

An Exploration of Female Shopping Behaviour: A Case Study of City Faisalabad (Pakistan)

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Abstract

Modern day changes in our society are redefining and reshaping family roles. Females are now no more confined to their houses rather they are seen in great number at work and shopping places. They are actively engaged in the shopping activity. This necessitates that behaviour of females which now shop significant part of family shopping should be understood and explored. For this purpose, the study in hand was planned and 130 females belonging to different sections of society were interviewed randomly in Faisalabad city of Pakistan. According to the findings of study, females were engaged in the shopping of wide array of food, clothing and luxurious items from shopping malls, local bazaars and sale points. Many of them were price conscious and bargain with shopkeepers. Overcrowdings and congestion at shopping places, wrong tactics employed by shopkeepers and high prices were found some of the problems encountered by female shoppers.

Keywords: Shopping behaviour, Females, Decision guidance, Shopping Place

Introduction

One of the most important social and economic trends since the turn of the century has been the increasing number of women entering the work force. The participation of women, especially housewives, in the labor force has accelerated due to the advent of better technologies in market production and household production, and a new social structure (Kan & Fu, 1997). The increasing presence of women in the workplace is redefining the roles of men and women in household management (Polegato & Zaichkowsky, 1994).

Going shopping is a major source of relaxation as well as a household chore. Associated with females, the activity is under pressure due to time constraints, changing social roles and technological

advances (Dholakia, 1999). Women's current high level of participation in the labour force has focused attention on changing life style and consumption pattern (Roberts & Wortzel, 1979).

Globalization and other modern trends have brought in gradual transformation particularly in societies of developing countries. Females in Pakistan too are not exception to this transformation. Modern day Pakistani females participate in various economic activities besides shouldering their domestic responsibilities. The female presence not only in the work places but at shopping places has become quite sizeable in the recent past. Females are seen shopping wide array of products like food, clothing, electronics and other grocery items. This change is very important from academic and marketer's perspective for understanding and exploring the dynamics of female shopping behaviour. Previously, as such no significant research was done in Pakistan to study this aspect of female behaviour. Therefore, this study was planned to explore female shopping behaviour in city Faisalabad of Pakistan.

Materials and Methods

The study was exploratory in nature and hence primary data based. Since the focus of study was females only, therefore, target population comprised of adult females of age 15-55 in city Faisalabad of Pakistan. A random sample of 130 female respondents was drawn for data collection purpose. In order to make it representative, an effort was made to incorporate all sections of females like housewives, doctors, workingwomen, teachers, and students.

A well designed and pre-tested questionnaire was used for data collection. Several question formats were included in the survey. Many of the questions were framed on a five point Likert type scale. Some open-ended questions were also included to reflect the respondent's opinion. Personal interviews were conducted by trained female student researchers. Simple descriptive statistics were employed for data analysis purposes. The data were analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Scientist (SPSS).

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Results and Discussion

Socio Economic Characteristics of the Respondents

Consumer behavior is greatly affected by several factors. Since socio-economic factors are important determinants of shopping behaviour of consumers, the brief review of socio-economic characteristics of the respondents has been presented below.

Age, Marital Status and Family Size

The respondents of the survey belonged to different age categories. Around 47 percent females belonged to age group of 15-25 years, around 38 percent to age group of 26-40 years and rest of females i.e 15 percent were found more than 40

years old. Among the sampled respondents, more than 57 percent were married, around 41 percent were singles and divorced and widows were less than one percent each (Table 1).

Family size contributes significantly in shopping pattern of the consumers. Larger the family size and higher will be the shopping expenditure. The data in the table 1 reveals that more than half of the female respondents engaged in shopping had a family size from 6-8 members. This was followed by another 30 percent females with 3-5 family members whereas more than 11 percent respondents had more than 8 members.

Table 1: Age, Marital Status and Family Size of the Respondents

Age			Marital Status			Family Size		
Categories	Freq.	Percent	Status	Freq.	Percent	Members	Freq.	Percent
15-25	61	46.92	Married	75	57.69	1-2	08	06.15
26-40	49	37.70	Single	53	40.77	3-5	39	30.00
Above 40	20	15.38	Divorced	01	00.77	6-8	68	52.31
-	-	-	Widows	01	00.77	Above 8	15	11.54
Total	130	100	Total	130	100	Total	130	100

Education and Occupation

Education is an important factor shaping the consumer behaviour. The findings of the study revealed that most of the women were educated. More than 60 percent were graduates and post graduates and rest of the females were below this level (Table 2).

In order to have an insight into female shopping pattern, an effort was made to include females from all sections of society. Among the surveyed respondents around one fourth were students, more than 36 percent housewives, and business women, doctors and teachers were more than 11, 14 and 12 percent respectively.

