

Comparing Men's and Women's Decision-Making Styles: Insights for Marketers

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Abstract:

Marketers typically use gender-based segmentation to appeal to men's and women's distinct needs and interests. Nonetheless, the role of gender in decision-making has received insufficient attention in the consumer behaviour literature. Consumer behaviour is highly dynamic and must be studied on a regular basis. Marketers must investigate consumer decision-making styles in the event of a pandemic. There has been very little research into the decision-making styles of Indian male and female consumers in particular. The convenience sampling technique was used to collect the data. This study's target respondents are members of Generation Y which does not include students. A total of 420 people participated in this study, 277 of whom were men and 143 of whom were women. Eight decision-making styles are investigated. The results turned out that men are enjoying their shopping more compared to women. Women are found to be more attracted by discounts and offers compared to the male respondents. Also women enjoy accessing new fashions and brands compared to men. Both men and women are alike in the aspects like quality, brand loyalty, confusion from choices and careless tendency. The study contributes to the consumer behaviour research clearly indicating that there are certain areas where gender based segmentation are highly required.

Keywords: Gender- based marketing, consumer behaviour, consumer decision-making styles, shopping orientations.

Introduction:

In Covid-19 (Quarter 3, Quarter 4 of FY21 and Quarter 1, Quarter 2 of FY22), India was one of the few countries to expand for four consecutive quarters, exhibiting the economy's robustness (IBEF, 2022). Globally, India contributes 17.7% of the global total of 1.4 billion people, according to Worldometer's elaboration of the latest United Nations data (United Nations data, 2022). India's retail landscape has changed dramatically in recent years. Because Indian consumers are able to access a variety of national and international brands at competitive rates due to the rise in disposable income, online retail, and the growth of online retail, their decision-making has evolved and become more sophisticated (Mehta & Dixit, 2016). It is critical that we comprehend consumer decision-making behaviours in the Indian setting, particularly in the event of a pandemic. Generation Y (Gen Y) is the target respondents for this study. Gen Y is the generation born from the early 1980s until the late 1990s (Oxford, 2022). India has the world's highest youth population, with more than half of its people under the age of twenty-five. Millennials have huge purchasing power, and Indian millennials account for over a quarter of the global millennial population (Mirrlees 2015).

Consumer decision-making style is “a mental orientation characterizing a consumer’s approach to marketing choices” (Sprotles & Kendall, 1986). Based on the mental orientations of consumers, retailers and marketers segment the seemingly

heterogeneous consumer base using the consumer characteristics approach (Zhou et al., 2010). Consumer scale inventory (CSI) is used to measure consumer decision making styles. CSI serves as a practical measurement tool that allows for the evaluation of consumer behaviour and style traits based on a standardized method (Bauer et al., 2006). CSI has also proven to be a valuable tool for marketers, allowing them to segment and position consumers. Unfortunately, it remains unclear whether CSI, which mostly validates with student samples, is appropriate for different types of consumers (Leo et al., 2005) (Nayeem & Casidy, 2015). (Kotler & Keller, 2009) opine that "customer satisfaction is a person feeling of pleasure or disappointment about the perception of the product performance as well as expectations". Consumer characteristics can be used by retailers and marketers to categorize seemingly diverse consumers into homogeneous groups based on their mental orientations.

Background of the study:

Consumer behavior is categorised based on how consumers make decisions through the CSI. The coexistence of global and local consumer cultures in recent decades has affected consumption culture, making it imperative to reaffirm that CSI is still a valid tool for today's consumers. The questionnaire was developed using the original items from the Sproles and Kendall Consumer Styles Inventory (1986). Eight decision making styles were proposed in CSI model as mentioned in Table 1.

Table 1. CSI Scale descriptions

Decision making style	Descriptions	Author and year
Perfectionism/high-quality consciousness	Quality-conscious consumers only settle for "good enough" in their products and will not compromise on quality.	(Lysonski & Durvasula, 2013)
Brand consciousness	Purchasing well-known, expensive national brands is common among brand-conscious consumers, who assume that a higher price equals higher quality, and they prefer brands widely advertised.	(Alba & Hutchinson, 2008)
Novelty/fashion consciousness	The novelty-fashion conscious can be characterized as people who are on top of fashion trends, have an eye for new trends, and are also open to new discoveries.	(Casidy, 2012)
Hedonism/recreational orientation	Consumption driven by pleasure and recreation-a characteristic of consumers who shop for fun and for pleasure when they shop	(Rezaei, 2015)
Price/value orientation	Prices are a very important aspect of shopper's thinking, because they want to find the best offers and are concerned about lower prices.	(Sarkar et al., 2019)
Confusion from over-choice	Confusion from over choice: consumers who are overwhelmed by the amount of information available and are unable to make decisions	(Sprotles & Kendall, 1986)
Impulsiveness/carelessness	Using Impulsivity refers to shopping by unplanned means and spending without regard to the amount spent; and Impulsivity is defined as being distracted by information overload and	(Sprotles & Kendall,

	having difficulty making decisions.	1986)
Habitual/brand loyalty orientation	Shoppers who are loyal to their favorite brands and stores are likely to return to them time and time again.	(Duh & Iyiola, 2020)

Objectives:

1. To compare the decision making styles of men and women consumers based on CSI scale.

Hypothesis:

Ha1. Compared to men, female consumers will be more likely to value quality.

