifically, the objectives of this study were threefold. First, this study attempted to characterize fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers by potentially defining them based on their decision-making characteristics and perceptions of fast (vs. slow) fashion. Second, this study investigated whether fast fashion and slow fashion consumers differentiate on the consumer decision process stages and several psychographic dimensions (i.e., fashion orientation, conspicuous consumption, and self construal). Finally, this study proposed two scales to quantitatively measure fast fashion and slow fashion consumers, which will allow for these consumers to be characterized based on their decision-making. The Discussion section will provide answers to the four research questions guiding this study.

#### ***Research Question One***

The first question was: What are the defining characteristics of fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers? The characteristics of these consumers have been developed through their reasons for purchasing/consuming fast (vs. slow) fashion, post-consumption evaluation of fast (vs. slow) fashion, divestment of fast (vs. slow) fashion, and the participants' perceptions of fast (vs. slow) fashion. To better understand fast (vs. slow)

fashion consumers, two definitions have been created based on a synthesis of all qualitative data.

**Fast fashion consumer:** a consumer who chooses to purchase trendy, fashion forward clothing at low prices, thus instilling a high replaceable factor allowing them to fulfill a need to purchase frequently and in quantity.

**Slow fashion consumer:** a consumer who chooses to purchase high quality, versatile clothing that allows them to build a wardrobe based on the concept of clothing created out of care and consideration.

These definitions were created to help researchers, retailers, and marketers better understand fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers. These definitions are based off the consumers' perceptions of fast (vs. slow) fashion as well as their reasons for choosing to purchase and consume fast fashion. These fast fashion findings confirmed past research by Morgan and Birtwistle (2009) that fast fashion encourages a throw away culture. Several participants indicated that they dispose of clothing before its real life cycle has ended; similar findings have been found in the past (Morgan & Birtwistle, 2009). It is important to note that while a true fast fashion store becomes evident from its business model, having an efficient supply chain that quickly responds to changing fashion trends, a true slow fashion store has not specifically been identified (Levy & Weitz, 2008; Sull & Turconi, 2008). The results of this study indicate that consumers prescribe to slow fashion clothing because of its high quality, versatile nature. This finding confirms the philosophy of slow fashion, which is to create timeless pieces that embrace simplicity of form and focus on detail (Zoica Matei, 2009). The participants shopped at a wide variety of clothing stores ranging from private label shops such as Gap to high-end designers

such as Stella McCartney. Therefore, slow fashion is not identified by the type of store, but by the type of clothing.

### ***Research Question Two***

The second research question guiding this study was: Do consumers of fast (vs. slow) fashion products differ in their purchase/consumption, post-consumption evaluation, and divestment of fashion apparel? If yes, how? This question was answered based on analysis of the qualitative data. Consumers of fast (vs. slow) fashion do differ in their purchase/consumption, post-consumption evaluation, and divestment of fashion apparel. In regards to the purchase/consumption stage, the consumers have different reasons for why they choose to purchase/consume fast (vs. slow) fashion. Fast fashion consumers choose to purchase/consume because they enjoy buying a plethora of trendy clothing for little money. This finding relates to Bagwell and Berheim's (1996) findings which indicate that many consumers, who want to signal wealth, buy a large quantity of goods at a lower price. Additionally, this finding supports fast fashion research that fast fashion's lead time encourages consumers to buy vast quantities of low-priced goods every week (Keynote, 2008). Slow fashion consumers choose to purchase/consume because they strive to buy versatile clothing that does not go out of style quickly so that they build a long-lasting wardrobe. Analysis through the creation of vignettes also indicated that some slow fashion consumers feel an emotional connection to their slow fashion clothing. They feel connected to this clothing because of the care and consideration put into the creation of the garment. Several slow fashion consumers describe their clothing as art. They describe themselves as collectors supporting the intellectual property of designers.

