

Consumer Shopping Characteristics Approach and Gender Difference in Pakistan

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Abstract

In branding literature, consumer's shopping characteristics are an important area in marketing research. In this study gender differences for six consumer shopping characteristics, brand consciousness, quality consciousness, price consciousness, fashion consciousness, impulse consciousness, and hedonic consciousness are empirically examined. The purpose of the study is to compare males and females for existing differences in consumer's decision-making styles, using the Consumer Style Inventory (CSI), to compare shopping pattern differences between consumers in Pakistan. The sample size is 140 and data were collected by convenience sampling method. The product category is apparel. An alpha level of .05 was set. Independent sample T- Test was applied to test the gender difference of different constructs. The reliability of the scales was evaluated by calculating as Cronbach's α for all variables, which is 0.807. Gender is considered as a dependent variable while other all factors are independent variables. In results, consumers demonstrated different Shopping patterns on brand, quality, price, fashion, impulse, hedonic consciousness. Moreover, male and female consumers exhibited different shopping patterns in relation to brand, quality and, price.

Keywords: Consumer Shopping Styles, Consumer Style Inventory, Consumer Characteristic Approach, brand consciousness, quality consciousness, price consciousness, fashion consciousness, impulse consciousness, and hedonic consciousness ,Gender and Apparel

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Introduction

In today's global branding environment brand manager's and marketer's knowledge about the customer leads to the successful competitive strategy. To understand why and how people acquire products is part of the focus of the Marketing concept. The course used by individuals in selecting, purchasing, and using goods and services is of great importance to strategic managers to devise appropriate strategies for their brands for long term sustainability.

If we examine the market strategies they represent an accumulation of customer focus strategies. Understanding consumer decision making and motivations behind their decisions is becoming ever increasing popular today because the environment is so competitive that it becomes vital to know how consumers think for brand survival. For this many channels are employed. Social media is gaining popularity and momentum in engaging consumer.

According to Batra, Ahuvia and Bagozzi (2012), consumers do exhibit relationship or bond with their favorite brands. Researchers employ different studies to understand consumer behavior related to brands. Marketers need to understand and research this area to assist in understanding their consumers and their markets. These researches provide information and clarity for brand managers to better able to meet the needs and wants of clients and develop their brands and businesses.

Everyone's is different on a micro level and may have different motivation to purchase any product or services. Consumers have different needs and motivations to buy a product or service. Economic conditions, cultures. Personalities and symbolic motivations and situations may urge the consumers to buy.

Sproles and Kendall in (1986), States that branded products and services, their higher quality perception or consumer being price consciousness may constitute consumer's individual shopping style. Due to these factors consumers develop unique shopping styles. Consumers may buy Influenced by the symbolic meaning or due to their functional needs.

Similarly consumers have different shopping styles due to different underlying motivations and shopping consciousness. These consumers' decisions are affected by different factors like quality of products, their style, image of brand, fashion or impulse to buy. To understand how consumers make purchase decisions it is very important to take into account all these factors.

According to Sproles and Kendall (1986) When consumers make purchases they exhibit their decision making styles and these decision-making styles refer to a mental orientation describing how a consumer makes choice. Decision making styles refer to the orientation of consumers which makes them choose certain brands over others "Consumer decision-making styles may be defined as "a mental orientation characterizing a consumer's approach to making choices" (Hafstrom, Chae and Chung,1992).

According to Sproles and Kendall (1986), the consumer literature explains three consumer decision-making styles namely, the psychographics/life style approach, the consumer typology approach and the consumer characteristics approach. Whenever consumers purchase any branded product or service their decisions to acquire are influenced by these styles.

All these three approaches are prominent in consumer behavior however this study will take after the consumer characteristic approach because it refers to consumer's mental orientations guiding their decision making styles and also emphasize the cognitive and affective orientations which impact consumer behavior during their decision making (Durvasula , Lysonski., & Andrews, 1993) . The basic assumptions of this approach were that all consumers approach the markets to purchase with a certain decision making style which impacts their purchases (Kamaruddin & Mokhlis ,2003).

(CSI) consumer style inventory approach was developed by Sproles and Kendall in (1986) to measure consumer decision making styles. A few researchers were interested in profiling consumer decision making styles thus the origin of characteristic approach began (Kamaruddin & Mokhlis, 2003).

There are eight characteristics of consumers' decision-making styles for shopping which are perfectionist or high quality consciousness, brand consciousness/price equals quality, novelty/fashion consciousness, recreational/hedonic consciousness, price consciousness/value for money, impulsiveness/carelessness, confusion by over choice, habit/brand loyalty (Bae, 2004). In this study we are examining only six of them. They will be examined in detail in literature review section of this paper.

