

ASSESSING COGNITIVE DISSONANCE AND SELF-WORTH: INVESTIGATING THE INFLUENCE OF FAST FASHION FOLLOWING AND SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION AMONG YOUNG ADULTS IN BANGLADESH

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Abstract

In today's digitalized modern society people are getting affected by the practice of fast fashion buying and become the victims of post purchase indecisions and social media addictions. Understanding how young adults' cognitive dissonance and sense of self-worth are related to fast fashion was one of the main goals of the current study. The present study also investigated whether any other factors, such as gender, social media addiction in terms of online shopping, educational background, and income, might have an impact on the study's results. Women who purchase fast fashion are more likely than males to experience cognitive dissonance when making a purchase, according to the present study results. Fast fashion and cognitive dissonance following purchase are discovered to have a positive relationship. Regression analysis determined that fast fashion and social media can predict cognitive dissonance after making a purchase as well as three sources of self-worth: appearance, God's love, and virtue. The results of the current study show a relationship between social media use and how it affects customer behaviour in the fast-fashion clothing sector, which may cause cognitive dissonance. Furthermore, there is evidence that social media use and rapid fashion have a negative impact on academic achievement, psychological health, and self-worth. Interestingly, the study shows that under this situation, women are more likely than males to experience cognitive dissonance. In conclusion, fast fashion plays a much greater role in our lives than we realize in terms of affecting our self-worth and cognitive dissonance and using of social media to for purchase purposes.

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Introduction

Fast fashion is characterized in the 21st century by assembly line production that is created with low quality and less sustainability, and it is consumed by modern individuals that exhibit trendy behaviour⁽¹⁾. Those who follow trends and attempt to stay up with the expanding fashion trend as a result of celebrity and popular individuals being affected by social media, newspapers, magazines, television, etc. are said to practice fast fashion (FF). Fast fashion drives people to make inconsistent decisions while buying things, but the most significant effect is that frequent post-purchase inconsistency leads to cognitive discomfort⁽²⁾. According to the “cognitive dissonance theory,” every person has an innate need to maintain harmony and balance in their cognition and thought process by avoiding disharmony⁽²⁾.

Those who engage in fast fashion buying, can receive rewards for a small period of time, but doing so will ultimately harm their mental health. Fast fashion has purposefully low prices, but its high volume defies expectations and encourages repeat purchases even though it is less sustainable⁽³⁾. Previous research has found relationships between cognitive dissonance arousal and self-esteem⁽⁴⁾. In the case of fast fashion, this dissonance happens when a person’s behaviours of buying and wearing fast fashion apparel conflict with their convictions about sustainability, ethics, and social responsibility. Addiction to social media and fast fashion creates a culture of comparison, rapid satisfaction, environmental worries, and addictive constant buying behaviours that cause young adults to experience cognitive dissonance and low self-worth.

Cognitive dissonance has a number of negative effects on people, including uncomfortable situations, self-worth, self-esteem, psychiatric problems, etc. A person’s self-worth is determined by the emotional outlook they develop about themselves, which affects how they feel about themselves when comparing themselves to others⁽⁵⁾. Self-worth differs from person to person depending on beliefs, attitude, personality, intelligence, social and educational background, expectation, motivation, achievement, etc.

In the current world view social networking sites (SNS) such as Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok, You Tube) plays a vital role not only in the constant assessment of self-worth but also in the marketing of fast fashion inventories. Social media addiction (SMA), an alarming issue for youths, is bleeding into every sector in person’s life.

The easy accessibility and the urge to order something online has become a phenomenon because it lessens the time and energy needed to go to shopping mall. According to research on the consumer-brand interaction, luxury and FF addiction have both beneficial and bad consequences on consumers’ wellbeing⁽⁶⁾. Additionally, self-accountability and self-efficacy perception play both positive and negative moderating roles in both primary and affective response, but cognitive dissonance mediates the relationship between SNS addiction and the decision of SNS user to stop using SNS⁽⁷⁾. SMA and low self-esteem have a moderately negative association⁽⁸⁾. Recent evidence of a positive association between social media and fast fashion and the growth of social media and influencers on many platforms has caused consumers to change their behaviour⁽⁹⁾.