In regards to post-consumption evaluation, fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers both indicated they were satisfied with purchases. After engaging in analysis; however, it became evident that fast fashion consumers were satisfied after the purchasing stage and dissatisfied after the consumption stage. Most participants expressed dissatisfaction when their clothing would become damaged after only after a few wears. This supports the findings by Cardozo (1965) that satisfaction increases as the performance/expectation increases. Similar to the expectancy disconfirmation model, the results of the study also show that consumers have certain expectations for their clothing thus influencing their satisfaction (Oliver, 1993). Fast fashion consumers ultimately reported satisfaction likely in part because their performance/expectation was met (the clothing will fall apart after a few wears). Slow fashion consumers had continued satisfaction through the purchasing stage and after consuming the product because it met their expectation to last several seasons.

The divestment behavior of fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers is the same on four methods and different on two methods. Fast fashion and slow fashion consumers choose to donate, re-sell, pass along, and reuse their clothing. However, only fast fashion consumers said they would throw their clothing away and only slow fashion consumers indicated they would keep and never divest their clothing. This finding supports past research which indicates that fast fashion consumers believe that fast fashion encourages a throw away culture (Morgan & Birtwistle, 2009). Even though the consumers were different on only two divestment methods, according to the data the differences are fairly significant in regards to means of disposal.

### ***Research Question Three***

The third research question guiding the study was: Do fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers differentiate based on individual characteristics (i.e., fashion orientation, conspicuous consumption, and self construal). If yes, how? The results of the quantitative data analysis indicated that fast (vs. slow) fashion consumer did not differ significantly based on individual characteristics. However, the descriptive statistics indicated that fast fashion consumers had slightly higher mean scores for all the dimensions of fashion orientation. As mentioned previously, fashion orientation is how concerned an individual is with others' perceptions of their clothing (Gutman & Mills, 1982).

The first dimension, fashion leadership, is how important it is to the consumer to be a fashion leader and have others recognize them as the first to adopt a trend. It makes sense for fast fashion consumers to rank more highly on this dimension for several of the participants indicated that they chose fast fashion because they wanted to set an example for friends in regards to clothing style. Additionally, fast fashion consumers reported a strong social component during their fast fashion shopping. This indicates that it may be important for these consumers to have peers around so they can judge others' perceptions of their clothing (Gutman & Mills, 1982).

The second dimension is fashion interest, which is the amount of time and money spent on fashion. Fashion interest is also measured by whether a consumer purchases at least one new fashion item each season. Purchasing a new item every season is more feasible for fast fashion consumers than slow fashion consumers because slow fashion consumers try to buy versatile clothing that can be worn throughout several seasons.

Additionally, this finding supports past research that fashion interest is positively correlated with compulsive buying (Park & Burns, 2005; Trautmann-Attmann & Johnson, 2009). Fast fashion participants had a higher mean score for fashion interest and also exhibited impulsive buying tendencies. These consumers sought replaceable goods so they could buy more clothing and shop more frequently. Impulsive buying tendencies are related to compulsive buying tendencies in that they both describe consumers who purchase goods due to an irresistible urge to buy (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998; Hausman, 2000; Piron 1993; Wood, 2005). The third dimension, importance of being well dressed, was also higher for fast fashion consumers, most likely because they placed a higher importance on occasion shopping, where they purchase goods that are only worn for one special occasion. Anti-fashion attitude is the fourth dimension that fast fashion had a higher mean score. Fast fashion consumers tend to follow trends more closely than slow fashion consumers; therefore, they are less likely to have a negative attitude (anti-fashion attitude) toward current styles and fashion experts.

The lack of significance in the quantitative data might be due to the fact that all consumers were fashion consumers. The characteristics of these consumers match those of fashion consumers and support the research done by Workman & Caldwell (2007), which states that fashion consumers are composed of four groups: fashion innovators, fashion opinion leaders, innovative communicators, and fashion followers. The participants in the study can be categorized into these four groups. Therefore, for this sample, the difference between these two types of fashion consumers was not significant.