Ha2. Compared to men, female consumers will be more likely to value brand.

Ha3. Compared to men, female consumers will be more likely to value fashion.

Ha4. Compared to men, female consumers will be more likely to value fun.

Ha5. Compared to men, female consumers will be more likely to value price offers.

Ha6. Compared to men, female consumers will be more likely to shop impulsively.

Ha7. Compared to men, female consumers will be more likely to get confused.

Ha8. Compared to men, female consumers will be more likely to be brand loyal.

Research methodology:

The descriptive research design was used to accomplish the research objectives in this study. Non – probability - Convenience sampling method is used in this study. Data collection is made through online survey questionnaire. Students sample is not taken for this research because, CSI scale was highly validated using students response. So in this study our target respondents are Generation – Y non- student category people. Total sample size of 420 is collected. Among which 277 are the male respondents and 143 are female respondents. Demographic questions are collected in part A and part B consists of questions related to consumer decision making styles. IBM SPSS statistics version 25 is used for data analysis.

Results and discussions:

Table 2 consist of the demographic profile of the respondents for this study. The result for the KMO measure of sampling adequacy is 0.734. This shows that the data for this study has a strong partial correlation and indicating adequate sample size (Hair et al., 2006). The average age of female respondents is 28 and that of male respondents is 29.5 in this study.

Table 2. Demographic profile

Measure	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	277	66
Female	143	34
Marital status		
Married	61	14.5
Unmarried	359	85.5
Occupation		
IT industry	334	79.5
Housewife	14	3.3
Self-employed	30	7.2
Manufacturing industry	21	5.0
Others	21	5.0
Family income		
Less than 20000	66	15.7
21000 to 40000	77	18.3
41000 to 60000	58	13.8
61000 to 80000	67	16
Above 80000	152	36.2
Area of location		
Urban	223	53.1
Semi-urban	113	26.9
Rural	84	20

The Cronbach's alpha value in table 3 is found to be greater than 0.6 for both male and female respondents which are proving the internal consistency and reliability (Hair et al., 2006) Using principal components analysis, eight dimensions of decision making were identified for men and women. The items with factor loadings higher than 0.4 and no cross-loading were retained in order to maintain consistency (Sprotles & Kendall, 1986).

Table 3. Factor loadings and Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient values

Decision making styles (Questions)	Male	Female	Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient	
			Male	Female
Factor 1 : Perfectionism, high-quality consciousness			0.75	0.71
<i>High quality products in all aspects</i>	0.72	0.69		
<i>My standards are high</i>	0.82	0.75		
<i>Get exactly what I want</i>	0.69	0.85		
<i>Good quality focused</i>	0.75	0.69		
<i>Best quality products are best</i>	0.8			

Factor 2: Recreational shopping consciousness			0.8	0.85
<i>Shopping is fun</i>	0.7			
<i>Shopping is enjoyable</i>	0.72	0.9		
<i>Shopping not pleasant</i>	(0.70)	(0.68)		
<i>Buying new is pleasure</i>		0.75		
Factor 3: Habitual—brand loyalty orientation			0.74	0.70
<i>Change brands regularly</i>	(0.72)	(0.68)		
<i>Purchase in the same store</i>	0.9	0.86		
<i>I stick to the brands</i>		0.89		
<i>Buying favourite brands often</i>	0.78			
Factor: 4 Confusion from over-choice			0.83	0.9
<i>Too many brands is confusing</i>	0.72	0.69		
<i>Hard to choose the brands</i>	0.76	0.82		
<i>Learning more about products confuses when choosing</i>	0.85	0.68		
<i>Data confuses</i>	0.75			
Factor: 5 Price-value consciousness			0.65	0.68
<i>Buying at sales price</i>	0.73	0.82		
<i>Lowest price</i>		0.75		
<i>Best value for money</i>	0.76	0.68		
Factor 6: Novelty-fashion consciousness			0.8	0.75
<i>Newest style</i>	0.82	0.85		
<i>Fashionable styles</i>	0.75	0.92		
<i>Different brands and different styles</i>	0.84			
<i>Buying new is exiting</i>	0.78	0.9		
Factor 7: Brand consciousness			0.75	0.9
<i>Best selling brands</i>	0.82	0.65		
<i>More expensive brands</i>	0.58	0.55		
<i>Well known national brands</i>		0.62		
<i>More advertised brands</i>	0.78			
Factor: 8 Impulsiveness/carelessness			0.65	0.72
<i>Buy carelessly</i>	0.62			
<i>Carefully buy products</i>	(0.56)	(0.66)		
<i>Purchase carelessly and feel not to buy</i>		0.63		
<i>Careful shopping</i>	(0.64)	(0.66)		