The present study

Fast fashion, has become a pervasive global phenomenon that is deeply ingrained in modern society, especially in the setting of a culture that is heavily reliant on social media. Its complex effect reaches into many facets of human existence, including gender roles, religious connections, social standing, cultural identities, and the obsessive chase of fads in fashion. The consequences of interacting with fast fashion can cause a startling cognitive dissonance and affect their self-worth. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate young adults' self-worth and cognitive dissonance in Bangladesh, especially to find out its indulgence with fast fashion and Social Media Addiction.

Addition to the previous objective, this investigation aims to investigate possible gender differences and correlations between the main variables, as well as the impact of income levels on fast fashion consumption, post-purchase cognitive dissonance, self-worth, and social media addiction. One's financial circumstances significantly influence both the capacity to acquire new clothing items and the frequency of such purchases. Furthermore, this present study determines the predictive ability of fast fashion and social media addiction in producing cognitive dissonance and determining self-worth after customer's purchase. Finally, it seeks to identify any observable influences of educational backgrounds on the above-mentioned variables described above, providing a thorough comprehension of the complex interactions among fast fashion, social media addiction, cognitive dissonance, self-worth, and sociodemographic variables.

Materials and Methods

Participants and setting

Cross-sectional survey research design was used for data collection. In all, 374 young adults of Bangladesh aged 18 to 28 participated, 192 of whom were female (51.33%) and 182 of them were male (48.66%). Their mean age was 21 years. Data were collected via google form. A link of the form was disseminated via social media networks.

Rating instruments

For successful conduction, an easy and well-defined questionnaire was made that contains instructions with consent paper, socio-demographic information section, fast fashion related questions scales measuring cognitive dissonance, self-worth and addiction in social media respectively.

Fast fashion

Questions inquiring regarding fast fashion included questions such as 'How many times do you shop per month?', 'How much money do you spend per month on fashion?', 'Do you get influenced by clothing's advertisement in social media?' etc.

Cognitive Dissonance After Purchase (CDAP): A multidimensional scale

This scale was used to assess cognitive dissonance following a purchase⁽¹⁰⁾. There are 22 items in total. This survey uses a seven-point Likert scale (1 to 7). Cronbach's alpha for current investigation was found 0.96.

Contingencies of Self Worth Scale (CSWS)

Self-worth scale of 35 items covers seven sources of worth, including other people's acceptance, competition, physical appearance, intellectual prowess, virtue, and God's love. It was seven point Likert format scale⁽¹¹⁾. The Cronbach's alpha for the current investigation was 0.85.

Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS)

With only six items, the Bangla translated scale has great reliability and validity and assesses social media addiction using a 5-point Likert scale⁽¹²⁾. During adapting, the internal consistency of BSMAS was found to be high (Cronbach's alpha is 0.88)⁽¹²⁾.

Results and Discussion

Results from Table 1 showed that a significant statistical difference was found for Cognitive Dissonance After Purchase mean scores of females ($M = 67.26$, $SD = 29.22$) higher (mean difference 4.81, 95%), than males ($M = 60.17$, $SD = 28.23$), $t(372) = 1.595$, $p < 0.05$, two tailed, indicates the findings were statistically significant.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of variables. Male (N = 182) Female (N = 192)

Variables	M	SD	M	SD	T	p
	Male		Female			
CDAP	60.17	28.23	67.26	29.22	-2.382	0.018*
OA	20.28	4.91	20.61	5.40	-0.625	0.533
A	17.18	3.90	16.77	4.12	0.987	0.324
C	21.32	2.53	21.53	2.62	-0.775	0.439
AP	25.65	4.54	24.79	4.84	1.763	0.079
FS	21.86	2.93	21.62	3.08	0.763	0.446
GL	29.74	5.75	29.06	6.28	1.080	0.281
V	25.44	3.64	25.41	3.97	0.085	0.932
FF	0.46	0.50	0.53	0.50	-1.454	0.147
SMA	18.75	4.80	18.53	5.28	0.414	0.679

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Note. CDAP: Cognitive Dissonance After Purchase; OA: Other's Approval; A: Appearances; C: Competition; AP: Academic Performances; FS: Family Support; GL: God's Love; V: Virtue; FF: Fast Fashion; SMA: Social Media Addiction

Table 2 demonstrated that Cognitive Dissonance After Purchase was significantly correlated with both god's love ($r = -0.164$; $p < 0.01$) and virtue ($r = -0.174$; $p < 0.01$) negatively. Moreover, positive correlation ($r = 0.309$, $p < 0.01$) between Cognitive Dissonance After Purchase and Fast Fashion was found indicated when the score increased, the Cognitive Dissonance After Purchase score increased as well.