Fashion consumers, in general, may have a higher likelihood to consume conspicuously due to the symbolic nature of fashion products (Belk, 1988). Even though



the results of the present study did not indicate that fast fashion or slow fashion consumers had a tendency to conspicuously consume, they did show signs of conspicuous consumption in their focus group discussions and interviews. Shipman (2004) discusses how consumers may buy branded products for their superior quality even though they have the same characteristics as cheaper versions. The results indicated that slow fashion consumers often chose branded, high quality products because of their superior quality. This finding indicates that slow fashion consumers may have conspicuous tendencies, as Shipman (2004) suggests, but may not be consuming strictly to show their wealth (Veblen, 1899). It was also evident that several slow fashion consumers purchased status goods, which are goods that have high-perceived quality (O’Cass & McEwen, 2004). Further, fast fashion consumers also shared a characteristic with conspicuous consumers. Bagwell and Bernheim (1996) suggested that consumers may signal wealth by consuming a large quantity of goods at a lower price; this was a common practice by the fast fashion participants. Also, fast fashion consumers discussed the importance of others witnessing their fashion consumption this may also be an indication of conspicuous consumption (O’Cass & McEwen, 2004).

Additionally, the researchers were unable to determine whether fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers have an interdependent or independent self construal. This may be due in part to the fact that America generally has an individualistic culture; therefore, more participants may identify with the ideals of an independent self construal. The consumers, as a whole, tended to be more independent; that is, they showed a higher mean score for independent self construal. This higher mean score supported past literature that individuals use clothing to reject symbols and show their individuality

(Piacentini & Mailer, 2004). Fast fashion and slow fashion consumers indicated that they choose their clothing to be unique and show individuality, which aligns with the behavior of an independent self construal (Piacentini & Mailer, 2004). Additionally, self construal has been found to have a causal influence on impulsive consumption (Zhang & Shrum, 2009). Zhang and Shrum (2009) measured male and female undergraduate business students' self construal and beer consumption in a laboratory experiment. The researchers found that peer pressure increases impulsive consumption for independent selves and decreases impulsive consumption for interdependent selves. Therefore, it is reasonable to attribute the fast fashion consumers' impulsive consumption to their generally independent self construal and peer pressure. Finally, the self construal scale utilized was not fashion or clothing oriented. This may have contributed to the lack of significance because the participants may not relate to some of the items in the scale (i.e., I would offer my seat in a bus to my professor).

It is important to note that based off the research questions, it was found that fast fashion and slow fashion consumers are different on several levels (e.g., reasons for consuming fast (vs. slow) fashion, satisfaction after consumption, and divestment behavior). Even though the results of the psychographic analyses were not significant, fast (vs. slow) fashion consumer may be different on other psychographic dimensions that were not explored in the present study.

#### ***Research Question Four***

The final research question guiding this study is: What are some of the items that can quantitatively measure fast (vs. slow) fashion preferences? To answer this question, two scales were created, based on the qualitative data, to measure fast fashion and slow

fashion consumers (see Table 5 and Table 6). The items in the scales were developed according to the answers to the focus group questions, which corresponded with the purchase and post-purchase stages of the CDP model. The fast fashion and slow fashion scales are designed to be Likert-type scales (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree) with 15 and 13 items, respectively. These scales were developed according to the codes that were most often found in the focus group and interview transcriptions. The purpose of these scales is to quantitatively measure, separately or collaboratively, whether a consumer is a fast fashion consumer, slow fashion consumers, or neither.

**Table 5. Fast Fashion Scale**

<b>Fast Fashion Scale</b>
I frequently buy fashion products with little planning.
I enjoy hunting for fashion products to find good deals.
I like fashion products that are inexpensive.
I choose certain stores to shop at because I enjoy the shopping experience.
I enjoy buying clothing in quantity.
I strive to buy unique fashion clothing.
I like clothing that is trendy.
I buy clothing frequently because I like having something new.
I like stores that receive new styles frequently.
I like clothing I can easily replace.
I frequently become bored with my clothing.
I generally wear my clothing for less than six months.
I prefer clothing that has color.
I frequently buy outfits that are purchased mainly for one occasion.
I have thrown some of my clothing away.