From the obtained results of independent sample T- test, it is found that Recreational shopping consciousness, Price value consciousness, Novelty fashion consciousness, and Brand consciousness there is difference between male and female respondents. It is revealed that male respondents of this generation shop for fun and

pleasure more than female respondents (Brosdahl & Carpenter, 2011). which is contradictory to the results revealed from previous study (Mehta, 2020). As a result, retail stores that try to appeal to men should pay more attention to designing the store in such a way that it provides entertainment as well as ease of browsing. Customers who enjoy recreational activities will enjoy the highly stimulating environment (Van Rompay et al., 2011). Another suggestion is that stores that focus on women should invest more in good layout that enables fast checkouts. The research revealed that women are more price-conscious than men, which is consistent with previous research findings. These findings were in accordance with findings from other studies in which women were found to redeem coupons more than men study. Asian women are naturally price conscious, and marketers should focus more on discounts, special offers, and other gifts to grab the female market (Mehta, 2020)

The study also revealed that women are more interested in novelty/fashion than men. This finding seems to be in line with the observations of (Mitchell & Walsh, 2004), who discovered that this personality is more prevalent in women than in men. Earlier studies also observed that a substantial number of men are uninterested in fashion trends (Hanzaee & Aghasibeig, 2008). Also women are more brand conscious compared to men which is contradictory to the results proposed in an Indian study (Mehta, 2020).

Table 4. Independent sample T -test results

<i>Decision making styles</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Two- tailed probability (p)</i>
Perfectionism, high-quality consciousness	2.65	2.50	0.15
Recreational shopping consciousness	2.83	2.55	0.00
Habitual brand loyalty orientation	2.65	2.66	0.879
Confusion from over-choice	2.69	2.63	0.418
Price value consciousness	2.66	3.43	0.00
Novelty fashion consciousness	2.75	3.91	0.01
Brand consciousness	2.86	3.75	0.01
Impulsiveness/ carelessness	3.05	2.95	0.205

The other orientations such as Perfectionism, high-quality consciousness, Habitual brand loyalty orientation, Confusion from over-choice and Impulsiveness/ carelessness which are found to be insignificant i.e. Male and female respondents are alike and there is no significant changes in their behaviour. Although men and women are similar in their habitual brand loyalty orientation, marketers must focus on different loyalty programmes to attract both genders. In this case, a thorough examination is required. In some studies men are more quality conscious compared to women. Confused from over choice and Impulsiveness/ carelessness remains consistent to the other study results (Mehta, 2020). Table 5 clearly indicates the hypothesis accepted and rejected correlating to the results obtained in testing.

Table 5. Hypothesis status

Hypothesis	Accepted/ rejected
Ha1	Rejected
Ha2	Accepted
Ha3	Accepted
Ha4	Rejected
Ha5	Accepted
Ha6	Rejected
Ha7	Rejected
Ha8	Rejected

It is very important to analyse the consumer decision making styles in pandemic because, decision making styles are something that changes often. Consumer's decision making styles and mindset of the consumers are highly dynamic. It is important for the retailers to understand the mindset of the consumers in order to understand their behaviour. Even it is important for the government to understand the mindset of the people in terms of decision making because the schemes and plans are highly dependent on the retail sector, which contributing more to the GDP. Digital transactions play a vital role in shopping behaviour. Credit facilities, easy EMI facilities encourage people to shop more and make their shopping easier without any burden. Government initiation in using digital transactions are also one of the main contributors to the change in the consumer behaviour.

Future research and conclusion:

This study only looks at Indian consumers; further research with consumers from other countries and culture is needed (Jenner et al., 2008). Although this study only looked at Generation Y, other studies with different generations could be conducted. This research can be conducted on a product-by-product basis, providing marketers with a clear picture of consumer behaviour (Mehta, 2020). It is vital to conduct this research during the pandemic to get a clear picture of what is going on in the market and whether there are any other changes in consumer behaviour compared to previous studies conducted prior to the pandemic. The results demonstrate that there are trivial changes in consumer behaviour when compared to the findings of the pre-pandemic study. Nevertheless, the majority of the behaviour remains the same as shown in the discussion part. More researches could be conducted using this CSI scale in various dimensions and aspects to clearly understand the consumer decision making styles. This research work is more valuable to marketers because it provides them with a clear picture of how to focus on consumer behaviour.

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