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An Exploratory Study on Shopper Typologies in Malaysia

ÉTUDE EXPLORATOIRE SUR LA TYPOLOGIE DE CONSOMMATEURS EN MALAISIE

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Abstract: There is an increasing trend of Malaysians shopping for leisure and spending their free time in shopping malls. Consumer shopping behavior has a plethora of research done. However, little intention has been given to summarizing the salient conclusions that can be drawn from the extensive study of segmentation research on Asian populations, particularly in Malaysia. This study aims to profile different types of shopper typology based on psychographic market segmentation statements and its differences with shopping motives. The difference of gender in each cluster was examined. Quota sampling was used in selecting 200 respondents in one of the university in Malaysia. In brief, all the respondents can be grouped into three main groups namely, economic shoppers, addictive shoppers and convenience shoppers. There was difference in gender found among economic shoppers. Different types of shoppers might lead to different implications to retailing industry and specifically the management of shopping malls.
Key words: Shopper Typology; Gender Differences; Shopping Motives

Résumé: Les malaisiens ont une tendance croissante de considérer le shopping comme un loisir et de passer plus de temps libre dans les centres commerciaux. Il y a une pléthore de recherches effectuées sur le comportement d'achat des consommateurs. Toutefois, on n'a guère prêté d'attention à résumer les conclusions les plus marquantes qui peuvent être tirées de l'étude approfondie de la recherche de segmentation sur les populations asiatiques, et en particulier en Malaisie. Cette étude vise à établir les différents types de la typologie de consommateurs sur la base des déclarations psychographiques de segmentation du marché et les différences avec des motifs commerciaux. La différence de sexe a été examinée dans chaque groupe. L'échantillonnage par quotas a été utilisée dans la sélection des 200 répondants dans l'une des universités en Malaisie. En bref, tous les répondants peuvent être regroupées en trois groupes principaux, à savoir les consommateurs économiques, les consommateurs accros et les consommateurs pour la commodité. Une différence de sexe a été constatée chez les acheteurs économiques. Différents types de consommateurs pourraient conduire à des conséquences différentes pour l'industrie de vente au détail et en particulier pour la gestion des centres commerciaux.
Mots clés: Typologie de consommateur; Differences de sexe; Motifs commerciaux

1. INTRODUCTION

Malaysia has emerged as one of the most developed country among the developing nations besides known as an upper middle income country (Nor and Rosmimah, 2008). The increment of affluence and education levels have transformed Malaysia's consumer lifestyle. The intervention of both high profile international retailers and the global mass media has

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successfully in developing consumer-buying behavior. In conjunction with the scenario, Malaysians have slowly immersed themselves in westernization, sophistication and cosmopolitan (Nor and Rosmimah, 2008). Looking back at the study by Euromonitor International (2009) in year 2008, increased urbanization and education shaped Malaysians become even more sophisticated and demanding with their shopping experiences. Alongside with these phenomena, in 2008, it brought about the development of world class malls with promising quality across the country. The malls accommodate a vast collection of international brands which are appropriate to cater the needs of consumers. As a result, novel lifestyle retail concepts have gained the popularity in Malaysia as retailers redirected their target to offer unique merchandise to the discerning needs of certain consumers.

In Malaysia, initial role of shopping mall as an economic transaction has been transcended into a community centre for social and recreational activity (Zafar, Ghingold, and Zainurin, 2007). As cited in the same study, research conducted by Frank Small and Associates reviewed that Malaysian adults who is above 18 years old spent 48 per cent of their leisure time in shopping malls and according to Lee (1995), the largest age cohort group in Malaysia roughly 49 per cent of the population consisting of 18 through 44 years old is the main target market for retail marketers. Retail marketers across Malaysia have come to know the significance of students as key targets for shopping malls. The same study revealed that shopping malls to be constructed vicinity to the institutions of higher learning and thus the location of shopping malls in Malaysia is highly proximity to the crowd of students as they are the target group of the retail developers (Zafar, et al., 2007).

This paper encompassed the past research about shopper typologies and the gender differences in shopping. The classification variables identified in the previous studies including consumers' attitudes towards shopping (Stone, 1954), patronage motivations (Bellenger and Korgoankar, 1980; Lesser and Hughes, 1986; Roy, 1994), mall behaviors, perceived mall benefits and mall activities (Bloch, Ridway and Dawson, 1994) and many others. In terms of differences of gender in shopping, female shoppers found to have more fondness and pleasure experiences as compared to male shoppers. Similarly, Bellenger and Korgoankar (1980) found that consumers who enjoy shopping are likely to be female and are a significant force in the retail market. They spend time shopping even after making a purchase, are prone to buy items they like regardless of need, and spend less time deliberating before making a purchase. These consumers actively seek information and are likely to enjoy social interaction and activities outside the home.