**Table 6. Slow Fashion Scale**

<b>Slow Fashion Scale</b>
I buy clothing to add to an existing wardrobe.
I buy certain clothing because I know it will fit well.
I like clothing that is seasonless and does not go out of style quickly.
I consider some of my clothing pieces to be investments.
I like clothing that is of high quality.
I buy certain clothing because it will last for several seasons.
I like clothing that is timeless and classic.
I like clothing that is versatile and can be worn at a variety of occasions.
I choose to buy clothing that has a long lifespan.
I buy clothing that is designed/produced with care and consideration.
The time and energy put into the creation of a garment is important to me.
I hardly dispose of my clothing items.
I prefer clothing that is neutral in color.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **CONCLUSION**

The purpose of the present study was to explore the differences between fast fashion and slow fashion consumers in regards to their consumer decision process stages (i.e., purchase/consumption, post-consumption evaluation, and divestment). This mixed method, exploratory investigation of fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers has provided academia and industry with a better understanding of these consumers. Fast fashion consumers purchase/consume fast fashion because they want trendy, disposable clothing that they can quickly replace when needed. This aligns with the fast fashion business model of quickly responding to emerging fashion trends and consumer demands by delivering fashionable merchandise to stores with a lead time in or around one month (Levy & Weitz, 2008; Sull & Turconi, 2008). This business model facilitates inexpensive, low quality clothing that the consumer is drawn to. However, there are other qualities of fast fashion consumers that draw them to choose fast fashion.

Fast fashion consumers are generally impulse shoppers that enjoy buying inexpensive clothing with no preconceived planning. They also have hedonic goals that are achieved through shopping in a fast fashion environment and purchasing clothing in bulk. These consumers have an innate need for frequent purchasing that becomes feasible when patronizing fast fashion stores which offer disposable clothing and ever changing clothing assortments. Fast fashion consumers' unique characteristics become

more salient when compared to slow fashion consumers. Slow fashion consumers are not the opposite of fast fashion consumers as the name suggests. Slow fashion consumers are different throughout the purchase and post-purchase stages of the CDP model, but also have unique characteristics of their own. Slow fashion consumers choose to purchase/consume because they wish to build a long lasting, versatile wardrobe. The ideals of slow fashion (adopting slower production methods and flexible, seasonless designs) help facilitate the high quality, versatile aspects of slow fashion clothing (Cordero, 2008). Slow fashion consumers pride themselves on choosing quality over quantity. These consumers wish for their clothing to last for years, thus eliminating the need for divestment. For some slow fashion consumers, slow fashion appears to be a hobby of collecting art. Slow fashion consumers also had hedonic tendencies, but achieved their goals by wearing couture garments that were made with high quality materials and stitched by hand.

While the psychographic variables chosen for this study did not prove to have significant differences, it was evident during the focus groups that these consumers had very different personalities, motivations, attitudes, and values. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that exploring different psychographic variables will introduce even more defining differences between these two consumer groups. The following sections will explain the theoretical and managerial implications of the study.

### ***Theoretical Implications***

The present study aids theory in several ways. First, this study explored the purchase and post-purchase stages of the CDP model, separate from the other stages of the CDP model. This particular focus on the CDP model, in the context of fast (vs. slow)

fashion, has not been researched in the past. Additionally, this research added to the body of knowledge by utilizing the CDP model to understand the differences between fast fashion and slow fashion consumers. Blackwell et al. (2006) found that the internal factors that affect the post-purchase stages of the CDP model include individual differences such as consumer resources, motivation, knowledge, attitudes, personality, values, and lifestyle. The present study confirmed these findings by illustrating how fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers are possibly different in regards to resources (inexpensive clothing vs. investment clothing), motivation (buying trendy clothing vs. buying clothing to build a wardrobe), attitudes (favorable towards quantity over quality vs. favorable towards quality over quantity), and values (disposable, replaceable clothing vs. long-lasting, couture clothing). Finally, this study proposed two scales to quantitatively measure fast fashion and slow fashion consumers. These scales can be used by researchers in the future to determine the extent to which consumers prefer fast fashion, slow fashion, or neither.