Table 2: Educational Status and Occupation of the Respondents

Education			Occupation		
Level	Freq.	Percent	Category	Freq.	Percent
Illiterate	06	04.62	Students	32	24.61
Matriculate	26	20.00	House Wives	48	36.92
Intermediate	16	12.31	Business women	15	11.54
Graduate	43	33.07	Doctors	19	14.62
Post Graduates	39	30.00	Teachers	16	12.31
Total	130	100	Total	130	100

Female Shopping Behaviour

Shopping behaviour is a subset of human behaviour that is mainly exhibited by the human beings while they shop. Some of the aspects which are studied include the shopping purposes, shopping decision making, items purchased and consumer shopping experiences etc. In the following, some of these aforementioned aspects of shopping behaviour have been explored.

Purpose of Shopping

In our social set up, the major responsibility of women is to take care of their family. The data in table 3 depicts that the main purpose of more than 60 percent female respondents was to shop for their family. Besides shopping for family, personal shopping was also the shopping purpose of around 41.53 percent and shopping for friends was also objective of another 2.31 percent respondents.

Shopping Decision Making

Decision making is an important component of consumer behaviour that greatly affects the choices

made. According to the study, around 44 percent females used to decide by themselves for their shopping patterns. This greater percentage indicates increasing women empowerment in the Pakistani society. The percentages of female respondents who indicated that their shopping decisions were largely dependent on their family members and friends were 38.46 and 17.69 respectively (Table 3).

Selection of Shopping Place

Modern changes are taking place in our society in terms of opening of mega shopping malls and stores. People are resorting to these malls in large numbers and females are also taking interest in these modern trends. The data presented in the table 4 points out that 40 percent females used to shop from the shopping malls. Local bazaars still were found to be the choice of almost half of the respondents due to various attributes attached with these bazaars. More than fourteen percent females

were also found benefiting from various sale points.

Table 3: Purposes of shopping and Decision guidance of Respondents

Purpose of Shopping			Shopping Decision Making		
Purpose	Freq.	Percent	Guidance Source	Freq.	Percent
Personal shopping	54	41.53	Own decision	57	43.85
For family	79	60.77	Family members	50	38.46
For friends	03	02.31	Friends	23	17.69

Product Categories Purchased

In terms of product purchased, majority of the females i.e. around 67 percent were found purchasing clothes, more than 46 percent food items and only 19 percent purchased luxury goods. The major reasons for this greater percentage of cloth shopping by females is that women do more shopping for cloths at different occasions and in Pakistani society the purchase of food and other items is mostly considered the responsibility of male members. However, this increasing percentage of female engaged in the purchase of food and other items clearly indicates a change in our society.

Shopping Planning

Changing life styles have made people more busy leaving less time for shopping purpose. People now have to plan themselves for shopping in order to manage their time. Females of this age too are busy in various job and house related activities. Due to this reason more than 68 percent females as reported in table 4 used to go for planned shopping i.e. deciding in advance about what, where and when to shop. However, around 32 percent respondents did not plan shopping mostly and usually had unplanned shopping. These were mostly the housewives who used to purchase routine items particularly food.

Table 4: Selection of Shopping Place, Product Purchased and Shopping Planning by Respondents

Shopping Place			Products Purchased			Shopping Planning		
Place	Freq.	Percent	Items	Freq.	Percent	Level	Freq.	Percent
Shopping malls	52	40.00	Food	61	46.92	Planned	89	68.46
Local bazaars	66	50.77	Clothing	87	66.92	Unplanned	41	31.54
Sale Pointes	19	14.61	Luxury goods	25	19.23	Total	130	100

Shopping Expenditure

According to the findings of the study, shopping expenditure of around 64 percent of females was less than Rs. 5000 which is largely due to lower income of the people. The respondents who spent

from 50001 to 15000 were more than 22 percent, from 15001 to 25000 were 10 percent, 25001 to 35000 were around 3 percent and less than one percent spent more than Rs. 35000 (Table 5).

Table 5: Shopping Expenditure of the Respondents

Expenditure	Freq.	Percent
Less than 5000	83	63.85
5001-15000	29	22.31
15001-25000	13	10.00
25001-35000	04	03.07
Above 35000	01	00.77
Total	130	100

Price Consciousness and Bargaining

Price is major determinant of shopping behaviour of consumers. Price conscious people consider it as the major criteria for selection of the products. In case of females, a vast majority i.e. 82 percent narrated themselves as price conscious whereas rest of the respondents responded otherwise. This greater percentage is in consonance with the income level of the people. Since major portion of our society belongs to low income groups, therefore, they weigh the products on the price parameter. The smaller percentage that did not

bother about the price belonged to higher income strata (Table 6).