Prior research on shopping motives suggests that consumers shop for a variety of reasons. One of the first researchers to investigate shopping motivations was Tauber (1972). According to Westbrook and Black (1985), shopping motives are forces investigating behaviors to satisfy internal need states. Previous studies on shopping motives could be largely classified into two categories i.e., shopping for product acquisition and shopping to enjoy the activity (Jin and Kim, 2003).

Objectives and Significance of the Study

There is a scarce study of segmentation research conducted on Asian populations, particularly in Malaysia. In an effort to understand the cluster of University Putra Malaysia students underlying shopping motivations and its impact in facilitating the ability to adapt the marketing approach where needed, this study designed to classify the respondents into different shopper typologies. Besides, gender differences are examined based on the shopper typologies constructed. This practice reflects a widely held view that gender is fundamental to understanding and predicting shopping behaviors.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A convenience sampling method was conducted among 200 University Putra Malaysia (UPM) students outside the university's main library. This sampling method was chosen due to the unavailability of the list students visiting the library and thus, it is impossible to get the absolute number of the patrons. Besides, researchers can meet different students from different faculty at the library. This is to avoid bias for surveying all the respondents from particular faculty. For sample size consideration, there are about 25 thousand in-campus students in Universiti Putra Malaysia in year 2009 and according to the Salant and Dillman (1994), 96 cases is just sufficient to represent the total sample of 25 thousand using 50:50 split approach and with ± 10 sampling error. Even though this small sample might not able to representative of all the population, they are considered appropriate for sampling as using a relatively more homogeneous group and this is helpful to minimize random error that might occur by using a heterogeneous sample such as the general public (Calder, Philips and Tybout, 1981). To reflect the demographic in Malaysia, quota sampling was used to identify respondents of the study where the researcher took 200 respondents in this study which comprises of 100 male and 100 female. Each gender comprised of 65 Malay students, 26 Chinese students and 9 Indian as to represent the stratification of the major races in Malaysia. Pre-test was done prior to the natural research. This pre-test was involving 30 respondents in order to ensure that the questions were understandable by the actual respondents. It was also aimed to determine the reliability alpha for each instruments used besides to achieve precise research objectives. In order to obtain data, self-administered questionnaire was used for this study. In addition, the questionnaire was conducted in both English and Malay.

3. VARIABLES AND MEASUREMENT

To classify respondents into shopper typologies, measurement of shopper typology for this study was assessed based on the 34 psychographic market segmentation statements adopted and adapted from Lesser and Hughes (1986). From the pre-test, noted that the reliability is 0.792 which is considered highly reliable in this research. Meanwhile, the measurement of shopping motives was adopted from Westbrook and Black (1985). An instrumental was developed to ascertain the personal satisfaction afforded by each of 17 different types of shopping experiences, settings, and outcomes corresponding to the proposed theoretical structure. Respondents were required to consider each of the 17 statements, one at a time and to provide numeric judgments of the satisfaction they typically received from each other. Ratings were made by sorting each of the 17 items into a seven-point scale the extremes of which anchored by 'provide me no satisfaction at all' (1) and 'provides me a great deal of satisfaction' (7). Based on the instrument, there are total of seven constructs have been developed out of the seventeen statements, namely (1) Anticipated Utility, (2) Role Enactment, (3) Negotiation, (4) Choice Optimization, (5) Affiliation, (6) Power and authority and (7) Stimulation. The reliability of shopping motives is shown as below:

Table 1: Reliability of Shopping Motives

Variables	No. of Items	Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha
Anticipated Utility	3	0.644
Role Enactment	3	0.690
Negotiation	2	0.544
Choice Optimization	2	0.730
Affiliation	3	0.666
Power and authority	2	0.567
Stimulation	2	0.786

For analytical purposes, the items which fall into the same shopping motives construct will be summing up to be a composite score. The one-way ANOVA findings of the shopping motives and independent samples t-test findings of gender differences in shopper typologies will be presented in the following part respectively.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

A total of 200 usable responses were obtained from the survey fieldwork. The sample consisted of equal number of male and female that is 100 respondents for each gender. Malay respondents accounted for 65 percent of respondents, Chinese- 26 percent and Indian- 9 percent. The age range of the respondents is within 18 to 28 years old and the mean age of respondents fell into 21 years old. Both 26 and 28 years old accounted for only 0.5 percent in this study. In terms of marital status, almost all the respondents fell into single category, which is 95 percent of the respondents. The residual 5 percent are married respondents. Statistics on the source of income of the respondents have shown that a large proportion of respondents (74.5 percent) were receiving scholarship or study loan. There were only 0.5 percent of respondents generating income by doing business. Regarding the amount of income, majority of the respondents, which is 82.5 percent of the respondents indicated that they had a monthly personal income of less than RM 1,000. There is only 1.5 percent reported more than RM 3,000 as their monthly income.

