



The Indian Consumer Experience: Shopping Behavior and the Involvement Construct

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Indian consumer research is an emerging body of work. The current economic status of India has opened possibilities for the materialization of a new middle-income class, both in urban and in rural society (Khare, 2012). This has slowly evolved as a large generation of young individuals has sought better education to become professionals. In addition, a growing number of women are joining the workforce, increasing the number of dual-income family households (Kaur & Singh, 2007).

Generally speaking, the Indian culture is characterized by high collectivist values and is thus family-driven, group-directed, and influenced by social values (Banerjee, 2008). Does the collectivist mindset influence the sources of inspiration when making a clothing purchase for the self? Does it matter if the consumer has a high degree of shopping involvement? Involvement is a strong marketing indicator that indicates the personal significance that an individual attaches to a product or endeavor such as shopping. Involvement is very useful in that it helps define and profile fashion leaders and followers. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the shopping behavior of Indian consumers, as delineated by involvement with shopping. Specifically, this paper will examine the effect of shopping involvement on idea sources for clothing purchase and self-identified shopping behaviors.

Method and Findings. A total of 1,114 surveys were collected (55% male, 45% female) in India via a mall-intercept-type survey. Involvement was measured with ten items based on Zaichkowski's (1985) bi-polar scale. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 40 ($M=25.5$), 48% indicated full-time employment, and 60% had at least one college degree. In order to facilitate data analysis, the participants were divided into three shopping involvement groups: High ($n=430$), Medium ($n=358$), and Low ($n=353$).

The study participants consulted their female siblings/female family members and their parents most often for clothing ideas. When the three involvement groups were compared, they differed significantly ($p<.0001$) on seven of the ten personal idea choices on the survey. Scheffe' post hoc analysis indicated the high involvement participants consulted female family members, female friends, and their spouse more often than did the other two groups. The high involvement group consulted their parents and male family members more often than did the low involvement group.

Factor Analysis was computed on the 18 non-personal idea sources to reduce them into a manageable number of variables. ANOVA indicated the three involvement groups differed significantly from each other in their use of two of the four non-personal idea sources for clothing to purchase: magazines/catalogs ($F=34.832$, $p<.0001$) and in-store sources ($F=33.904$, $p<.0001$). In both cases, the high involvement group used the idea sources most, and the low

involvement group used them the least. No significant findings were computed for advertising-related sources or web-based social media/ marketing/ retail sources.

ANOVA computed significant differences between the involvement groups with regard to comfort with making clothing decisions ($F=44.938$, $p<.0001$), frequency of purchasing clothing ($F=18.663$, $p<.0001$), frequency of shopping for clothing ($F=10.192$, $p<.0001$), number of times the participant returned an item to the store for refund in the past three months ($F=4.782$, $p<.0001$), and the time spent on a shopping trip ($F=14.781$, $p<.0001$). Generally speaking, Scheffe' post hoc analysis indicated the most differences were between the low- and high involvement groups. The high involvement group was more comfortable making clothing decisions, shopped more often, purchased more clothing, spent more time on a shopping trip, and returned more merchandise to the store for refund. No significant differences were computed for the amount of money spent on clothing.

When motivations for shopping for clothing were examined, participants were able to mark each motivation on the list that applied to them. Frequency analysis for each of the involvement groups indicates that the low involvement group was most motivated by "want something new" and "take advantage of sales." The medium involvement participant was most motivated by "Change of season" and "Take advantage of sales." The high involvement participants were generally more motivated by all reasons listed. The motivators they indicated most often were "Change of Season" and "Want something new."

Conclusions. Factors such as changing lifestyles and enhanced economic development that leads to rising incomes makes India an attractive market for retail companies. With a large population, a large proportion of whom are young with rising purchasing power, it is important to understand the Indian consumer. The Indian urban clothing market is expected to become the third largest market in coming years (Khare, 2012). This survey of Indian consumers found a strong relationship between clothing involvement and the personal and non-personal idea sources for clothing for the self. Perhaps the collective cultural values of the Indian culture can explain the relatively strong reliance on family members, including parents, for clothing choices. High shopping involvement consumers, predictably, indicated spending more time and money shopping – and returning unwanted merchandise - than lower involvement consumers

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