
Apparel Shopping Behavior: A Snapshot

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Abstract

Shopping behavior is a complex and multidimensional concept. Consumers' are now in a more involved manner into apparel shopping than ever before. But the perception and opinion of consumers vary while buying apparels in different environment. This paper has made an endeavor to determine the factors that the consumers' are considering at the time of shopping fashion apparel items. To do so, a focus group interview has been conducted through a structured questionnaire by using 5-point Likert scale on 160 samples of individual consumers within the age of 25 to 50 years from Bangladesh and West Bengal. Stratified random sampling was considered in the study. Multiple regression analysis has been carried out to identify consumers' apparel shopping behavior. The study also attempts to develop a theoretical approach of fashion apparel shopping behavior and propose few opinions for the marketers so that they can competitive edge in fashion industry.

Keywords: *Shopping Behavior, Fashion Industry, Apparels.*

Introduction: Consumers' preferences are not fixed, but rather, depend on the framing of the problem, and are constructed while they search. An attitude satisfies personal preferences and at the same time, affects the shopping habits of consumers. In today's competitive fashion industry most of the country's marketers are vastly executing fashion marketing. That's why it is very crucial to determine the consumers' behavior while purchasing to compete and survive with the new way of business procedures in the world.

The fashion market condition for apparel items of Bangladesh and West Bengal is very raising and there are huge potentials for successful implications of fashion marketing. The study of the apparel shopping behavior is very significant and also will help also marketers for cost, and construction decisions, which can dramatically shape their creation.

Literature Review: Decision is selection of an option from two or more alternative choices. So, purchase decision means go for a purchase through selection from available alternatives to solve a certain problem (Shiffman and Leslie, 1998). Consumers with varying degrees of perceived religiosity tend to differ in their evaluations of certain store attributes can be very useful in determining the appropriate image for a retail store and in designing an overall retail marketing strategy based on that image. Store image, as one of the determinants of store choice, is largely based on store attributes, which can gain a selective advantage for retailers in the minds of consumers. Coupled with such consumer characteristics as shopping orientation, store attributes help retailers to

predict which shopping outlets people will prefer Martineau (1958).

According to Moye (2000), consumers engage in a comparison process in their minds to determine whether their evaluation of the relative importance of store attributes aligns with their perceptions of these attributes. Lee and Johnson (1997) found that customers' expectations of store attributes also differ according to store type. Again, customers did not expect much customer service at discount stores while they expected extensive service from specialty stores (Cassill et al., 1993).

Walsh et al. (2001) found that fashion consciousness among German consumers was related to a desire for up-to-date styles, frequent changes in one's wardrobe and pleasurable shopping experiences. Obviously, fashion consciousness is a convenient consumer attribute for apparel marketers, in that this pre-existing interest in clothing can increase consumer receptivity to apparel product promotions (Richards and Sturman, 1977; Kaiser and Chandler, 1984).

Lumpkin (1985) found that a high proportion of active mature consumers were relatively heavy spenders on clothing, and therefore concluded that fashion-conscious segments do exist among older apparel shoppers. Barak and Stern (1985) noted that fashion-conscious women often feel younger than their chronological age. However, no relationship was found between age perception and fashion consciousness in Chowdhary's (1988) study. Fashion consciousness refers to a person's degree of involvement with the styles or fashion of

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clothing. An individual does not have to be either a fashion opinion leader or a fashion innovator to be considered fashion conscious. Rather, fashion consciousness is characterized by an interest in clothing and fashion, and in one's appearance (Summers, 1970; Jonathan and Mills, 1982).

A majority of mature women are moderately to very interest in clothing, the changing trends in apparel styles, and their own appearance. However, businesspersons desiring customers from this lucrative market must recognize that although mature women value 'dressing smartly', they do not do so at the expense of comfort. In other words, attracting apparel purchases from older women will necessitate integrating elements of current fashion with comfort factors, (Nam J., Hamlin, Gam H. J., Kang J. H., Kim J., Kumphai P., Starr C., Richards L., 2007). Shopping orientation is a complex and multidimensional concept. Defining shopping orientation is extremely difficult, due to numerous interrelated variables (Darden, WR. 1980).

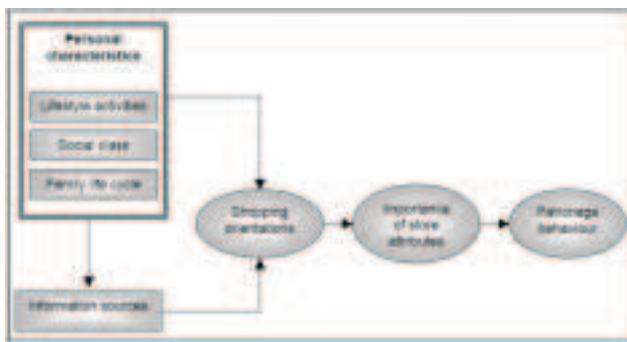


FIGURE 1 DARDEN'S PATRONAGE MODEL OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

Source: Darden, WR. 1980.