### ***Managerial Implications***

This research may be utilized by fashion industry managers to better understand their consumers and the components they wish for their clothing to possess. By determining whether their target markets are fast fashion consumers or slow fashion consumers, managers can utilize the information for why these consumers choose to purchase and consume and cater their product lines toward these needs. Additionally, it appears that both fast fashion and slow fashion consumers realize the wasteful nature of disposable clothing. Several fast fashion participants mentioned that they are embarrassed by the amount of waste their fast fashion clothing procures. Apparel

retailers may need to be more cautious and consider the lifecycle of their products. Past research also warns that price-led marketing strategies will not stimulate needed consumer demand in the future (Gorman, 2007). Marketing strategies that do not focus on price may include: receiving a percentage off a future order for bringing in old clothing to recycle, or advertising friends and family events that entices the social component of shopping that fast fashion consumers identify with. Slow fashion retailers may want to consider promoting quality over quantity as well as offer versatile product lines that allow consumers to mix and match pieces throughout the seasons. Further, slow fashion consumers appear to have strong connection with slow fashion as a form of art; apparel retailers may want to bridge this connection with their marketing and advertising.

### ***Limitations***

The present study has several limitations to be addressed. First, the sample recruitment took place in a Western state, which has a farther proximity to several fast fashion stores. This makes certain fast fashion clothing less accessible to many participants. Thus, their responses were based off one or two fast fashion stores instead of fast fashion as a whole. Second, the divestment behavior for the group of participants is likely to be different from other parts of the country because residents of this state tend to identify with being healthy and supporting a green movement that encourages recycling and environmental sustainability. Finally, while the sample size is appropriate for an exploratory methodology and focus groups, it is not representative of the entire population and thus cannot be generalized to all fast fashion and slow fashion consumers.



This sample size; however, may not have been large enough for survey data collection thus contributing to non-significant results.

### ***Future Research***

Although the present work provides valuable insights regarding fast (vs. slow) fashion consumers, the results provide several areas for future research. First, a focused, exploratory study on either fast fashion or slow fashion consumers utilizing a means-end approach may help expand upon the underlying reasons for choosing fast (vs. slow) fashion items (Gutman, 1982). Secondly, the results suggest that fast fashion consumers report satisfaction during and after purchasing but dissatisfaction after consumption. A future study could explore why these consumers still choose to purchase/consume after reporting dissatisfaction with garment performance. Thirdly, even though the psychographic variables chosen for this study proved to not be significant, a future research project may explore different variables such as consumer need for uniqueness, impulse buying tendency, or shopping enjoyment, which appear to be key aspects mentioned by fast fashion consumers. Last, but not least, analysis of several of the slow fashion interviews indicated a strong emotional connection to slow fashion clothing. The feeling the consumers felt towards wearing and supporting slow fashion were salient in their responses for why they chose to purchase/consumer slow fashion. A future study further exploring this emotional connection to fashion as an art form could be interesting.

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APPENDIX A  
RESEARCH INSTRUMENT



## Consumer Survey and Focus Group

Dear Consumer,

**This research project has two parts and focuses on understanding your apparel buying and consumption behavior.**

Please take 10-15 minutes to complete this questionnaire, as well as 45-60 minutes to participate in the focus group discussion. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions. Your participation is voluntary. As researchers, we are interested in knowing about your individual characteristics and consumption behaviors. You may be assured of complete confidentiality.

There are no known benefits for participants in this research; however, you may enjoy the survey and the focus group discussion. Your responses will help us better understand consumer's individual characteristics and how they may affect consumption behaviors.

There are no known risks associated with participating in this research. It is not possible to identify all potential risks in completing a survey, but the researchers have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize all known and potential, but unknown, risks.

You will receive an entry in a raffle to win a \$25 gift card for a fast fashion (slow fashion) store. If you choose to participate, you will place your participant number in a basket and the winner will be drawn after the focus group discussion. Your personal responses will not be linked with your names; your survey data and focus group responses will be linked via your participant number. The surveys and audio recordings will be destroyed in 2012.

If you wish to participate in both the survey and the focus group, please return the completed questionnaire to the researcher. Your participation will be greatly appreciated. Feel free to ask the researcher questions or to stop the survey at any time if you decide to do so. If you have any questions or concerns at some point in the future, please feel free to call Maegan at (970) 491-1677 or Terry at (970) 491-5331. We would be most happy to answer your questions. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research please contact Janell Barker, Human Research Administrator, at (970) 491-1655.

Thank you, in advance, for your valuable assistance!