Table 2. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients among the variables (N = 374)

Variable's name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1 CDAP	1									
2 OA	-.029									
3 A	.066	-.142**								
4 C	-.012	.005	.085							
5 AP	-.014	-.037	.046	.158**						
6 FS	-.032	0.88	-.027	.101	.356**					
7 GL	-.164**	-.015	-.148**	.051	.404**	.355**				
8 V	-.174**	0.47	-.155**	.118*	.416**	.314**	.541**			
9 FF	.309**	-.037	.003	-.049	.023	0.18	-.106*	-.076		
10 SMA	.057	-.068	.136**	.042	.118*	.071	.175**	.078	-.126*	1

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Note. CDAP: Cognitive Dissonance After Purchase; OA: Other's Approval; A: Appearances; C: Competition; AP: Academic Performances; FS: Family Support; GL: God's Love; V: Virtue; FF: Fast Fashion; SMA: Social Media Addiction.

A negative significant correlation ($r = -0.106$; $p < 0.05$) has been found between god's love and fast fashion. Social Media Addiction was significantly and positively correlated with appearance ($r = 0.136$; $p < 0.01$), academic performance ($r = .118$; $p < 0.05$) and god's love ($r = .175$; $p < 0.01$). There was a negative correlation between the two independent variables fast fashion and Social Media Addiction ($r = -0.126$, $p < 0.05$) which suggests that fast fashion score decreases while social media addiction score increases.

Table 3. Regression analyses of variables (N = 374)

Variables	B	95% CI		SE	B	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F
		LB	UB					
CDAP						.105	.100	27.79**
FF	18.58	12.96	24.21	2.86	.322			
SMA	0.561	.004	1.12	.284	.098			
CSWS								
A						.019	.014	3.57*
FF	.166	-.652	.989	.416	.021			
SMA	.110	.029	.191	.041	.138			
AP						.015	.010	2.88 ^{ns}
FF	.363	.579	1.324	.489	.039			

SMA	.114	.019	.209	.048	.122			
GL						.038	.033	7.30**
FF	-1.03	-2.242	.192	.619	-.09			
SMA	.197	.076	.318	.061	.165			

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, ns- non significant

Note. A: Appearance; AP: Academic Performance; GL: God's Love; three subscales of Contingencies of Self Worth Scale (CSWS), FF: Fast Fashion; SMS: SMA; rp = part correlation; $rp^2 \times 100$ = percentage calculation of part correlation.

Table 3 showed that together fast fashion and social media addiction accounted for 10.5% in the variability in Cognitive Dissonance After Purchase, where fast fashion measure possessed a higher beta value ($\beta = 0.322$, $p < 0.05$) than social media addiction ($\beta = 0.098$, $p < 0.05$) which indicated that if fast fashion scores increased by one standard deviation, it increased 0.322 unit of standard deviation of Cognitive Dissonance After Purchase scores, similarly if one standard deviation of social media addiction increased then Cognitive Dissonance After Purchase score increased for 0.098 unit.

The current study investigates the impacts of fast fashion and social media addiction on cognitive dissonance, self-worth, and academic performance among young adults in Bangladesh. The results highlight critical insights into how this modern consumption and digital behaviours affect psychological and educational outcomes. Both fast fashion and social media addiction together were responsible in prediction only 1.5% of Academic Performance. The part correlation analyses also demonstrate that social media addiction is a significant predictor (1.46%) of academic performance. Fast fashion and social media addiction, two independent variables, together explained 3.8% of God's Love. While Fast Fashion ($\beta = -1.025$, $p > 0.05$) was not a statistically significant predictor, social media addiction ($\beta = 0.165$, $p < 0.05$) was. This means that if the social media addiction score increased by one standard deviation, God's Love increased by 0.165 units.

