

Chapter 2

Materialistic Values and Impulsive Behavior in the Purchasing Process Between Genders

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ABSTRACT

The research investigates the relationship between gender, materialistic values, and impulsive behavior with fashion clothing involvement. Furthermore this study investigates different decision-making styles and the influence of the marketing mix to the purchasing process. A survey was conducted with a sample of 295 consumers. Factor analysis using principle components with varimax rotation was used. Also, the Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted in order to reveal interactions and relationship between different variables. According to research findings young adults have developed materialistic values and therefore material goods are used as symbols by them. The reinforcement of a person's self-image is probably a motivation that plays significant role in individuals purchasing decisions. Thus consumers are engaged in non-planned purchases, which are considered as impulsive. Moreover, men are those who are more involved with fashion clothing in order to bolster their self-image. However women are those who appear to be more impulsive in their purchasing decisions.

1. INTRODUCTION

The changes which take place in business environment have affected mainly young consumer behavior. Young consumers nowadays better known as generation “Y” is generally acknowledged as a new market segment. That target has socialized into consuming earlier than previous generations. Generation Y have been brought up in an era where shopping is not regarded as a simple act of purchasing but as a recreational act. Furthermore the proliferation of media choices such as magazines, television, Internet has resulted in greater diversity of product and lifestyle choices (Elliott & Richard, 1994). Moreover the shopping

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malls have become places of social interaction and leisure activities. As a result young consumers may have developed different shopping style in comparison to previous generations. They are considered to be highly involved with apparel products and in particular in fashion clothing (Dholakia, 2000).

Therefore there is need to better understand young consumers' behavior, their decision making style and their values concerning fashion clothing. Nowadays possessions have come to serve as key symbols for personal qualities, attachments and interests. Hence an individual's identity is influenced by the symbolic meanings of his/her own material possessions, and the way in which he/she relates to those possessions. Fashion clothing is regarded as a possession that holds a significant position in society. In this research fashion clothing involvement is being viewed to the extent to which the individual views the activity as a central part of his life (Youn, 2000). Therefore the need for the study is to explore the relationship between young consumers, their values, and their level of knowledge concerning fashion clothing. The focus on fashion clothing is crucial due to its both social and economic value to many societies, especially western societies where materialism seems to play a significant part to everyday life. Consequently it is of great importance to investigate fashion clothing involvement. Moreover it is vital for marketers to identify the attitudes of consumers towards the marketing mix concerning the retail sector, especially the field of apparel products (Youn & Faber, 2000).

2. CONSUMER BEHAVIOR THEORIES

Consumers' behaviour is the decision processes and acts of people involved in purchasing and using products. People consume in order to fulfil and satisfy their needs and they have different motivations concerning the purchase of different products.

Sometimes consumers are driven to a purchase through logical arguments but other times are persuaded more by emotional or symbolic appeals. Thus one theory of decision-making behavior generally is the cognitive paradigm perspective which focuses on the decision-making process, of an individual, as a sequel of thought processes when making the decision.

According to Assael (1987) "consumer choice is a problem-solving and decision making sequence of activities, the outcome of which is determined principally by the buyer's intellectual functioning, and rational, goal-directed processing of information". This implies according to Markin & Narayana (1975) that "the consumer is an intelligent, rational, thinking, and problem solving organism, which stores and evaluates sensory inputs to make a reasoned decision". Major models of consumer behavior such as (O'Cass, 2001; Pliner et al., 1990; Engel & Blackwell, 1982) assume that consumers are able to attain large amount of information and are also able to handle and process this amount of information in order to compare and evaluate the entire alternative products related to their needs before they come up to the best solution to them. Most of other cognitive models follow the same patterns. The stages of the model are: 1 Problem definition: a stimulus from the environment triggers information processing from which a consumer perceives a need. 2. Information search: the consumer collects information to aid in the satisfaction of the need. 3. Evaluation of alternatives: a process of problem solving, which will be affected by a range of influences. 4. Purchase. 5. Post-purchase evaluation: consumption will be followed by an evaluation to determine whether the need was satisfied or not (Engel & Blackwell, 1982).

The models of the cognitive paradigm however fail to take into consideration the consumer's personal characteristics and find out what is going on in consumer's mind and therefore become predictors of the actual behaviour. Those questions find answers through the study of the factors that influences

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