Sincerely,

Maegan Zarley, Graduate Student  
Co-Principle Investigator  
Department of Design and Merchandising

Ruoh-Nan Yan, Ph.D., Assistant Professor  
Principle Investigator  
Department of Design and Merchandising

**Part 1. Please indicate your response to the following questions on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).**

1. It is important for me to be a fashion leader.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

2. I am aware of fashion trends and want to be one of the first to try them.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

3. I am confident in my ability to recognize fashion trends.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

4. Clothes are one of the most important way I have of expressing my individuality.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

5. I am the first to try new fashion; therefore, many people regard me as being a fashion leader.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

6. Because of my active lifestyle, I need a wide variety of clothes.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

7. I always buy at least one outfit of the latest fashion.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7

8. I never read fashion magazines or pay attention to fashion trends.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7

9. I spend a lot of money on clothes and accessories.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7

10. I spend a lot of time on fashion related activities.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7

11. It's important to be well dressed.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7

12. If you want to get ahead, you have to dress the part.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7

13. What you think of yourself is reflected by what you wear.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7

14. Wearing good clothes is part of leading the good life.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

15. I resent being told what to wear by so-called fashion experts.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

16. Fashion clothing is just a way to get more money from the consumer.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

17. I buy clothes I like regardless of the current fashion.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

18. I buy products to enhance my image.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

19. I buy products for uniqueness, to have products others do not own.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

20. I buy products to be fashionable.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

21. I buy and use certain products to please others.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1            2            3            4            5            6            7

22. I buy certain products to feel more important.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1            2            3            4            5            6            7

23. I want to have products that are owned by my friends and colleagues.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1            2            3            4            5            6            7

24. I want to have products that are owned by my neighbors.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1            2            3            4            5            6            7

25. I want products that are owned by everybody.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1            2            3            4            5            6            7

26. I want products that are social status symbols.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1            2            3            4            5            6            7

27. I want products that symbolize success and prestige.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1            2            3            4            5            6            7

28. I want products that indicate wealth.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree



1 2 3 4 5 6 7

29. I use products that increase my own value from the point of view of others.

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

30. I use products that allow popularity among friends and colleagues.

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

31. I buy products only because they are more expensive than other products.

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

32. I have respect for authority figures with whom I interact.

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

33. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group.

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

34. My happiness depends upon the happiness of those around me.

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

35. I would offer my seat in a bus to my professor.

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

1                  2                  3                  4                  5                  6                  7

36. I respect people who are modest about themselves.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1                  2                  3                  4                  5                  6                  7

37. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I am in.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1                  2                  3                  4                  5                  6                  7

38. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1                  2                  3                  4                  5                  6                  7

39. I should take into consideration my parents' advice when making education/career plans.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1                  2                  3                  4                  5                  6                  7

40. It is important to me to respect the decision made by the group.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1                  2                  3                  4                  5                  6                  7

41. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I'm not happy with the group.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1                  2                  3                  4                  5                  6                  7

42. If my brother or sister fails, I feel responsible.

Strongly disagree  
1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7  
Strongly agree

43. Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument.

Strongly disagree  
1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7  
Strongly agree

44. I'd rather say "No" directly, than risk being misunderstood.

Strongly disagree  
1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7  
Strongly agree

45. Speaking up during a class is not a problem for me.

Strongly disagree  
1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7  
Strongly agree

46. Having a lively imagination is important to me.

Strongly disagree  
1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7  
Strongly agree

47. I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards.

Strongly disagree  
1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7  
Strongly agree

48. I am the same person I am at home that I am at school.

Strongly disagree  
1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7  
Strongly agree

49. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me.