The above mentioned characteristics will be explored in detail in the literature review section.

Research Question

The research question of this study is as follows:

- Is there significant difference evident between six consumer shopping characteristics i.e. (brand consciousness, quality consciousness, fashion consciousness, impulse consciousness, price consciousness, hedonic consciousness), regarding males and females in Pakistan?

Previous research recommends investigating consumer behavior regarding consumer decision making styles to better understand the construct. To unmistakably "identify consumer decision-making styles, it is necessary to explore and clarify international consumers' shopping characteristics to help marketers develop a precise and worldwide marketing strategy "(Sproules & Kendall (1986) .

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to study the consumer characteristic approach, its effects on male and female consumer shopping behavior in Pakistan. Whenever consumers go shopping their shopping behaviour is affected by consumer characteristic approach furthermore we will take into account Differences which exist in shopping behaviour of males and females for apparel in Pakistan.

Academically studies about gender differences in shopping behavior were conducted with the samples of university students. Mostly young adult population have been tested and much research is conducted in western culture on this concept so in this paper we fill in the gap by taking individual Pakistani consumers as target samples for our study.

Much research is done on scale development for consumer decision making however lack of research is evident on the consumer perception. So in our study we will highlight on the consumer characteristics approach because consumers are the main consideration.

Differences in gender preferences are confirmed by previous research. According to Peter & Olson (1999), information processing differs in males and females and they react differently to same stimulus thus from this study we can add to the knowledge base of academics and provide the marketers and retailers the information and understanding about gender differences for competitive marketing strategy for apparel taking account the gender attitudes.

The hypotheses in the literature review section have been developed to understand and test the purposes of the study. Literature will be presented arguing the importance of the consumer characteristics approaches while emphasizing on consumer decision making styles and gender differences relating to the concepts. A conceptual framework is presented to label the relationships among the variables in the study. Following this will be results of the hypotheses testing; analysis, discussion, conclusions, limitations, recommendations and opportunities for future research will also be presented later in the study.

Literature Review

Shopping!, with this word uttered different people will react differently to this word. Some might feel its a toil or a chore they have to do and on the contrary some might feel exited and may claim shopping as their favorite time spending activity. According to (Bae, 2004) shopping has an impact on consumer decision making process and needs research in this area.

Consumers shop to obtain products and services which they need (functional) or desire (symbolic). Shopping is a way to identity creation and has two dimensions that is utilitarian that is functional and hedonic which is symbolic (Bae, 2004) .

Gender differences in shopping behavior is well researched area and important segment for the marketers(Carpenter,Wayne &Connolly, 2005).According to Darley and Smith (1995), women spend more time in shopping than men. Men mostly shop for specialty products such as camping gear electronics (Fischer & Arnold, 1994). Consumption patterns and habits of males and females are different forexample gender difference is evident in smoking behavior (Carpenter,Wayne & Connolly, 2005) and brand sensitivity (Nelson and McLeod, 2005).

In previous literature it is identified that consumers approach shopping with different behaviors and have different characteristics or shopping styles which impact their decision making. Consumers exhibit different traits while shopping such as they can be brand loyal (Moschis, (1981) or quality consciousness (Babin, Darden & Griffin (1994).

These all factors influence consumers' decision-making styles but we will only take into account some characteristics of consumers' decision-making styles for shopping which are perfectionist or high quality consciousness, brand consciousness/price equals quality, novelty/fashion consciousness, recreational/hedonic consciousness, price consciousness/value for money a impulsiveness. Brand loyalty and Confusion by over choice is also a consumer characteristic. However, confusion by over choice and repurchase by habit or brand loyalty are not examined in this study.

The first characteristic is brand consciousness, which is the need or desire of the consumers to acquire the most advertised brands who's visibility and awareness is higher or are considered higher priced premium brands (Sproles & Kendall,1986).

According to the American Marketing Association, brand is: "a term, symbol or design, or a combination of them that is intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors" (Tapei, Taiwan, Wang & Hsu , 2011,p.643).

Brand consciousness is also referred as brand sensitivity has been studied to understand consumer socialization processes (Nelson and McLeod, 2005).

Branded products Products like Rolex watches or Gucci textiles are purchased to enhance self or social image of the consumers (Wanke, Bohner & Jurkowitsch, 1997).

Generally some people are more brand conscious than others and this also impacts their decision making (Nelson and McLeod, 2005). Consumers like to buy branded products due to their better quality and higher image, which in returns speaks for the buyer and conveys its personality to other people. The study by Wolfe (1942), refers to the increased brand usage due to brand consciousness of consumers.

