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#### **FACTORS DETERMINING WOMEN SHOPPING BEHAVIOUR**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Women and shopping are complementary to each other. Shopping is both a utilitarian as well as a hedonic activity for women. There is various retailing related factors which shape their shopping behaviour. These factors range from merchandize, store staff, ambience, to store image and discounts. The relative importance of different factors may vary. Retailers can understand such factors and consider them while designing their strategy to attract women shoppers. The present study was aimed at understanding and examining different factors influencing women shopping behaviour. In a survey based study of women shoppers, nine different factors have emerged which govern their shopping behaviour. The data was analyzed using exploratory factor analysis and all the factors are discussed in detail. The present study provides important implications for retailers as well as for future researches in the area of retailing.

#### **KEYWORDS**

shopping behaviour, women, retailing, buying behaviour, shoppers.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

hopping is increasingly becoming very popular activity among women due to changing lifestyle, demographics and environmental factors. Women are often engaged in shopping for self, family or friends. Most of the studies have reported that shopping is an enjoyable activity for women. Shopping behaviour exhibited by women is often different than man. They spend more time, buy more and consider a number of factors before making their purchase decisions. In comparison to women, men consider a fewer factors and take more rational decisions. It has been observed that women give due consideration to both rational and emotional factors while shopping. Changing role of women, growing purchasing power, more number of women in the workforce, growing exposure due to media, opening of new format retail stores and malls, frequent introduction of new products, and emphasis on lifestyle related products has contributed to increased consumption of all types of products. It has also created more opportunities for women to shop for a variety of reasons. The present study was aimed at exploring the major factors shaping shopping behaviour of women in the changing scenario. It will help in designing retail strategies for providing better satisfaction to women shoppers and increasing store sales.

#### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE - DETERMINANTS OF WOMEN SHOPPING BEHAVIOUR**

Shopping behaviour is influenced by a large number of factors present in the retail environment. They are related to both rational and emotional decision making. In an important study on retail store behaviour Terblanche and Boshoff (2001) found that shopping activities involve browsing, price comparisons, search for merchandise, evaluating product variety and quality, and interaction with store personnel. They further reported that colours, lighting, music, arrangements, ambient scents and layout influence consumer responses in a variety of ways. Women shopping behaviour is influenced by a wide range of factors present in the retail or mall environment. Bakewell and Mitchell (2003) observed that women consider shopping as leisure and enjoyable activity while purchasing clothes, cosmetics, footwear and jewellery. Considering different factors influencing women shopping, they found five distinct decision making groups of women shoppers: recreational quality seekers; recreational discount seekers; trend setting loyal; shopping and fashion uninterested; and confused/time money conserving. Kapoor and Kulshrestha (2008) in a study on urban women found that price and quality along with media usage and price perceptions influence their buying

behaviour. They reported that media plays an important role in shaping the images about different products sold by retail stores. De Klerk and Lubbe (2008) found that product design and material plays an important role in decision making for apparel products by women.

A number of studies have examined the effect of retail environment on women shopping behaviour. Retail environment uses a combination of various sensory cues related to lighting, display, music, scent, air quality and temperature, interiors, promotional materials, layout etc. to shape facilitate shopping process. Michon et al. (2008) found that women shopping behaviour is influenced by the perception of mall environment (relaxed, comfortable, cheerful, colourful, stimulating, lively, bright and interesting). In many other studies retail or mall environment is reported to have significant influence on shopping behaviour. Music is an important element of shopping environment and influences shopper's behaviour. In an experimental study on women, Broekemier et al. (2008) found that happy and liked music has significant influence on the shopping intentions in the women's clothing store.

In a study on understanding women decision making, Granot et al. (2010) found that retail brand, retail environment (sales people, atmospherics, design, service, specialization, distribution and other cues have significant influence on women shopping behaviour. Women prefer to shop at a relaxed pace when they move around in a retail store. They make purchases after examining merchandise, comparing items and prices, ask questions, and try things on (Kraft and Weber, 2012). In a study on purchase of branded apparel by women in India, Rajput et al. (2012) observed in their study that price, fitting, income level of consumers are significant factors influencing their buying behaviour.

Guha (2013) suggests that women due to their multiple roles influence their own and of their family members' shopping behaviour. The study also revealed that shopping behaviour of working women is highly influenced by price, quality, brand image and others shoppers. In another study Singh and Parashar (2013) observed that shopping is influenced by of five factors: ambience, convenience, physical infrastructure, marketing focus and safety and security.