According to Darden's (1980) Model shopping orientations serve as key constructs in a patronage choice model. The antecedent variables to shopping orientations include personal characteristics (lifestyle activities, social class, and family life cycle), as well as information sources. It is also hypothesized that shopping orientations to a large extent determine the importance of salient store attributes, which, in turn, impact on patronage behavior (Shim & Kotsiopoulos, 1992a & 1992b). This reflects the influence of both market-dominated and consumer-dominated variables. Shopping orientations and patronage behavior could be viewed as variables of market and consumer interaction.

The De Klerk (1999) points out the interrelationship between characteristics of the apparel consumer and the environment (business and market influences, mass media, and stores). According to Moschis (1976), lifestyles and shopping orientations are good predictors of various aspects of shopping behavior, such as store loyalty and preferences for types of retail outlets.

Shopping orientations could also be used to determine choice and application of information by shoppers and to suggest viable promotional strategies.

Shopping orientation therefore varies with regard to individuals and different products, among individuals over time, and with changing situations. Concepts (or variables) related to shopping orientation are not necessarily included in the above-mentioned definitions. Some of the authors refer to concepts such as shopping attitudes (Fuller & Blackwell, 1992), shopping behavior (Bellenger & Korgaonkar, 1980) and shopping motives (Stoltman et al, 1991).

The need to investigate shopping orientations of apparel shoppers was emphasized by Shim and Kotsiopoulos (1993). Due to the desirability of studying marketplace behavior with respect to specified product categories, and the importance of apparel as a product category, it was decided to focus this literature review on apparel shopping orientations. Fashion orientation was reported by three researchers. Apparel-fashion lifestyle segments were identified by Gutman and Mills (1982).

The patterns of scores on shopping orientation revealed that those on the high fashion involvement side of the spectrum (Leaders, Independents, and Followers) enjoyed shopping. Theoretical models on apparel consumer behavior include consumer and market-dominated variables, as well as the interaction between consumers and the market. Further evidence of this is found in Sproles' Model of the Fashion Adoption Process which depicts the impact of the adopter's psycho-social motivations (cognitive orientations toward dress, psychological identity, social influences) and influences from the adopter's environment (marketing system, socio cultural change, lifestyles) on consumers' decision-making process (Sproles, 1979:197).

Shopping frequency and multipurpose shopping contributed to patronage behavior, with special reference to mall choice, in a study conducted by Stoltman et al (1991). Women are perceived as the predominant and "traditional" purchasing agents of apparel for themselves and family members (Fuller & Blackwell, 1992). Consumer Buying Decision Process consists of three stages, they are: pre-purchase stage, purchase stage and post purchase stage (Chowdhury A., 2000).

Objectives of the Study: The objectives of the study were as follows:

- (1) To determine consumers' apparel of fashion behavior in Bangladesh and West Bengal.
- (2) To develop a theoretical approach of apparel shopping behavior.

Methodology: This study was followed by descriptive

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Change Statistics | | |
|-------|------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|----------|---------------|
| | | | | | R Square Change | F Change | Sig. F Change |
| 1 | .656 | .431 | .404 | .355 | .431 | 16.427 | .000 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), country of origin, Influence of reference group, Economic Factor, Product quality, Store Attributes, Religious restrictions, Culture of Society

b. Dependent Variable: Shopping Behavior

Source: Darden, WR. 1980.

method of research (Malhotra N., K., 2006) is to gather information about the present condition.

Research Design:

Sample Design: In this study, a focus group interview was conducted through a structured questionnaire by using 5-point Likert Scale where coding were (Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Neutral=3, Disagree=2 and strongly disagree=1). To do so, 160 samples of individual consumers were selected from Bangladesh and West Bengal where 80 were taken from each country within the age of 25 to 50 years of both male and female consumers. Stratified random sampling technique was considered in the study.

The areas of the sample in Bangladesh were Dhaka, Chittagong and Panchaghor districts where, Nadia, North 24 Porgona and Burdwan districts of West Bengal were selected for collecting data. As there are many similarities of both Bangladesh and West Bengal like language, food pattern, celebration of occasions and culture, that's why these area was taken in this study. The frame of sampling was Universities and households. The sample was

representative of the entire population, so results from this research can be generalized.

Variables: In this study the dependent variable was shopping behavior and independent variables were culture of society, religious restrictions, economic factor, store attributes, influence of reference group, product quality and country of origin.

After generalizing the collected data from respondents and other sources, apparel shopping behavior were measured through multiple regression analysis by using SPSS 16 in this study.

Analysis and Findings:

In this study, the R square value comes 0.431, so the model is fit. Thus, 43.1% percent of variation in the fashion behavior can be explained by the variables of culture of society, religious restrictions, economic factor, store attributes, influence of reference group, product quality and country of origin.