A significant gender effect is identified in Cognitive Dissonance After Purchase supporting earlier research which found gender differences in impulsive purchasing behaviour, where women experience more cognitive dissonance than males while making planned purchases⁽¹³⁾. This particular finding aligns with previous research where differences in gender-specific traits and expectations were found to influence cognitive dissonance⁽¹⁴⁾.

Researchers tested the ability of fast fashion and social media addiction to predict cognitive dissonance after purchase, and they discovered that when combined, they can do so with an accuracy of 10.5%. Rapid fashion has a greater impact on cognitive dissonance after purchase than social media addiction. Also, from these results it can be stipulated that people who feel more God's Love follow fast fashion less than others. Because they adhere to principles that prevent impulsive and excessive consumption, those with higher spiritual or virtuous orientations may experience less cognitive dissonance, as suggested by these negative associations.

Social media addiction can increase the feelings of God's Love since now a day's social media provides people with lots of religious contents that may affect people's beliefs directing them to be follow fast fashion less and feels less cognitive dissonance and similar outcomes were also seen from regression analysis. The research also shows a significant positive correlation between cognitive dissonance and fast fashion purchases ($r = 0.309$, $p < 0.01$). This implies that students who frequently engage in fast fashion shopping experience higher levels of cognitive dissonance, which may affect their focus and motivation towards academic pursuits. Given that fast fashion and social media addiction together account for 10.5% of the variability in cognitive dissonance, cognitive dissonance can lead to stress and distraction, and it is plausible that increased dissonance from fast fashion purchases negatively impacts academic performance.

As per the current research academic performance was impacted positively by social media addiction and in contradiction with previous research findings where social media addition and usage were found to be negatively associated with academic performance^(15,16). Social media addiction also influenced people's Self-Worth, fast fashion does not. The advantageous use of social media platforms is one possible explanation for these results. Social media provides students with easy access to a wealth of instructional content, making it an invaluable tool for learning and knowledge acquisition. This shows that social media's influence on academic achievement and self-worth can be positive in many scenarios.

It is interesting to note that whereas social media addiction had a modest impact on academic performance (1.46%), fast fashion did not. Academic performance is a multifaceted construct influenced by various psychological, social, and economic factors. This research has explored an intriguing correlation between academic performance and fast fashion purchases, unveiling significant insights. Results from the current one is in line with earlier research findings that showed that simply social media use was a non-significant predictor of academic performance but that multitasking on social media had a detrimental impact on academic performance⁽¹⁷⁾. Another dimension to consider is the allocation of time and financial resources. Students engrossed in fast fashion trends may prioritize shopping and social activities over academic responsibilities. This shift in focus can lead to decreased study time and poorer academic outcomes. Additionally, frequent purchases can strain financial resources, potentially increasing stress and detracting from academic performance. Nonetheless, utilizing social media does not always negatively affect our lives. Social media has frequently been used to disseminate news and encourage fruitful dialogue. In some ways, it is also up to us to figure out how to use social media to our advantage.

Conclusion

In conclusion, fast fashion significantly impacts our self-worth and induces cognitive dissonance, especially when purchases are influenced by social media. This study reveals that social media heightens susceptibility to fast fashion, affecting self-worth and causing cognitive dissonance, particularly in women. Additionally, fast fashion and social media

addiction can harm academic performance and psychological health. Collaboration between the fashion industry, regulatory agencies, and academic institutions is essential for developing sustainable business models. This research provides valuable insights into the psychological effects of fast fashion and social media in Bangladesh, enriching global understanding and informing targeted interventions.

The present research had several shortcomings, one of which was that it only included adults in its sample. Future study should put a strong emphasis on removing the age restriction due to the development and extensive accessibility of social media and the internet for people of all ages. Its inclusion will also make it easier for people to apply the study's findings broadly. Furthermore, due to the data collection timing of this study during the last leg of the on-off-again coronavirus lockdown, the participant's responses could have been knowingly or unknowingly influenced by the several effects of prolonged and ever-changing lockdown and social isolation protocols, such as feelings of loneliness⁽¹⁸⁾, pessimistic future thinking⁽¹⁹⁾, improper regulation of emotion⁽²⁰⁾, and hopelessness regarding their future⁽²¹⁾.

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