According to David (1997), brand conscious behavior of current consumers is often noted and written about in popular press. Consumers favor brands which are well established such as Nike, Adidas or Puma when purchasing for athletic sportswear (Bae, 2004) .

The second characteristic is quality consciousness, which can be defined as an awareness of and desire for high quality products, and the need to make the best or perfect choice versus buying the first product or brand available. There are two types of quality one is called perceived quality and other is real or objective quality of the product or service. Perceived quality is defined as a consumer's judgment about a product's overall performance (Zeithaml, 1988) whereas objective quality refers to the measurable quality (Monroe & Krishnan, 1985).

According to Tapei, Taiwan, Wang & Hsu (2011), branding helps the consumer to choose quality products as quality of branded products are higher than generic ones and it also minimizes the risk of buying for consumers. Generally consumers who are brand conscious are also quality conscious. Quality is an important dimension of brand equity (Tong, 2006). Quality conscious consumers are presumably more attuned to ads which focus on the functional aspects of brands.

Price is also an indicator of higher quality (Yoo , Donthu & Lee, 2000). Quality conscious consumers will look for the brands which perform well and fulfill their promise of higher performance. According to (Kumar, 2000), quality consciousness is related to convenience, performance and comfort. Due to this factor the elasticity is less in premium brands and consumer purchase them in spite of the presence of less priced substitutes or competitors.

The third characteristic is fashion consciousness, which can be defined as “an awareness of new styles, changing fashions, and attractive styling, as well as the desire to buy something exciting and trendy” (Sproles & Kendall, 1986). Fashion conscious consumer will adapt fashions and trends more quickly than others creating a demand for those brands. Brands are also bought by this market segment to state their fashion conciseness, higher image and also their innovativeness.

According to Fuchs (2012), literature identifies brand poisoning central success factors for brands. Fashion conscious consumers are quite profitable segment for the marketers. Kumar (2000) explains in his paper that, the staple foods we need are far less profitable than the products which follow changing trends and are not a need but rather a want. Brand managers create desire for their brands for fashion conscious consumer segment rather than fulfilling need to sustain their brands in long term profitably.

It is a well known fact that brands are bought due to their symbolic and functional reasons (Aaker, 1991). With ever changing trends and in the midst of a culture of constant development of global markets brand managers build their brands around the symbolic functions. This way they try to associate their brands with image enhancement and fashion statements so that consumer should buy their brands as a solution rather than a need. A brand enjoys premium status if the brand strategy for that brand is successful in implanting a desire for that brand in the mind and hearts of the consumers.

According to Chen, Chen, and Huang (2012) brands are readily accepted by consumers if they have relevancy to consumers self concept. Thus fashion conscious consumers buy trendy branded products to build communicate and reinforce their desirable social and self images. Furthermore, consumers also reinvent themselves with buying brands which are trendy and in fashion.

In apparel “Consumers tend to prefer those items that they can wear on different occasions and can wear on different social situations” (Lau, Chang, Moon & Liu, 2006), this shows that the best product not only satisfies the customer but also delights the customer by fulfilling both functional and symbolic attributes of the products.

The fourth characteristic is impulsive shopping, which can be described “as shopping that focuses on making impulsive, unplanned and careless purchase” (Sproles & Kendall, 1986).

We all sometime feel an urge to buy and a rush to purchase products we didn't intended to purchase at that particular moment. As we move through the maze of malls and engage in window shopping or standing in line to pay for groceries that we end up more than we came for. We buy on impulse.

Impulse buying is a rather loosely defined concept, which covers many forms of non-rational purchase behaviour. “It is mostly associated with an unplanned and sudden purchase, which is initiated on the spot, accompanied by a powerful urge and feelings of pleasure and excitement” (Rook, 1987).

Consumers mostly indulge is shopping due to psychological underlying motivations and their behavior turns out into rational buying, impulsive buying or compulsive buying (Penman & McNeill, 2008). Consumers engage in buying process to fulfill different desires such as to have a change in mood or self esteem (Dittmar & Drury, 2000). Impulsive buying behavior exhibited by consumers is regarded as non rational purchasing style (Wood, 1998).

According to Dittmar, Beattie and Friese (1996), impulsive behavior of the consumer is a way to escape boredom or uplifting mood. Environment of the shopping area also plays a vital role in impulsive buying (Beatty, Ferrell, 1998), however consumers will act impulsively depends on consumers individual psychological makeup (Beatty, Ferrell, 1998).

