

Dynamics of Personal Identities: A Study of Female Buying Behavior in Peshawar

Faryal Yousaf¹, Mussarat Anwar², Ayesha Anwar³, Sadaf Asghar⁴, Maimoona Khalid⁵

Rabia Chishti⁶ and Madiha Zeb⁷

¹Lecturer, College of Home Economics, University of Peshawar, Pakistan

²Associate Professor, College of Home Economics, University of Peshawar, Pakistan

³Lecturer, College of Home Economics, University of Peshawar, Pakistan

⁴Lecturer, College of Home Economics, University of Peshawar, Pakistan

⁵Lecturer, College of Home Economics, University of Peshawar, Pakistan

⁶Lecturer, College of Home Economics, University of Peshawar, Pakistan

⁷Lecturer, College of Home Economics, University of Peshawar, Pakistan

*Correspondence: faryalyousaf@uop.edu.pk

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Abstract: The aim of the present research was to understand the role of social-cognitive orientations (i.e. identity styles) that female consumers rely on when they make decisions regarding their personal attire. A sample of N=200 females was drawn from different areas of Peshawar. Age ranged from 13-40 years. Identity Style Inventory-3, a 40-item scale rated on 5-point likert scale, was used to classify female subjects on their decision-making style. The scale sorts people according to whether they process decisions through information-orientation, normative-orientation, or diffuse-orientation. Significant relationship was found between the identity styles and buying behavior of females. The results revealed that informative identity style was more common among young women who were more self-reflective and critical thinkers. They presented themselves as active participants in consumer market and had intense shopping temptations. They were more curious and passionate about new trends in clothing. They would either purchase from the local markets (22.0%) or online (12.5%). Normative females (9.5%) offered higher levels of commitments, self-control, and a sense of purpose due to which they only shopped for quality and practical clothes. Normative individuals, being conservative and traditional were not found to be active shoppers they only shopped when their desired item of a particular style was available in the market. Normative females (11.0%) provided the evidence of shopping at malls as they do not compromise on the practicality and quality of the item. Diffuse-avoidant individuals own a more disintegrated or puzzled self and have less decision-making power. Results identified that such individuals (19.0%) preferred to visit the shopping malls and spent maximum amount of time and money each month on clothes (11.0%). The current research will provide insight to the marketer to redefine the strategies of retailing textile apparel considering the personal identities of individuals.

Key Words: Consumer market, Identity styles, Shopping practices, Informative, Personal attire, Normative, Diffuse avoidant.

INTRODUCTION

Textile market is one of the leading markets in the world. Understanding the complex nature of consumers is one of the practices used in present-day marketing of textile products. Today's industry is more consumer-driven and consumer's buying behavior, preference and needs are the driving force underlying all marketing decisions (Ayman & Kaya, 2014). In today's increasingly demanding and highly competitive and dynamic consumer-centric market, the focus of the retailers should be more inclined towards the constantly evolving consumer preferences and needs (Ayman & Kaya, 2014).

Consumer buying behavior entails the study of people's individual identities, needs, motivations, and thought processes used in choosing one product over another and the patterns of purchasing different goods and services (Orji et al., 2017). There are several factors in the background playing a significant role to take customers to the final decision. Therefore, it is essential for the marketing team to understand the unique nature and personal identities of the customers which lead their shopping behavior (Khaniwale, 2015, Noel, 2017, Al-Salamin & Al-Hassan, 2016).

The importance of identity cannot be repudiated in anyone's life as it plays a significant role in the process of individual's self-development. The model of identity style developed by Berzonsky (1992) presents an approach for problem solving or coping mechanisms, enlightening one's present way of dealing with routine situations. Furthermore, identity styles signify the ways in which individual's approaches the process of decision making, particularly regarding those decisions that have meaningful effect on their individual identities (Berzonsky, 2004). The identities are reflected through the attire of individuals as personal and social values are proclaimed through dress and appearance, and the way in which an individual dresses expresses personal values (Damhorst, 1999).