Strongly disagree  
Strongly agree

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7

50. I act the same way no matter who I am with.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7

51. I feel comfortable using someone's first name soon after I meet them, even when they are much older than I am.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7

52. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I've just met.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7

53. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7

54. My personal identity independent of others, is very important to me.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7

55. I value being in good health above everything else.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7

**The following information will remain confidential and no personal identification will be made in the study.**

**Please indicate or circle the most appropriate response to the following questions.**

56. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_ years old

57. Are you a university student? YES NO

58. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Finished High School

Completed Technical College

Completed Junior/ Community College

Completed Graduate School

Other \_\_\_\_\_

59. What is your yearly individual income?

\$19,999 or less

\$20,000 – 34,999

\$35,000 – 49,999

\$50,000 – 64,999

\$65,000 – 79,999

\$80,000 – 99,999

\$100,000 or above

60. Approximately how much did you spend on clothing purchases **in the past year?**

\$600 or less

\$601 – 900

\$901 – 1,200

\$1,201 – 1,500

\$1,501 – 1,800

\$1,801 – 2100

\$2101 or more

61. What is your ethnicity?

American Indian

Asian-American

Asia or Pacific Islander (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

Black or African American

Hispanic or Latino

White

Other (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

61. How many times have you purchased *fast fashion (slow fashion) items* (such as clothing from H&M and Forever 21) **in the past year**? \_\_\_\_\_

62. Please list what clothing stores you typically shop at.

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**I TRULY APPRECIATE YOUR PARTICIPATION!**

APPENDIX B  
QUESTIONING ROUTE

## Questioning Route

### Introduction

- Thank so much for participating. We are here to discuss your different decision processes in regards to fast fashion (slow fashion). We will be specifically looking at purchase and consumption, post consumption evaluation, and divestment behavior.
- Give definition of fast fashion, purchase and consumption, post consumption evaluation, and divestment behavior.
- I will be taping the discussion so I can refer back to it for verification.
- You are free to discontinue participation at any time that you wish
- Rules: Please only one person talking at a time. I want to hear all your views and opinions so please share your ideas even if they are different from someone else's.
- Please feel free to talk with each other and not solely with me.
- Ask everyone to go around and say their names.

#### 1. Introductory question

*When you think of fast fashion (slow fashion) what are some things that come to mind?*

*Fast fashion probe: As mentioned earlier fast fashion clothing is usually made under a specific business model. When clothes are produced under fast fashion ideal, what do you think are some of the characteristics the clothing may hold?*

*Slow fashion probe: Can you please list some stores, clothing brands, designers you consider to be slow fashion?*

\*Summarize the conclusions written in my notes. Ask if I stated anything incorrectly and ask if they would like to add or modify anything that was stated.

\*Provide some information regarding the characteristics literature has provided to fast fashion (slow fashion). Then briefly review the purchase and consumption stage to transition into the next question.

#### 2. *Please describe why you choose to purchase and consume fast fashion (slow fashion).*

*Probe: In regards to the actual tangible garment, what are some of the considerations that go into your purchase, why are you buying it? (Price, fashion)*

*Probe: When you make a fast fashion (slow fashion) choice, are you deciding between two alternatives? What are some of the other items/factors considered?*



*-In addition to your previous answer are there any other items/factors that make you choose fast fashion over other garments that may not be slow fashion?*

*\*Summarize the conclusions written in my notes. Ask if I stated anything incorrectly and ask if they would like to add or modify anything that was stated.*

*\*Briefly discuss the post consumption evaluation stage to transition into the next question.*

- 3. Please describe your typical post consumption evaluation a fast fashion (slow fashion) good.*

*Probe: Are you generally satisfied or dissatisfied with your consumption of fast fashion (slow fashion)? Why? How does **this** influence your evaluation?*

*Probe: What elements of the clothing influence your post consumption evaluation? (material, construction, label) Is your post consumption evaluation influenced by certain elements of the clothing?*

*\*Summarize the conclusions written in my notes. Ask if I stated anything incorrectly and ask if they would like to add or modify anything that was stated.*

*\*Briefly describe the divestment stage of the decision process to transition into the next question.*

- 4. How do you typically dispose of your fast fashion (slow fashion) clothing?*

*Probe: Why do you choose that specific method of disposal?*

*Probe: Do you dispose of other non fast fashion (slow fashion) clothing in a similar manner? If no, what are some other ways you dispose of clothing?*

*\*Summarize the conclusions written in my notes. Ask if I stated anything incorrectly and ask if they would like to add or modify anything that was stated.*

Conclusion:

- Thank you so much for participating.
- This is the first of several sessions I will be proctoring; do you have any suggestion as to how I can improve?