According to Dittmar, Beattie and Friese (1995) the social psychological model of impulse buying, predicts that consumer acquire products due to underlying symbolic reasons and identity but fail to explain the reasons behind these actions.

From literature review it is observed that, interestingly impulse purchases don't differ for males and females. In social categories there is not much difference (Dittmar, Beattie & Friese 1996), for example, clothes are bought more impulsively than tools. We will be examining gender differences in this paper to assess how consumers in Pakistan engage in impulsive buying behavior.

Impulsive buying is also described by Bayley and Nancarrow, in (1998) as a purchased intention not recognized before buying and a buying intention not earlier recognized before entering the store. Store environment may also encourage impulsive behavior upon entering the store the consumer's impulsive state may be triggered by its environment.

When the affective state overrides the cognitive state then the consumer attempts to engage in impulse shopping (Youn, 2000). This trigger of impulse buying behavior and disequilibrium of the emotional state could be due to store environment (Bayley & Nancarrow, 1998).

According to Bayley and Nancarrow, in (1998) impulsive buying is associated with mostly negative behavior including immaturity, lower will power even criminality however, in some instances it is also taken as positive such as gift giving. Imagine the delight of impulse shopper as he /she engage in impulse shopping but bought a gift for someone or upcoming occasion and this act turns a negative impulse purchase into a delightful positive one.

The fifth characteristic is price consciousness, which is "an awareness of the best value, buying at sale prices or the lowest price choice" (Sproles and Kendall 1986).

According to Kumar, (2003) consumers who make decisions according to this style look for both price and performance according to price. The consumers are also value oriented. Verplanken and Herabadi, (2001), stated that hedonic motives strongly influence impulsive buying behavior

Due to economic and societal change price conscious consumer will emphases on value more than fashion when they acquire. Arising numbers of consumers are becoming value conscious and if buying apparel they tend to choose those clothes which can be worn on multiple occasions(Fischer and Arnold ,1994). This helps them to attain value for the money spent. This is a reason why retailers try to provide consumers different price ranges for products.

According to Arnould, Price, Zinkhan, (2002), some shoppers consider shopping as a challenge to have maximum benefit from minimum price and to win they try their best. Consumers have their own sets of evaluative criteria. Price is also key factor of the decision making process of the consumers.

So one way of winning might be to hunt and get the best deal. These consumers shop for hours to get the best deal and then feel exhilarated and the winner of the in mind shopping challenge.

Thus if the consumer is satisfied he/she will identify with the product or service and it will lead to price tolerance in consumers (Hsieh and Chang, 2004). The purchase might be evaluated as how much value for money is gained however in other instance time saved could be the evaluative criteria of the consumer (Arnould, Price, Zinkhan, 2002).

According to Creyer and Ross ,(1997), as consumer's price consciousness increases, they demand brands which can offer them highest benefit to cost ratio. Generally consumers are price sensitive however this could be handled with the increased involvement of the consumer. Consumers feel more of a part of the brand when they feel they are being give importance and also when organizational socializing with the consumers is increased(Hsieh and Chang, 2004).

Kim,(1988) studied the price conscious consumer comprehensively and emphasized that price conscious shoppers go to shopping trips more frequently and regularly browse newspapers or television for information. So these channels are best for them to entice in consumer participating. Price conscious consumer is sensitive to price and value they are gaining but are less inclined toward fashion consciousness. Trade off between these two important factors could be the key for the retailers.

The sixth characteristic is hedonic consciousness .Hedonic consciousness is defined as the "enjoyment of shopping as a leisure-time activity, which includes wasting time in stores, shopping just for fun, and fast shopping trips" Bellenger, and Korgaonkar, (1980).

How consumer make choices weather to take a heavy Mac burger or a fruit salad for dinner . This type of decision making comes under the domain of hedonic and functional approach to decision making. How emotion affects consumer decision making is important. Much of the pioneering theory revolves around cognitive decision making (Gutierrez, 2004).

The process of shopping is not just buying for the products or services you need but it involves complex decision making styles and underlying motivations which drive these actions. These shopping activities are not just physical aspects of shopping but also point to the mental and emotional aspects of these actions (Wilkie and William , 1990).

According to Bellenger, and Korgaonkar, (1980) for better strategy for retailers we need to understand the nature and significance of shopping from a consumer's point of view. For consumer shopping could be a break from their daily routines and some consumer also do shopping as a fun activity or hobby (Furnham, 2000)

According to Newman and Staelin (1972) consumers also view shopping as a means to gather more information about their products or services, new fashions and trends. In the zest for information and trend gathering they end up buying() this information has very important implications for marketers they need to understand this hedonic behavior of shoppers better to devise better strategies.