Identity formation is an essential milestone in person's life identifying three styles of identity-processing that are well-known by exploration and commitment: information, normative, and diffuse-avoidant (Berzonsky, 2002). The identity processing style mirrors premeditated differences in an individual's decision making, dealings with personal problems, and in governing and regulating their lives. An information style is typical of individuals who engage in a process of exploration by seeking out and assessing information that is pertinent for their identity before making dedicated decisions. According to Berzonsky (1990), these adolescents are indefensible towards their self-concepts, open to innovative information, and inclined to revise aspects of their identity when faced with discrepant information about themselves (Berzonsky, 1990, 1992b, 2002). This identity style is categorized collectively by (a) progressive levels of self-image and dynamic information-processing and (b) by openness towards novel information. A normative style is distinctive of adolescents who depend on the standards and prospects held by significant others (for instance parents and authority figures) when challenged with identity-related problems or information. Berzonsky (1990, 2002) suggested that these individuals are "closed" to information that impends their uncompromising ideals and beliefs and they attribute great importance to conserving their firmly organized and committed self. On the whole, they are assumed to have uncompromising beliefs and value systems and to adapt to their outmoded and conventional opinions. A diffuse/avoidant style is characteristic of adolescents who circumvent personal matters and adjourns decisions until situational demands direct their behavior. Such individuals would attune their identity in role of the varying societal demands, without accomplishing a set in identity.

Research on the role of identity in making clothing choices varies widely across different disciplines. Although a large continuum of research body has explored how various aspects of identity affect attitudes and norms, less is known about how beliefs concerning identity determine decision making of female consumers. In connection to this, the present study aims to develop new approach to understand; how people acquire clothing choices and how identity affects choices and decisions in the consumer market. It would be a distinctive study in the field of Home Economics as it is bridging human psychology with the textile market. Practically, this will be informative research for textile, apparel and fashion designers, manufacturers and advertisers in order to put into consideration features that could affect their product characteristics.

Aims & Objectives

1. To identify the significant identity styles of adolescent girls and early adult women of Peshawar;
2. To explore the predominant shopping behavior of women of Peshawar in relation to their identity styles.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Sample

The sample for the study was collected specifically from the females of Peshawar. As the whole population could not be examined, a total number of 200 sample size containing, 100 adolescent girls with age range 13–19 years and 100 early adult women aged 20–40 years were drawn from the entire population pool.

Data Collection Tools / Instrument

A self-developed assessment created explicitly for the study was used to evaluate the consumer buying behavior and a scale was used to discern the identity styles of the sample. Questionnaire designed was divided into the following two sections:

i. Consumer Buying Behaviour

Closed-ended questions were used to gather shopping information from the respondents. Information regarding shopping location, shopping trips, amount of money spent on each trip was collected through these set of questions.

ii. Identity Style Inventory (ISI-3)

A forty-item Identity Style Inventory (ISI-3) developed by Berzonsky (1997) was used to measure the style of identity among respondents. Respondents completed items on 5 point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). To generate a definite measure of styles, scores on the three styles of identity processing were standardized and the style that obtained the maximum score specified the respondents' identity style. The subscales are detailed as follows:

Informational Style: Adolescents presenting this style dynamically build a sense of identity by looking for and appraising self-relevant information afore making choices and making commitments. Informational subscale included 11 items (item no 2,5,6,16,18,25,26,30,33,35,37) calculating the level to which respondents deal with identity associated issues. Advanced ratings on this subscale specify that the individual would have this identity style.

Normative Style: It signifies adolescents who depends on the perspectives and directions apprehended by significant others when come across identity relevant problems. The subscale covered 9 items (item no

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4,10, 19, 21, 23, 28, 32, 34, 40) gauging the degree to which individuals focus on others for direction by ranking their actions, attitudes, or dealings with identity associated issues in these items. Greater scores on this subscale reveals that the individual owns normative style of identity.

