



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of Business Research

Clothing disposal in a collectivist environment: A mixed methods approach[☆]Jorge Cruz-Cárdenas^{a,b,*}, Reyes González^c, M. Teresa del Val Núñez^d^a School of Administrative and Economic Science, Universidad Tecnológica Indoamérica, Machala y Sabanilla s/n. 170103 Quito, Ecuador^b Doctoral Program in Economics and Business Management, University of Alcalá, Spain^c Department of Business Organization, University of Alicante, Ap. de Correos, 99, 03060 Alicante, Spain^d Department of Economics and Management, University of Alcalá, Plaza de la Victoria, 3, 28802 Alcalá de Henares, Madrid, Spain

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 1 February 2015

Received in revised form 1 June 2015

Accepted 1 September 2015

Available online xxxx

Keywords:

Consumer behavior

Clothing disposal

Mixed methods

Collectivism

ABSTRACT

Although consumers' clothing-disposal behavior is of considerable interest, studies thus far focus only on developed, individualistic societies. This study aims to contribute to the topic by discussing clothing-disposal behavior in the developing, collectivist society of Ecuador, a Latin American country. This study uses a mixed methods exploratory approach to understand the variables that determine the quantity of clothes that consumers dispose of from their households. Five themes arise from the qualitative results: gender, the purchase and receipt of clothing, collectivism at the personal level, the tendency to retain clothing, and the method and frequency of disposal. This study further supports these themes and their respective hypotheses in the quantitative phase.

© 2015 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

The disposal of a product begins with the consumer's decision to stop using the product for its original purpose even when the product still retains the capacity for use (Jacoby et al., 1977). One product that increasingly interests researchers in disposal studies is clothing (Laitala, 2014). Falling clothing prices and shorter use times increase the frequency of consumer purchases (Birtwistle & Moore, 2007), which broadens markets but also increases environmental impact (Chen & Burns, 2006). In the United States alone, households spend approximately \$350 billion annually on clothes and shoes (American Apparel and Footwear Association, 2012).

Despite this growth in research on clothing disposal, most studies thus far focus on specific populations (i.e., young women) particularly in developed and culturally individualistic countries, with very few studies addressing heterogeneous populations and other settings (Laitala, 2014). Another important gap in the literature is the lack of deeper investigation into the connection between clothing disposal and new clothing purchase, a connection that is relevant to the practice of marketing (Ha-Brookshire & Hodges, 2009).

Based on this background, the current research seeks to contribute to the literature by addressing clothing disposal behavior in a scarcely

studied setting: the developing, collectivist country of Ecuador, South America. This study examines people's outside-of-the-household clothing disposal predictors, and the connection between this behavior and the purchase of new clothes.

To achieve these goals, this study adopts an exploratory, sequential mixed methods approach. Under this approach, the qualitative stage focuses on developing relevant categories and themes as the basis for a subsequent quantitative phase that focuses on evaluating the possibilities of generalizing the qualitative results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

2. Literature review, qualitative phase, and hypotheses

One way to categorize the disposal methods that consumers use is to examine whether the product remains within the home. Consumers achieve disposal within the household mainly by methods such as storage or use conversion (Jacoby et al., 1977). Regarding product disposal outside of the household, and from the perspective of physical product flow, consumers, through their disposal actions, may represent the start of a disposal or redistribution channel (Harrell & McConocha, 1992; Paden & Stell, 2005) by transferring the product to other users through gifting (to family, friends, or acquaintances), sale, or donation. Irresponsible behavior can also cause consumers to throw the product away.

Although storage prevails in clothing disposal methods within the household regardless of the type of society under analysis (Cruz-Cárdenas, 2013; Harrell & McConocha, 1992), existing studies reveal an important difference in clothing disposal behaviors outside of households between collectivist societies and individualistic societies:

[☆] The authors thank José Gascó, University of Alicante, and Patricio Arévalo, Catholic University of Ecuador for their careful reading and suggestions.

* Corresponding author at: School of Administrative and Economic Science, Universidad Tecnológica Indoamérica, Machala y Sabanilla s/n, 170103 Quito, Ecuador.

E-mail addresses: jorgecruz@uti.edu.ec (J. Cruz-Cárdenas), mr.gonzalez@ua.es (R. González), mteresa.val@uah.es (M. Teresa del Val Núñez).

Collectivist societies prefer gifting disposal (Cruz-Cárdenas, 2013), whereas individualistic societies prefer donation disposal (Harrell & McConocha, 1992; Morgan & Birtwistle, 2009).

After this first approach to the theoretical framework, the study presents a qualitative empirical work, and discusses the design and results in the following sections while simultaneously deepening the relevant theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

2.1. The study scenario

This research focuses on Ecuador, a developing country in South America with a population of approximately 15 million. Ecuador is a mainly Catholic, Spanish-speaking country that uses the US dollar as its currency. Ecuador is also a strongly collectivist country that presents an individualism index of just 8. This index contrasts with the individualism index of 91 for the United States, which is at the other end of the cultural spectrum (Hofstede, 2001). Catholicism, cultural collectivism, and a status as a developing country are characteristics that Ecuador shares with the majority of other Latin American countries.