Word of mouth , past shopping experiences and friends do impact how consumers compile information about products and services Udell, J. G. (1966). According to (Kawabata and Rabolt, 1999) fashion magazines , friends , store display and TV played a vital role in information gathering too .Udell, (1966) also identified advertising as important factor for consumer's decision making process.

From the above argument we can say that hedonic or recreational consciousness is very important aspect in consumer decision-making and needs further probe to better understand the consumers.

Research Theory

Based on the influence of the different shopping orientations of consumer on the apparel purchase, the conceptual framework applied to and steering this study, originally was designed by Sproles and Kendall (1986).It is help full in to determining specific differences affecting the decision-making characteristics of males and females in the Pakistani apparel market.

This study comprises of seven total variables (brand consciousness, quality consciousness, fashion consciousness, impulse consciousness, price consciousness, and hedonic consciousness) and gender of consumers.

This study is basically devised to examine gender differences which are vital in marketing. They have overall different preferences in life. Peter and Olson, (1999), stated that women and men make different decision mainly due to the difference in how they process information. Gender differences are evident in every field. For example in education, they invest in different majors; they choose different occupations and kinds of human capital (Francine 1998).

Dittmar, Beattie and Friese, in (1996) found that gender differences do exist in purchase behavior and they purchase same products for different reasons. Males and females relate to the shopping process differently. Mostly men consider it tiresome and try to get over with it. Women on the other hand enjoy it. Chigger (2001) stressed that due to gender differences consumer approach shopping differently.

Gender differences in previous literature are well established therefore it is vital for apparel industry to gain knowledge about these differences related to different decision styles of consumer. In this study we want to investigate the differences in gender decision making style for shopping in Pakistani branded apparel market. These approaches are dominant mechanism in making a decision towards consumer decision making style for shopping and served as the theoretical framework for this study. We shall utilize them to examine gender specific differences.

Hypothesis Development

This paper employed quantitative data to test hypotheses associated to consumers' inspiration to engage buying behavior. These hypotheses are tested by the collection and analysis of survey data. Based on the conceptual framework and supported by the literature review, the following hypotheses are constructed.

H1.

Ho. There is no significant difference in shopping behavior between male and female in term of brand consciousness.

Ha. There will be significant difference towards shopping behavior between male and female in term of brand consciousness.

H2.

Ho. There is no significant difference in consumer shopping characteristic between male and female in term of quality consciousness.

Ha. There is significant difference in consumer shopping characteristic between male and female in term of quality conscious.

H3.

Ho. There is no significant difference in consumer shopping characteristic between male and female in term of fashion consciousness.

Ha. There is significant difference in consumer shopping characteristic between male and female in term of fashion consciousness.

H4.

Ho. There is no significant difference in consumer shopping characteristic between male and female in term of impulsive consciousness.

Ha. There is significant difference in consumer shopping characteristic between male and female in term of impulsive consciousness.

H5.

Ho. There is no significant difference in consumer shopping characteristic between male and female in term of price consciousness.

Ha. There is significant difference in consumer shopping characteristic between male and female in term of price consciousness.

H6.

Ho. There is no significant difference in consumer shopping characteristic between male and female in term of hedonic consciousness.

Ha. There is significant difference in consumer shopping characteristic between male and female in term of hedonic consciousness.

Research Methodology

The main objective of this section was to identify the research method and test the research questions, based upon the conceptual framework of this study. This study used quantitative research and, surveys the consumer's decision-making styles, using the Consumer Style Inventory (CSI), to compare shopping pattern differences between male and female consumers in Pakistan. The primary aim of this study was to identify shopping pattern differences between genders, relating particularly to apparel. To analyze the effect of the six-factors on consumer's decision-making, quantitative research was conducted.

The research question of this study calls for exploration of significant different shopping patterns relating to gender differences of consumer's brand consciousness, quality consciousness, fashion consciousness, impulse consciousness, price consciousness, and hedonic consciousness, in Pakistan.

To test this question, this study consisted of six dependent variables (brand consciousness, quality consciousness, fashion consciousness, impulse consciousness, price consciousness and hedonic consciousness) and one independent variable (gender). The six dependent variables of the consumer decision-making styles were elected.

To examine the applicability of the CSI to the apparel market in Pakistan we collected consumer sample. This is different from the majority of the consumer studies in which only university students were used. The apparel was chosen as the target product for this empirical study.

Following the technique of convenience sampling the data were collected from the shopping malls, university, and hospitals in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. We chose Islamabad because it is the capital city and its sample can be perceived as a reasonable surrogate for the population of Pakistan.