Diffuse-Avoidant Identity Style: Adolescents having diffuse avoidant identity style tries to evade personal conflicts and problems related to identity. They make delays in taking decisions. The subscale included 10 items (item no 3, 8, 13, 17, 24, 27, 29, 31, 36, 38) that evaluated the level to which an individual delay still the circumstances necessitate to govern a course of action by answering to these items. The more scores on this subscale signifies that an individual possesses diffuse-avoidant identity style.

Commitment: It mirrors the individuals' sense of obligation, their strength of decisions, optimism, encouraging self-esteem, acquiescence, personal goals and ideals. The subscale involves 10 items (item no. 1, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 20, 22, 39) that are used to judge basic integration. Advance scores on this subscale would show that more convinced commitments and assurance were presumed.

Procedure

The target population consisted of the adolescent girls and young adult women of different areas in Peshawar. The population was assessed through stratified random sampling and simple random sampling. Peshawar region was stratified into City, Cantonment, Warsak Road, Faqirabad, University Road, University Campus, Town and Hayatabad. Among the stratas, all the residential areas, different private, government and semi-government schools, colleges, universities, work places (banks, hospitals, NGOs etc.) were targeted for data collection. The sampling frame consisted of 100 adolescent girls and 100 young adult women from the specified stratas on the basis of gender and age. The survey instrument comprised a self-constructed questionnaire assessing the buying behaviour, and a scale was used to evaluate the identity styles of the sample. The survey instrument was personally distributed by the researcher. Completed questionnaires were collected and prepared for statistical analysis.

RESULTS

In total, 200 respondents, exclusively containing women of age range 13 - 40 years from different regions of Peshawar, took part in the exploratory study. The results revealed significant relationships among the identity processing styles and buying behavior of the sample. Respondents' data was evaluated through SPSS version 18.0. The analyzed results of the study are hereby presented in the form of tables.

Table 1. Identity Style by Shopping Temptations of the Respondents (N=200)

Shopping Temptations	Identity Style			Total
	Informative n(%)	Normative n(%)	Diffuse Avoidant n(%)	
Once a week	11(5.5%)	6(3.0%)	11(5.5%)	28(14.0%)
Every second week	21(10.5%)	14(7.0%)	15(7.5%)	50(25.0%)
Every third week	2(1.0%)	2(1.0%)	11(5.5%)	15(7.5%)
Every month	47(23.5%)	19(9.5%)	9(4.5%)	75(37.5%)
Occasionally	21(10.5%)	8(4.0%)	3(1.5%)	32(16.0%)
Total	102(51.0%)	49(24.5%)	49(24.5%)	200(100.0%)

$\chi^2(8, 200) 35.697, p < .01$

Results of Table 1 exhibits the elevated shopping temptations of informative identity style, whose frequency ranged from shopping once a week (5.5%) to occasional shopping (10.5%). Individuals with normative identity style preferred to shop every month (9.5%). Diffused identity population mostly preferred shopping for clothes more than a week (7.5%). Over all the results were found significant showing relationship between the shopping temptations and the identity styles, $\chi^2(8, 200) 35.697, p < .01$.

Table 2. Identity Style by Amount of Money Spent each Month on Clothes by the Respondents (N=200)

Amount of Money Spent on Clothes	Identity Style			Total
	Informative n(%)	Normative n(%)	Diffuse Avoidant n(%)	
5000-10000	22(11.0%)	19(9.5%)	2(1.0%)	43(21.5%)
10000-20000	51(25.5%)	14(7.0%)	10(5.0%)	75(37.5%)
20000-30000	27(13.5%)	10(5.0%)	30(15.0%)	67(33.5%)
30000-40000	2(1.0%)	6(3.0%)	7(3.5%)	15(7.5%)
Total	102(51.0%)	49(24.5%)	49(24.5%)	200(100.0%)

$\chi^2(6, 200) 46.732, p < .01$

Tabulated results of Table 2 signified those subjects of informative identity style who spent only up to 5000 to 20000/- on clothes. Normative individuals spent varied amount of money on clothes; while those of diffuse avoidant style spent maximum amount of money ranging from 20000 to 40000/-. Chi square results showed significant relationship between the two variables, $\chi^2(6, 200) 46.732, p < .01$.