In the Pakistani markets, at most of the places usually the prices are not fixed. Buyers and sellers arrive at the acceptable price thorough bargaining. This phenomenon was also highly prevalent among the females. More than 71 percent females were found bargaining which may be attributed to the lower income in the society and arbitrary prices charged by the sellers that makes the buyers psychologically habitual of this practice.

Table 6: Price consciousness and Bargaining during Shopping

Yes/No	Price Consciousness		Bargaining	
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent
Yes	107	82.31	93	71.54
No	23	17.69	37	28.46
Total	130	100	130	100

Female Perception of Shopping

The views of people about shopping also vary considerably from people to people. Same trend was found prevalent among the females. Most of the females are usually fond of shopping and take it as fun. On the other hand many of the women do not agree with this notion and consider shopping as burden and routine activity. The females who were strongly agreed and agreed with the statement that shopping is a burden were 10.77 and 17.69 percent respectively. The females who disagreed and

strongly disagreed with this statement were 32.30 and 12.31 percent. According to their views, shopping is not a burden and rather it is a fun and they enjoyed shopping (Table 7).

In reply to the statement, that shopping is a routine activity, the percentage of female who agreed and strongly agreed were 8.47 and 28.46 respectively. Out of sampled respondents, 24.62 were found neutral where as 30.76 percent disagreed and 7.69 strongly disagreed with this statement.

Table 7: Female Perception of Shopping

Level	Shopping is a Burden		Shopping is a Routine Activity	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	14	10.77	11	08.47
Agree	23	17.69	37	28.46
Neutral	35	26.93	32	24.62
Disagree	42	32.30	40	30.76
Strongly Disagree	16	12.31	10	07.69
Total	130	100	130	100

Post Shopping Feeling

Shopping process is not concluded with the purchase of goods and services rather it goes on till the product disposal. Post shopping satisfaction feeling plays a considerable role in this process as this helps in bringing in changes in shopping pattern. In terms of post shopping satisfaction, 6.92 percent females were highly satisfied, 19.23 percent satisfied, 40 percent were in between, 33.08 percent dissatisfied, and less than one percent were highly dissatisfied.

Shopkeeper's Attitude

Since Pakistan society is male dominated society, therefore females have to face male shopkeepers selling various types of items. Nonetheless, shopkeepers are experienced persons and they know moods, habits, tastes and preferences of women, so they sell their products by gift of gab. The findings of the study did not point out any serious problem on this aspect. A vast majority of the females i.e. 11.54 and 54.61 percent were satisfied and highly satisfied with the attitude of the shopkeepers. Only few of the female respondents were not satisfied with the attitude of the shopkeepers.

Table 8: Post Shopping Feeling and Shopkeeper's Attitude

Satisfaction Level	Shopkeepers attitude		Post Shopping Feeling	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Highly satisfied	09	06.92	15	11.54
Satisfied	25	19.23	71	54.61
Neutral	52	40.00	24	18.46
Dissatisfied	43	33.08	15	11.54
Highly Dissatisfied	01	0.77	05	03.85
Total	130	100	130	100

Problems faced by women during shopping

Although due to changing nature of female role in our society, they are increasingly found in the shopping places, yet they still encounter several problems during the shopping. The most important

problem faced by women during their shopping is high prices charged by shopkeepers which are not even according to the quality of products. Females also complained of overcrowdings and congestions at shopping places which created problems for

them in shopping. Cheating, wrong practices and rude behaviour were also cited as other problems. Shopkeepers generally deceive women by giving them low quality products at high prices by hiding true facts about the actual features of products. Besides these transport, traffic and pollution were also among the problems faced during shopping by females.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Greater integration of world has made it a global village and has brought significant socio-economic changes that have affected every sphere of life. This has increased opportunities for female workers and their participation in the workforce has surged. Due to this factor, their family role is in the process of redefinition. They are now seen widely in shopping places. They shop not only for themselves but for their families and friends. They are engaged in the shopping of wide array of food, clothing and luxurious items from shopping malls, local bazaars and sale points. Many of them are price conscious and bargaining. Overcrowdings and congestion at shopping places, wrong tactics employed by shopkeepers and high prices are some of the problems encountered by female shoppers.

To alleviate above mentioned problems, selling companies and shopkeepers should pay attention. At most of the places, prices are charged arbitrarily and are not fixed. This practice should be discouraged and the system of price fixation should be encouraged. The modern trends of retailing and shopping malls should be encouraged and separate shopping places at several places can also be a solution to congestion and overcrowding problems. The retailers and big shopkeepers should also employ females for selling purpose to the female customers.

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