Regarding the clothing consumption in Ecuador, families designate 8% of their total budget to clothes and shoes (National Institute of Statistics and Censuses, Ecuador, INEC, 2013), which amounts to an annual expenditure of \$2.2 billion.

2.2. Method

In June and July 2014, this study approached 35 adults (20 women and 15 men) whose ages ranged from 18 to 63 years old, in the city of Quito, Ecuador's capital. Initially, the participants came from middle- and upper-middle-class settings, and after analyzing the initial findings, this study later incorporated people from the lower class. During the interview period, the study expanded the list of participants drawing on referrals from the participants (e.g., Cross & Gilly, 2014).

Prior to the interview, participants signed an informed consent form that explained their rights (Silverman, 2006), and received \$40 for attending the interview. On average, the interviews lasted for one hour, and a professional transcribed the interviews.

The interviews discussed specific events of disposal and not just abstract concepts (Thompson et al., 1989). Thus, the interviews covered a total of 93 disposal events, some of which went back several years.

The study used a thematic analysis approach to analyze the data inductively and seek patterns or themes in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Burnard et al., 2008). The study also conducted a complete audit of the process to ensure the validity of the results (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

2.3. Findings and hypotheses

The qualitative analysis of the data allows for the establishment of five themes and their respective hypotheses: gender, the purchase and receipt of clothing, collectivism, the retention of clothing, and the type and frequency of the disposal method.

2.3.1. Gender

Regarding gender, the interviews show a contrast between women and men's behavior. Women are critical of their spouses due to their spouses' little interest and lack of involvement in the disposal of clothing.

For example, Rosa (woman, high school teacher, 46) contrasts her behavior with her husband's: "I have learned not to get attached to things. If someone needs it, I'll give it away... I'll tell you about Pedro. For example, Pedro does not like to give anything away... he prefers to have it in his closet."

Previous research already reveals many reasons behind these gender differences. Mainly women are responsible for the care of the household relationships (i.e., relationships among family members or with other households and individuals) (Rosenthal, 1985). This role allows

women to be more aware of the needs of family members and friends, and to be more active in product disposal by gifting. Studies on disposal behavior point out that women engage more in donation (Harrell & McConocha, 1992) and dispose of clothes more often than men do (Lang et al., 2013).

H1. Women dispose of a larger quantity of their clothing outside of the household than men do.

2.3.2. Purchase of new clothing and receipt of second-hand clothing

The second theme relates to the purchase of new clothing, and the receipt of second-hand clothing: Receiving or purchasing clothes affects people's clothing-disposal behavior.

Erik (man, university student, 18) says that in his case, new clothes displace from his household the clothes he no longer uses: "It must have been in August. I did not like those shirts anymore and as I had just bought more shirts, I decided that those could be useful for other people."

In addition to these findings, other studies describe the need for closet space for future clothing purchases (Ha-Brookshire & Hodges, 2009), and the positive relationship between the frequency of clothing purchase and the frequency of clothing disposal (Lang et al., 2013).

H2. Consumer's expenditure on clothing positively relates to the quantity of clothing disposed of outside of the household.

Regarding the receipt of second-hand clothing, Elena (woman, domestic employee, 38), an interviewee with a low income level, specifies how receiving clothes from people she works for displaces clothes she no longer uses: "Sometimes in the places I work, they give me any kind of thing, and I also dispose of things so as not to accumulate too much.... I got rid of some six [pairs of jeans] I think."

H3. Consumers who receive second-hand clothing dispose of a greater quantity of their clothing than those consumers who do not receive anything do.

2.3.3. Collectivism

The third theme is personal collectivism (Sharma, 2010). Personal collectivism relates to the subject's concern for the well-being of family, friends, and acquaintances (Cruz-Cárdenas et al., 2015). In this sense, the participants' perception that members of their social groups have clothing needs leads to the flow of clothes outside the household.

Doris (woman, administrative assistant, 35), a woman with a low income, describes how her friend Elizabeth, originally from a small town and now living in Quito, was having economic difficulties, leading Doris to give her some of her clothes: "I asked if she brought any clothing from home. 'Not much', she said because she did not have much there... Then, I told her... 'I have clothes... Aren't we the same size?' She tells me [excited] yes, yes."

The only previous study on consumer behavior showing similar behavior to that of Doris is Saunders' research (2010); however, in that study, the motivation of individuals is religious.

H4. As the collectivism of the consumer increases on a personal level, the quantity of clothing disposed of outside of the household increases as well.

2.3.4. Retention of clothing

Some interviewees tend to retain clothing in the household. Coulter and Ligas (2003) describe packrats as frugal consumers who tend to keep their possessions, in contrast with purgers, who favor immediate disposal. Haws et al. (2012) associate this behavior with a lifestyle trait that they term product retention tendency (PRT).

For example, Lupe (woman, housewife, 63) explains that she uses all of her clothing, though she later admits that this is not always the

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/10492775>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/10492775>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)