Table 1: Model Summary

In this study, the variable of influence of reference group

Table 2: Regression Results

| Model | Un Standardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| (Constant) | 2.221 | .288 | | 7.707 | .000 |
| Culture of Society | -.148 | .034 | -.334 | -4.367 | .000 |
| Religious restrictions | -.228 | .028 | -.605 | -8.150 | .000 |
| Economic Factor | -.037 | .027 | -.087 | -1.372 | .172 |
| Store Attributes | -.115 | .035 | -.241 | -3.263 | .001 |
| Influence of reference group | .165 | .031 | .393 | 5.284 | .000 |
| Product quality | .066 | .043 | .109 | 1.535 | .127 |
| country of origin | .066 | .027 | .157 | 2.426 | .016 |

a. Dependent Variable: Shopping Behavior

is having more value .165 which means it is more influential rather than other variables. Again, less value -.037 comes for the variable economic factor which means this variable is less influential. On the other hand, -0.148 value comes for the variable culture of society and -0.228 comes for the variable religious restrictions. As well as, the variable store attributes is having value -0.115, the variable is product quality is having value 0.066 and also value 0.066 comes for the variable country of origin.

From the Table 2 we can draw the equation as follow:

$$SB=2.221-0.148CS-0.228RR-0.037EF-0.115SA+0.165RG+0.066PQ+0.066CO$$

Here, SB= Shopping Behavior, CS= Culture of Society, RR=Religious restrictions, EF=Economic factor, SA=Store Attributes, RG=Influence of reference group, PQ=Product quality and CO=country of origin.

After considering the influences of these variables on consumers shopping behavior, we have developed a theoretical approach of shopping behavior that given in below:

The below figure shows that, consumers go through the evaluation process by considering different variables like culture of society, religious restrictions, economic factor, store attributes, influence of reference group, product quality and country of origin. Later on they take purchase decision of apparel items. If consumers become satisfied after the consumption of certain items, then they go for post shopping behavior.

From the above discussions, we can come to a point that attitudes varies from consumer to consumer toward apparel shopping in Bangladesh and West Bengal. For this, customer driven action can be considered to enjoy competitive advantage in the market. Customer driven action means specific approaches to overcome consumer's ignorance toward shopping and concentrating more emphasis on consumer's considering factors of apparel shopping.

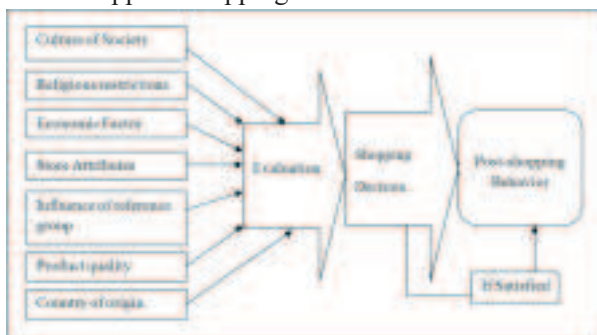


Figure 1: Apparel shopping behavioral approach

Conclusion: Consumers' buying decision in most cases is influenced by emotional attachment and need satisfaction. In the light of the current findings, the study

on consumers' apparel shopping behavior in Bangladesh and West Bengal, recommends that companies need to have a better understanding of buying behavior.

The increasing complexity of the consumer decision journey will force virtually all companies to adopt new ways of measuring consumer attitudes. So, they may conduct in-depth market research, focusing on what is consumers' view for apparel buying and how they can be encouraged to make a better and more effective regular shopping. Without such effort buying behavior may not thrive in a highly competitive and dynamic environment.

In addition, future research efforts may give special attention to the broader areas of consumers' apparel shopping behavior.

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Appendix:

Questionnaire used for conducting survey

Part I

| | | | |
|--------|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| Name | Id No: | | |
| Gender | <input type="checkbox"/> Male | <input type="checkbox"/> Female | |
| Age | <input type="checkbox"/> Below 25 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 25-45 years | <input type="checkbox"/> Above 45 years |

| SL | Questions | 5 point scale Likert Scale | | | | |
|----|---|----------------------------|------------|--------------|---------------|------------------------|
| | | Strongly Agree 5 | Agree 4 | Neutral 3 | Disagree 2 | Strongly Disagree 1 |
| 1 | I have to consider the culture of my society for the consumption/selection of clothing items | | | | | |
| 2 | I have to consider the price or other credit facilities to make shopping | | | | | |
| 3 | I also have to consider the religious restrictions for fashion of clothing items | | | | | |
| 4 | I always consider the display and fashion simulation offered by the stores | | | | | |
| 5 | I always follow the fashion patterns of my family, relatives, friends, colleagues or neighbors. | | | | | |
| 6 | I like to consider comfort & quality of the apparel items | | | | | |
| 7 | I always consider the country of origin of clothing | | | | | |