In the light of the literature review of related studies it can be concluded that there are a large number of factors present in the retail environment which influence shopping behaviour or women shoppers. Some of these factors can be summarized as: assortment (variety, uniqueness, quality); service interface (service person, technology, co-creation / customization); retail atmosphere (design, scents, temperature, music); price (loyalty programs, promotions); customer experiences in alternative channels; social environment (reference group, service personnel); retail brand (retailers own brand – private labels and manufacturer or service brand); store image and value added services. The review of literature also revealed that although many studies have been carried out in western context, very few studies were conducted in India to examine shopping behaviour of women. Therefore, present study was aimed at examining presence of such factors, mentioned in earlier studies, with the help of an empirical investigation.

#### **RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

The objective of the present study was to identify different factors which determine shopping behaviour of women.

#### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present research is descriptive and adopted survey research technique to identify the major factors governing women shopping behaviour. The sample unit was women shoppers in the age group 21-48. The data was collected with the help of a scientifically developed questionnaire consisting of thirty items. The statements were carefully developed in the light of literature review. Nine items were dropped during the initial phase of analysis and the final analysis included only 21 items. The responses were measured on five point Likert type scale. The sample size was 350 respondents. After editing 29 questionnaires were rejected

and only 321 valid responses were retained. Final data analysis was done on valid 321 responses. The data was analyzed using exploratory factor analysis using Principal Component Technique.

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The data was analysed for factor constitution through Exploratory Factor Analysis technique. Firstly, the data was checked for sample adequacy through KMO and Bartlett's Test. The values for both the tests were found to be significant and adequate in the light of obtained scores (Table 1). The scale has high reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = .756) (Table – 2) and high content validity. Principle Component - Varimax Rotation Method was applied for understanding the factor constitution. Nine items were removed due to cross loading or low factor loading scores. Remaining twenty-one items converged into nine factors such as merchandise, store staff, value added services, customer convenience, aesthetics, product knowledge, ambience, store image and discount. The total variance contributed by all the factors was 69.067% which is regarded as highly significant. (Table – 3, 4, and 5). All the nine factors were given a suitable name in the light of their constituents. A brief discussion of all the nine factors is presented below:

The first factor was named as **merchandise** with a total variance of 9.346%. It consisted of three items namely - A large number of preferred brands are available in the store; Store maintains a large variety of products; and Products of latest design and style are available, with factor loadings .823; .822; and .666 respectively. It shows that the type of products and brands maintained by the retail store has the most important influence on shopping behaviour of women. This can be further explained by the fact that products satisfy functional needs, whereas, brands satisfy emotional or psychological needs of the shoppers.

The second factor was named as **store staff** with a total variance of 9.324%. It consisted of three items namely - Customers are serviced with a smile; Staff members have pleasant physical appearance; and Staff members are friendly with customers, with factor loadings .796; 748; and .740 respectively. The structure of this factor establishes the importance of store staff knowledge, attitude, behaviour and appearance. Store staff is a key element in explain product details, handling customer queries and providing required help or assistance to the shoppers. Women shoppers place significant importance on store staff during shopping process. The third factor was named as **value added services** with a total variance of 8.677%. It consisted of three items namely - Exchange / return facilities are provided; Availability of after sales service i.e. repair, alteration; and Spacious and well equipped fitting/trial rooms, with factor loadings .866; .732; and .623 respectively. This finding reveal that women place due importance to value added services. This may be explained by the fact that women often buy lifestyle products and apparels which may require need for trying on, alteration, exchange or return facilities. Such services offered by retail stores may form an important factor to be considered before purchase decision by women shoppers.

The fourth factor was named as **customer convenience** with a total variance of 8.2%. It consisted of three items namely - Sufficient open space for customer movement; Store maintains cleanliness and hygiene; and Noise levels are managed for smooth shopping, with factor loadings .788; .744; and .650 respectively. Women shoppers value the convenience provided by store layout in terms of movement, cleanliness and noise levels. It may also lead to a better shopping experience and satisfaction.

The fifth factor was named as **aesthetics** with a total variance of 7.281%. It consisted of two items namely - Colour scheme of the Store is attractive; and Store's interior design has a major impact on customers, with factor loadings .820 and .791 respectively. It reveals an important role of design and decor of the store which has a significant influence on women shopping behaviour. It contributes to the pleasure or joy of shopping.

The sixth factor was named as **product knowledge** with a total variance of 7.095%. It consisted of two items namely - Store personnel demonstrate/display the products; and Product information is available, with factor loadings .827 and .808 respectively. This factor reflects an importance dimension that women may seek detailed product information and may ask for demonstration or display of products before purchase. This may contribute towards becoming assured about the product attributes and performance.

The seventh factor was named as **ambience** with a total variance of 6.903%. It consisted of two items namely - Theme décor is used in the store; and Background music is soothing, with factor loadings .818 and .719. Both the elements describing ambience of the retail store creates a pleasurable mood and lead to comfortable shopping. Influence of music on shopping has already been explained in a large number of earlier studies.