Table 3. Identity Style by Shopping Situation of the Respondents (N=200)

Shopping Situation	Identity Style			Total
	Informative n(%)	Normative n(%)	Diffuse avoidant n(%)	
Shopping malls	33(16.5%)	22(11.0%)	38(19.0%)	93(46.5%)
Local market	44(22.0%)	18(9.0%)	10(5.0%)	72(36.0%)
Online	25(12.5%)	9(4.5%)	1(.5%)	35(17.5%)
Total	102(51.0%)	49(24.5%)	49(24.5%)	200(100.0%)

$\chi^2(4, 200) 28.914, p < .01$

Table 3 contains the significant results of the shopping situation in relation to the identity styles, $\chi^2(4, 200) 28.914, p < .01$. According to the results, individuals with diffuse avoidant style preferred to shop at shopping malls representing the ratio of 19.0%. Similarly, population representing the informative style mostly shopped for clothes; either at malls (16.5%), from the local markets (22.0%) or online (12.5%). Normative individuals provided the evidence of shopping at malls (11.0%).

Table 4. Identity Style by Number of Hours Spent in Shopping by the Respondents (N=200)

Number of Hours Spent in Shopping	Identity Style			Total
	Informative n(%)	Normative n(%)	Diffuse Avoidant n(%)	
1-2hrs	6(3.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	6(3.0%)
2-3hrs	30(15.0%)	16(8.0%)	12(6.0%)	58(29.0%)
3-4hrs	53(26.5%)	29(14.5%)	15(7.5%)	97(48.5%)
4-5hrs	13(6.5%)	4(2.0%)	22(11.0%)	39(19.5%)
Total	102(51.0%)	49(24.5%)	49(24.5%)	200(100.0%)

$\chi^2(6, 200) 32.803, p < .01$

Table 4 displays the responses of the population regarding number of hours spent in shopping in relation to identity processing style. Results clearly identifies that the subjects with informative identity style spent about 2 - 3 hours (15.0%) to 3 - 4 hours (26.5%) in shopping for clothes. 14.5% normative individuals also spent 3 - 4 hours in shopping. Over all, the diffuse avoidant respondents (11.0%) signified the highest number of hours in clothes shopping i.e. 4 - 5 hours. A significant relationship was observed among the two variables, $\chi^2(6, 200) 32.803, p < .01$.

Discussion

Significant relationship was identified between the identity styles and shopping behavior of women of Peshawar. It was found that the population with informative style had frequent shopping temptations as compared to the individuals with normative and diffused styles. Normative women were found to shop every month instead of visiting the market too often. Diffuse avoidant population provided evidences of varied responses for their shopping temptations. They preferred to shop upon their will; may it be once a week to occasional shopping. Researchers (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Babin et al., 1994; Wolfenbarger & Gilly, 2001; Childers, et al., 2001) argues that female shoppers try to find out fantasies, feelings, outlook and fun in the practice of fulfilling a purchasing need or carrying out search for goods and services to satisfy their need. Utilitarianism is not only adequate for covering the woman's desire to purchase (Batra & Ahtola, 1991; Babin et al., 1994; Wakefield & Baker, 1998). People have several needs; in order to meet them, they have to shop. From the ordinary articles to the most expensive ones, from online shops to platforms, people across the world are busy in shopping affairs. Women, as compared to men, are mostly perceived to spend more time in shopping. Women, being more self-conscious, patiently search for their choice product among all the available brands, compare their style and design, check any available offer, bargains and finally purchase the item with highest satisfaction (Girard, Korgaonkar & Silverblatt, 2003). Concerning the analyzed results, most of the teenagers belonged to the informative identity style who are known to be the active participants in consumer market. They are the most up-to-date population. They are well differentiated when being among people. In order to be trendy and be center of attraction, they search for the latest items in the market and do maximum shopping for being in their distinctive style. According to Arnett (2000), teenage girls are frequently apparent to mass media, where the perfect and idealistic picture of body image is exposed. Given that the young individuals are still in the course of searching their individual identity, they are probable to begin following the 'ideal' picture and initiates to purchase greater fashion objects

in order to obtain their ideal image. Although, in contrast to the informative women, the normative women may shop less as they are found to be conservative and traditional. They only shop for clothes when they feel that their desired item of a particular style is available in the market. They do not compromise on practicality of the item. Frequent visits to the market was also evident among the diffuse avoidant individuals.