4.2 Inferential Statistics

4.2.1 Shopper Typologies

Exploratory factor analysis was performed on the shopper typologies as shown in Table 2-A, 2-B even though the measurement in this study has been firmly established in the literature. Thus, in order to ascertain whether all the scales used in this study have construct validities especially in Malaysia context, all the items needed to be validated using factor analysis.

Table 2-A: Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis on Shopper Typologies Constructs

Factor Labels and Statement	**Factor Loading**	**Eigenvalues**	**Percentage of Variance**	**Alpha Coefficient**
Economic Shoppers		5.102	8.759	0.824
I always compare prices before buying items.	0.857			
When I shop, I usually go to several different stores to get the best prices.	0.847			
I often shop at the discount stores.	0.791			

Table 2-B: Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis on Shopper Typologies Constructs

Factor Labels and Statement	Factor Loading	Eigenvalues	Percentage of Variance	Alpha Coefficient
Addictive Shoppers		3.673	8.672	0.881
Television advertising a real helpful in shopping.	0.843			
Radio advertising a real helpful in shopping.	0.901			
Newspaper advertising a real helpful in shopping.	0.847			
Convenience Shoppers		1.928	6.360	0.690
It is important to me that the stores have helpful clerks.	0.785			
It is important to me that a store has signs or a store directory to tell me where to find merchandise.	0.730			
I rely heavily on signs in stores to give me helpful information for selecting merchandise.	0.738			
Cumulative percentage of variance			23.791	

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy = 0.712 ; Barlett test of sphericity, p=0.000

A principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation was constructed to reduce the 34-item scale in shopper typologies into fewer factors and at the same time finding the similarity among these variables. The Chi-square Test for the maximum likelihood solution ($p < 0.05$) indicated that the measured variables are multivarietly normally distributed and fix the model. Using eigenvalues of one or greater, eleven shopper typologies factors emerged. Since Byrne (2001) proposed that 'an assessment of model adequacy must be based on multiple criteria that take into account theoretical, statistical, and practical considerations' (p.88), there are several criteria that taken into consideration for the study including items with factor loading lower than 0.5 and those with cross-loading were deleted. As a result, three factors were found and labeled as 'Economic Shoppers, Convenience Shoppers and Addictive Shoppers'. All the three factors had high reliability of Cronbach alpha coefficients which are 0.824, 0.881 and 0.690 respectively. These factors were judged to have acceptable reliability considering the exploratory nature of the study. The Barlett test of sphericity was based on a Chi-square transformation of the determinant of the correlation matrix shows that the results are significant (p=0.000). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy is 0.712, which is well above 0.5 indicating that factor analysis is appropriate.

4.2.2 Comparison of Clusters on Shopping Motives

Table 3 presents the mean values of three groups including Economic Shoppers, Addictive Shoppers and Convenience Shoppers on each dimension of shopping motives along with number and percent of respondents classified into each group. Significance of group differences was demonstrated using one-way ANOVA. The difference is based on Tukey Post Hoc tests. Two observed F statistics for anticipated utility and affiliation slightly exceed critical values at the 0.05 significant levels are considered as marginally significant. Tukey Post Hoc tests revealed that the clusters were statistically indifferent with respect to the seven shopping motives. There are no significant differences in shopping motives among different types of shopper typologies. Addictive shoppers were driven more by the shopping motives of anticipated utility and affiliation comparing to the convenience shoppers.

Table 3: Group Differences in the Dimensions of Shopping Motives (one-way ANOVA)

Dimensions of shopping motives	Total (n=200, 100%)	Clusters: Economic Shoppers (n=107, 53.5%)	Addictive Shoppers (n=35, 17.5%)	Convenience Shoppers (n=58, 29.0%)	F	p
Affiliation	15.89	16.04	16.57	15.19	2.603	0.077
Role enactment	15.48	15.75	15.69	14.86	1.662	0.192
Anticipated utility	14.27	14.40	15.06	13.55	2.715	0.069
Choice optimization	10.60	10.42	11.23	10.55	1.815	0.165
Negotiation	10.06	9.97	10.60	9.90	0.996	0.371
Stimulation	9.84	9.79	10.46	9.55	1.510	0.223
Power and authority	9.46	9.36	10.00	9.31	1.047	0.353

Notes: The difference is based on Tukey Post Hoc tests; The mean difference is significant at $p \leq 0.05$

Affiliation shopping motive dimension recorded the highest score across clusters, revealing that most University Putra Malaysia students visit shopping malls as a way to stay connected with friends. The respondents generally appear to take pleasure in mingling with other shoppers. The results are consistent with a number of marketing scholars such as Tauber (1972) and Westbrook and Black (1985) which also found that consumers shop to mingle with other shoppers. In their studies even suggested that consumers' desire for social interaction is central to the appeal of brick-and-mortar stores.