The eighth factor was named as **store image** with a total variance of 6.859%. It consisted of two items namely - Store entrance is attractive and appealing; and Store is stylish, with factor loadings .824 and .783 respectively. Store image is an important consideration in selection of the retail store by women shoppers.

The ninth factor was named as **discounts** with a total variance of 5.383%. It consisted only one item namely - Discounts motivated customers to buy more, with factor loading .876. Women shoppers are described as bargain hunters. They highly attracted by the discounts offered by the stores on different products.

The above mentioned nine factors emerging out of factor analysis, explain the major determinants of shopping behaviour of women. These factors are in line with earlier studies related to women / females shopping behaviour (Terblanche and Boshoff, 2001; Michon et al., 2008; Singh and Parashar, 2013).

#### **CONCLUSION**

The present study brings important insights into factors influencing women shopping behaviour. Shopping is an important activity in the life of women, whether they shop for functional requirements or they consider it as a pleasure trip. Most of the women enjoying shopping activity. They derive hedonic and utilitarian value from shopping. One of the major contribution of the present study is the identification of Nine Factors comprising of twenty-one elements, which determine women shopping behaviour. These factor are described as: Merchandise; Store Staff; Value Added Services; Customer Convenience; Aesthetics; Product Knowledge; Ambience; Store Image; and Discounts. Retail stores, focussing on women shoppers, can draw insights from the present study and design their retail strategy to influence them.

#### SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

There is enough scope for future research in the area of women shopping behaviour. Generalization of results requires more studies for validation purposes. Future researches may include a variety of retail stores to explore other determinants. The relationship of determinants and with customer response / retail performance measures such as revenue, profitability, satisfaction, quality, loyalty and others may be further explored. Comparative studies to examine gender differences in shopping behaviour.

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#### **ANNEXURE**

TABLE - 1: KMO AND BARTLETT'S TEST

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of	.700			
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1314.239		
	Df	210		
	Sig.	.000		

#### **TABLE - 2: RELIABILITY STATISTICS**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items		
.756	21		

**TABLE - 3: TOTAL VARIANCE EXPLAINED** 

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings			
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	
1	3.665	17.454	17.454	1.963	9.346	9.346	
2	1.950	9.283	26.737	1.958	9.324	18.670	
3	1.744	8.303	35.040	1.822	8.677	27.347	
4	1.487	7.080	42.120	1.722	8.200	35.547	
5	1.266	6.029	48.150	1.529	7.281	42.828	
6	1.180	5.620	53.770	1.490	7.095	49.923	
7	1.122	5.341	59.111	1.450	6.903	56.826	
8	1.089	5.188	64.299	1.440	6.859	63.685	
9	1.001	4.768	69.067	1.130	5.383	69.067	
10	.828	3.945	73.012				
11	.666	3.170	76.182				
12	.661	3.149	79.331				
13	.634	3.020	82.351				
14	.588	2.800	85.151				
15	.561	2.669	87.820				
16	.504	2.401	90.221				
17	.473	2.250	92.472				
18	.439	2.092	94.563				
19	.399	1.900	96.463				
20	.386	1.840	98.304				
21	.356	1.696	100.000				

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

TABLE - 4: ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIX<sup>a</sup>

		Component							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	.823								
2	.822								
3	.666								
4		.796							
5		.748							
6		.740							
7			.866						
8			.732						
9			.623						
10				.788					
11				.744					
12				.650					
13					.820				
14					.791				
15						.827			
16						.808			
17							.818		
18							.789		
19								.824	
20								.783	
21									.876
Fxt	raction	Metho	od: Prin	ncinal (	Compo	nent A	nalvsis		•

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

<b>Factor Number</b>	Factor Name	Constituent Items
1	Merchandise	A large number of preferred brands are available in the store.
		Store maintains a large variety of products.
		Products of latest design and style are available.
2	Store Staff	Customers are serviced with a smile.
		Staff members have pleasant physical appearance.
		Staff members are friendly with customers.
3	Value Added Services	Exchange / return facilities are provided.
		Availability of after sales service i.e. repair, alteration
		Spacious and well equipped fitting/trial rooms.
4	Customer Convenience	Sufficient open space for customer movement.
		Store maintains cleanliness and hygiene.
		Noise levels are managed for smooth shopping.
5	Aesthetics	Colour scheme of the Store is attractive.
		Store's interior design has a major impact on customers.
6	Product Knowledge	Store personnel demonstrate/display the products.
		Product information is available.
7	Ambience	Theme décor is used in the store.
		Background music is soothing.
8	Store Image	Store entrance is attractive and appealing.
		Store is stylish.
9	Discounts	Discounts motivated customers to buy more.

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