Such individuals have confused state of mind and lack the quality of decision making; may be because of this they cannot shop for clothes at one time and visit the markets frequently. Jansson-Boyd(2010) provided his view point about such individuals and stated that people who experiences higher levels of inconsistency and unpredictability more often suffers from low levels of self-esteem and are most likely to buy clothes in order to satisfy their identity relevant issues. People, who are less pleased and unsatisfied with their actual selves, would engage in shopping activities in order to please themselves.

Even though the results signified that informative individuals have frequent shopping temptations but surprisingly, they did not spend much on clothes on monthly basis and mostly shopped at local markets. Local markets are known to provide a chance to those who prefers individuality in dressing. Finding stuff of own choice, doing mix and match and designing unique dresses for selves are some of the qualities of informative individuals; as they are characterized to be open to experiences. They also take the risk of shopping on line and doing experimentation with new items. Internet, now a days is one of the leading innovations, providing a unique source of shopping, "online shopping". Online shopping has reduced the time and efforts of people spent in shopping (Bhatnagar, Mirsa & Rao, 2000). It provides a wide range of products and unlimited services to the people, who can purchase and sell anything, at anytime and anywhere (Bhatnagar&Ghose, 2004; Forsythe & Shi, 2003). Furthermore, Violet et al. (2004) presented that agreeable individuals have a tendency to get engaged in activities that are valuable and considerate. Karl et al. (2007) stated that individuals with a high degree of agreeableness are more likely to, in the course of online shopping, form or discern things; such as cognition, processing of information, alternative assessment, etc. (ShuHui & Kuan-Ping, 2008). Although, Meyer (2001) stated that women of modern day choose the styles, designs and cuts that are suitable to their personality, through the internet. They do not waste their time in designing and choosing new styles for selves. However, there are a large proportion of people who are anxious of online shopping due to risk factor. Researches explored a number of perceived risks associated with shopping online among which the leading ones are the financial risks, quality of products and source risk (Bhatnagar et al, 2000; Fram & Grandy, 1997; Torkzadeh & Dillion, 2002).

It was further observed that the normative population monthly spent an amount ranging from 5000 - 10,000/- or as much as 30,000 - 40,000/- depending on the item of their choice. Normative individuals preferred to shop at shopping malls because only there can they find the quality items they prefer. Howlett, Pine, Orakcioglu & Fletcher, (2013) explains women when buying any clothing item, consciously or unconsciously thinks about its relationship with their particular personality type. Maximum amount of money was spent by diffuse avoidant individuals at the shopping malls. This may be because such individuals are found to have problems in self-control and are prey to impulsiveness.

The analysis further revealed that all the population belonging to the different identity styles significantly spent at least 2 - 3 hours to a maximum of 4 - 5 hours in shopping for clothes. Individuals with diffuse avoidant style spent greater time in shopping for clothes; which may be due to their less decision-making power in selection of clothing items. Although, it is a known fact that women of all ages do spend a lot of time in searching and selection of items for selves. A woman's' interest in apparel

shopping is often regarded as the amount of time, energy and money she spends on her personal clothing and self-grooming. Greater the amount of time and money spent, the greater would be the degree of interest and satisfaction.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Significant relationship was identified between the identity styles and shopping behavior of women of Peshawar.
2. Individuals with informative identity style had intense shopping temptations and were found to be active participants of consumer market.
3. Normative individuals monthly shopped for quality and practical clothes.
4. Individuals with diffused avoidant style frequently visited the malls and spent maximum amount of time and money on clothing.

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