Overall, Economic Shoppers are the largest cluster comprises more than half of total respondents (n=107). Convenience Shoppers are the second largest group, accounted for 29 percent (n=58). Addictive Shoppers are the smallest

group which included about 18 percent of the respondents (n=35). Addictive shoppers indicated the highest mean score for almost all dimensions of shopping motives except role enactment. On the other hand, Convenience Shoppers received the lowest mean score for all dimensions of shopping motives except choice optimization. Convenience shoppers were generally attracted with finding exactly the products or services that they need in the least amount of time and in special occasion shopping is for searching exactly the right product when deciding on buying gift for someone. While Economic Shoppers recorded highest mean score on role enactment. This cluster was attracted most by careful shopping as a way to fulfill responsibility as a homemaker, finding for a real bargain and doing comparison shopping as to find the best product for the money.

4.2.3 Gender Differences in Shopper Typologies

Differences in shopper typologies between male and female respondents were demonstrated using independent samples t-test as shown in Table 4

Table 4: Shopper Typologies between Male and Female Respondents (Independent Samples T-Test)

Shopper Typologies	Gender	Mean	t	p
Economic Shoppers			2.615**	0.010
	Male	17.05		
	Female	18.21		
Addictive Shoppers			1.629	0.105
	Male	14.07		
	Female	13.13		
Convenience Shoppers			0.172	0.864
	Male	15.86		
	Female	15.78		

Notes: The difference is based on independent sample t-test
The difference is significant at $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$ and $p \leq 0.001$

The result indicates that there was difference in gender of economic shoppers. Female respondents tend to compare prices before buying items, go to several different stores to get the best prices and often shop at the discount stores compared to men. The results are consistent with Bellinger and Korgoankar (1980) study which found that female consumers actively seek information before making purchase. However, there was no significant differences of addictive and convenience shoppers between male and female respondents in this study.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The study attempted to identify the categories of shopper typology of University Putra Malaysia students using psychographic segmentation statements. Specifically, it sought to identify the comparison of shopper typologies on appraisals of shopping motives. In addition, the study endeavored to examine the differences of shopper typology in terms of gender. Typology of shoppers in the study could be summarized in Table 5 as follows:

Table 5: Typology of Undergraduate Shoppers from University Putra Malaysia

Categories of Shoppers	Number of Respondents	Descriptions
Economic Shoppers	107 (53.5%)	• Largest cluster comprises more than half of total respondents • Attracted most by - Careful shopping as a way to fulfill responsibility as a homemaker - Finding for a real bargain - Doing comparison shopping as to find the best product for the money • Female consumers - Compare prices before buying items - Go to several different stores to get the best prices - Often shop at the discount stores • The smallest group • No difference observed in term of gender • Driven most by the shopping motives of anticipated utility and affiliation • Highest mean score for almost all dimensions of shopping motives including anticipated utility, negotiation, choice optimization, affiliation, power and authority, stimulation except role enactment • The second largest group • No difference observed in term of gender • Concerned most with - Finding exactly the products or services that they need in the least amount of time - In special occasion, shopping is for searching exactly the right product when deciding on buying gift for someone

The outputs of the study have several implications that would be beneficial to the consumers, retailing industry and specifically the management of shopping malls. This research may contribute to the extant literature by giving realistic evidence on the shopping behavior of local students. Second, results of this study bring forth the important dimensions of motivators for the youth when they shop. It is pertinent for retailers to identify the target shoppers as well as to identify the prime reasons they shop.

Although this study provides empirical data about the Malaysian market, the study may have limitations in generalizing to other international markets. Thus, additional study is needed to confirm the results of this study for other markets. The sampling frame for this study was limited to students in University Putra Malaysia. The results are definitely not generalizable to all populations of non-Western consumers or even all Malaysian consumers. A cross-cultural comparison would guarantee a future study. Future research with wider perspectives is desirable to enable comparisons, benchmarking and setting standards. Further research with larger sample sizes will be necessary to provide more conclusive evidence towards shopper typologies of local context. There appear to be significant opportunities to investigate shopper typologies using a qualitative or phenomenological approach. This study is hoped to pique the interest of other researchers to pursue these issues in their future efforts. In building on this study, future researchers can further deepen our understanding of one of the most fundamental aspects of market behavior that is why and how consumer shop.

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