Literature review was undertaken in order to develop the questionnaire for this study, which included brand consciousness, quality, impulsiveness etc, in the apparel market, and gender differences in consumers of branded stitched clothes.

A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to 150 adult people living in Islamabad, Pakistan via a convenience, non-probability sampling method. A total of 150 questionnaires were returned, for a 100% percent return rate. After eliminating incomplete questionnaires, 140 were deemed useable.

Measures

According to Walsh, Mitchell, and Hennig-Thurau, (2001), Sproles and Kendall, in (1986), developed a rigorous and parsimonious scale Consumer Style Inventory (CSI), which was further employed and empirically tested across cultures, in countries with western culture and eastern cultures like New Zealand, South Korea, Greece, India, and China. It is considered reliable and will be employed in this research to investigate gender differences regarding different consumer decision-making styles.

The final questionnaire is consisted of two parts:

In the first section a question on gender was asked to specify the gender of respondents'. It was a closed ended question. The second section consisted of questions relating to consumer decision-making styles modified from a previous study by (Sproles and Kendall, 1986). The name of the authors whose scales we adopted for our study is (Sproles and Kendall, 1986).

The statements of the six characteristics were adopted from the previous research. The previous survey was focused on general shopping dimensions. The modified survey for this study, however, focused on specific shopping pattern differences for apparel.

The questionnaire was designed to measure different shopping orientations on eight factors: brand consciousness, quality consciousness, fashion consciousness, price consciousness, hedonic consciousness, impulsive consciousness, based on the consumer's decision-making styles.

This questionnaire consisted of 24 items about consumer shopping styles, and these items were designed using a five-point Likert scale (1= Strongly Agree; 2= Agree; 3= Neutral; 4= Disagree; 5=Strongly Disagree).

Validity Test

According to Thomas and Nelson (1996), Validity can be defined as the degree to which a measure test what it is developed to measure and so that it can be categorized as criterion, and construct. The reliability of the scales was evaluated by calculating as Cronbach's α for all variables, which is 0.807. This demonstrates that the scale is highly reliable.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing involved independent samples t-tests. Hypothesis testing was analyzed through t-tests analysis. All Responses are measured using a five-point Likert scale. These test resulted in several attention-grabbing results which will be discussed later in discussion.

Results and Analysis

H1, which questioned gender-related differences in consumer shopping characteristics in term of brand consciousness, is tested using independent samples t-tests. The test, for brand consciousness, is significant at the 0.05 level.

The result of first consumer shopping characteristics of the first hypothesis test, to determine whether a significant gender difference existed in terms of brand consciousness.

By examining mean scores, it seems that males are more likely to consider brand conscious characteristics when they are shopping (mean 2.71) compared with females (mean 2.81) which shows that females are less brand conscious while they are shopping so we can assume that this consumer shopping characteristic affects men more than women and there are significant difference in Pakistani male and female consumers.

There is significant difference between two group mean, as t test equality of mean (Sig, $0.000 < 0.05$) in term brand consciousness, as a first shopping characteristics.

Group Statistics

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
TOTBRAND	male	80	2.7167	.46570	.05207
	female	60	2.8167	.85959	.11097

Table 1

H2, which questioned gender-related differences in consumer shopping characteristics in term of quality consciousness, is tested using independent samples t-tests. The test, for quality consciousness, is significant at the 0.05 level.

There is no significant difference between two group mean, as t test equality of mean (Sig, $0.100 > 0.05$) in term quality consciousness, as a second shopping characteristics. In terms of the overall quality consciousness, it seems that females (mean 2.06) are equal to as compare to males (mean 1.69). There is no significant difference between two group mean.

Group Statistics

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
TOTQUA	male	80	1.6938	.82961	.09275
	female	60	2.0667	.86831	.11210

Table 2

H3, which questioned gender-related differences in consumer shopping characteristics in term of fashion consciousness, is tested using independent samples t-tests. The test, for fashion consciousness, is significant at the 0.05 level.

The result of third shopping characteristics of the third hypothesis test, to determine whether a significant gender difference existed in terms of fashion consciousness.

By examining mean scores, it seems that females are more likely to consider hedonic characteristics when they are shopping (mean 2.08) compared with males (mean 2.74) which shows that males will consider the hedonic factor less while they are shopping so we can assume that this consumer shopping characteristic affects women more than men and there are significant difference in Pakistani male and female consumers.

There is significant difference between two group mean, as t test equality of mean (Sig, 0.000 < 0.05) in term fashion consciousness, as a third shopping characteristics.

gende	N	Mean	td. Deviatiod.	td. Error Mea
TOTFASI male	80	2.7438	.61492	.06875
femalc	60	2.0833	.95077	.12274

Table 3

H4, which questioned gender-related differences in consumer shopping characteristics in term of impulsive consciousness, is tested using independent samples t-tests. The test, for impulsive consciousness, is significant at the 0.05 level.

The result of forth shopping characteristics of the forth hypothesis test, to determine whether a significant gender difference existed in terms of impulsive consciousness.

By examining mean scores, it seems that females are more likely to be impulsive when they are shopping (mean 1.92) compared with males (mean 3.81) which shows that males will consider the price factor less while they are shopping so we can assume that this consumer shopping characteristic affects women more than men and there are significant difference in Pakistani male and female consumers.

There is significant difference between two group mean, as t test equality of mean (Sig, 0.000 < 0.05) in term impulsive consciousness, as a forth shopping characteristics.

Group Statistics

gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
TOTIMPUL male	80	3.8167	1.27499	.14255
female	60	1.9222	.58663	.07573

Table 4

H5, which questioned gender-related differences in consumer shopping characteristics in term of price consciousness, is tested using independent samples t-tests. The test, for price consciousness, is significant at the 0.05 level.

The result of fifth shopping characteristics of the fifth hypothesis test, to determine whether a significant gender difference existed in terms of price consciousness. By examining mean scores, it seems that females are more likely to consider price when they are shopping (mean 2.31) compared with males (mean 3.81) which shows that males will consider the price factor less while they are shopping so we can assume that this consumer shopping characteristic affects women more than men and there are significant difference in Pakistani male and female consumers.

There is significant difference between two group mean, as t test equality of mean (Sig, 0.000 < 0.05) in term price consciousness, as a fifth shopping characteristics.

Group Statistics

gender		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
TOTPRICE male		80	3.8125	1.33449	.14920
female		60	2.3167	.90651	.11703

Table 5

H6, which questioned gender-related differences in consumer shopping characteristics in term of hedonic consciousness, is tested using independent samples t-tests. The test, for hedonic consciousness, is significant at the 0.05 level.

The result of sixth shopping characteristics of the sixth hypothesis test, to determine whether a significant gender difference existed in terms of hedonic consciousness. By examining mean scores, it seems that females are more likely to consider hedonic characteristics when they are shopping (mean 2.86) compared with males (mean 3.08) which shows that males will consider the hedonic factor less while they are shopping so we can assume that this consumer shopping characteristic affects women more than men and there are significant difference in Pakistani male and female consumers.

There is significant difference between two group mean, as t test equality of mean (Sig, 0.000 < 0.05) in term hedonic consciousness, as a sixth shopping characteristics.

Group Statistics

gender		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
TOTHEDON male		80	3.0800	.50073	.05598
female		60	2.8667	.66960	.08644

Table 6

Discussion

This study is needed for the development of new insights into the subject of shopping styles of consumers in Pakistan. By analyzing consumers in Pakistan, this study can provide apparel marketers a better understanding of how they are able to meet its Consumers' needs and wants and to develop a precise marketing position. Furthermore, it can provide understanding of consumer behavior for retailers as well.

Males and females consumers show differences and similarities when shopping so genders used as segmentation basis in apparel markets Darley and Smith (1995).

According to previous studies Darley and Smith (1995), women, in general, shops more frequently than men and spend more time shopping. In our research paper this is supported that Pakistani women are generally more brand , fashion , and hedonic conscious and they are more impulsive then men when they shop while there was no difference in quality consciousness in Pakistani males and females. This tells us that in terms of quality they both consider quality equal. The findings from our quantitative analyses strongly support our six hypotheses

Brands provide a shortcut for the consumers to select a product .Branded products are perceived to be of a better quality. Our results supports that males in Pakistan are brand conscious and like to buy branded apparel. The results of this study showed that differences exist in the shopping characteristics of males and female consumers. Males are more likely to consider brand conscious characteristics when they are shopping (mean 2.71) compared with females (mean 2.81) when shopping for apparel. To develop brand consciousness in females marketers should emphasize on the benefits of branding.

Product quality is widely used to differentiate your brand from the crowd. Consumers share their experiences about products and services with peers , friends and family (Lau, Chang, Moon & Liu, 2006) .If the customer is satisfied with the quality of the product he will engage in the repeat purchase.

Mostly consumer's response to quality based advertising. These people give more attention to the functional aspects of the products and services. Presumably would purchase such products to the extent that doing so would facilitate their attempts to act in ways that fulfilled their personal needs and desires.

We found Pakistani consumers to be quality conscious and there were no difference in males and females in regard of quality. For Pakistani males and females quality of apparel is important so manufactures should enhance quality features. The marketers should increase quality appeal in their promotion and advertising campaign to get better response from Pakistani apparel consumer.

Fashion is very important factor for consumers. Not much research work is done in this arena in Pakistan. If consumers rates style of the product high they will be attracted towards that brand which gives attention to this aspect of the product design for example "Brands that supplied stylish sportswear attract loyal customers who are fashion conscious" (Terrell, 2000) .

Consumers like to buy products and services, which are complimenting or giving cues to their personalities, their likes and dislike, taste and style. According to Dittmar, Beattie, Friese (1996), states that style of apparel is recognized as the main attribute in the conceptual categories of style. Consumer's conclusion to acquire a certain product depends on the shopper's intensity of fashion consciousness, so decision will be conditioned by their belief of what is currently fashionable.

Impulse buying is interchangeable term with unplanned buying and defined as "any purchase which a shopper makes but has not planned in advance" Stern, (1962). Consumers use shopping to satisfy a number of needs, not just their need for the products they acquire during the shopping excursion. In other words, the shopping act itself satisfies certain needs and the products purchased during these trips, since their purchase was unanticipated, fall into the realm of impulse buying behavior.

The majority of the researchers recently have extended this description beyond a straightforward unplanned purchase to embrace an emotional element or an urge to make the purchase. Women have more tendencies to make purchases on impulse than men. Our results also support this statement. In Pakistan we can observe that females are more impulsive (mean 1.92) when they go for shopping while males (mean 3.81) are also impulsive purchasers of apparel but they are less impulsive in respect to women.

Consumers when shopping are motivated by a number of needs other than those strictly related to acquiring some product. Hedonic products are consumed for symbolic reasons. These consumers are less price sensitive than the consumers who are price conscious.

Our results also support this statement. Females (means 2.86) in Pakistan have more tendencies to make purchases due to hedonic consciousness than men (mean 3.08). This shows that both males and females shop for apparel due to hedonic consciousness but men are less hedonic conscious with respect to women.

Recommendation

Understanding shopping behavior should be of interest to consumer educators in their efforts to educate consumers on apparel shopping strategies. Information about how consumers collect information and decided to buy apparel will help merchants to devise strategies to increase sales (Kawabata and Rabolt, 1999).

When companies are able to determine the factors driving purchase decisions, they will be able to better tailor products, advertisements and other marketing strategies to the needs and desires of Pakistani apparel market. Retailers may use the findings of this study to improve Their merchandise assortment of apparel.

Women treat shopping as a absorbing activity and it is confirmed by previous research that women when shopping exhibit more awareness, are more inquisitive and are more patient while shopping (Furnham, 2000). This is also confirmed by this study, so to attract both men and women marketers in general have to make apparel shops more attractive for men as well as women. From the results of the study this is clear that women are more hedonic conscious than men so strategies may include better hedonic elements to entice them. They should increase hedonic components of store environment to attract women more and retain their customer for longer period of time.

Marketers should introduce environment which is better attuned to males as well to tap this market as well. The more time spent in stores can make the consumers to impulse purchase as well. In a highly competitive environment, only those retailers who exceed the expectations of their customers in terms of providing an enjoyable shopping experience can survive and become successful so marketers should improve the shopping environment including store displays to trigger impulse purchases.

Generally the results of this study imply that females are more impulsive, fashion conscious, brand conscious and shop more hedonic brands. Advertising and promotions should focus on them and should increase their involvement. Involvement of males should be increased by targeting advertising towards them and appealing to the quality consciousness because both gender will respond to quality appeals in advertising.

Finally, Kawabata and Rabolt (1999), compared evaluative criteria in the purchasing of clothing between New Zealand and US consumers and the study showed that US subjects placed importance on clothing criteria. So to understand the demographics Further variables, styles the nationality, age socioeconomic factors etc should be examined to identify differences in shopping patterns of males and females for future research.

Limitation:

The potential limitations of this study are described below.

1. The study is limited to consumers residing in Islamabad only so the results of this study cannot be used to reflect the population as a whole.
2. This study collects convenient samples Therefore; one cannot generalize the results of the study to the population. This study can only reflect a specific and limited population's apparel needs.
3. Survey research plays an important part in creating a successful study. The questionnaire was not translated in Urdu which was the most understood language of the population. The success of this study depends upon whether the questions will be clearly understood and answered, as well as upon whether or not the respondents honestly and diligently answer the questions and complete the survey for this study.

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