

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR for

A Study of Shopping Motives: The Case of Young Turkish Consumers

Elif AKAGUN ERGIN, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Marketing

Department of Management

Cankaya University

ANKARA 06530

TURKEY

Phone: 00(90)(312)284-4500 ext. 175

Fax: 00(90)(312)286-4873

E-mail. elifrutgers@yahoo.com

A Study of Shopping Motives: The Case of Young Turkish Consumers

Elif AKAGUN ERGIN, Çankaya University, Ankara, Turkey
(elifrutgers@yahoo.com)

ABSTRACT

The youth market in Turkey is of major importance to local and foreign retailers simply because of its great size and level of economic affluence. The research presented here explores the key shopping motives of young Turkish consumers. Factor analysis was applied to identify the motives of this consumer segment. The result of the analysis revealed five social and personal motives including peer group attraction, diversion, status and authority, learning about new trends and sensory stimulation.

KEYWORDS: Shopping motives, young consumers, retail market.

1. INTRODUCTION

As the pace of globalization quickens, so does the race into new markets. Retailers are expanding beyond their home markets in search of global growth opportunities. The retail market in Turkey has been growing rapidly during the last decade and offers tremendous potential for foreign as well as domestic retailers. The retail market was estimated at US\$ 221,6 billion in 2007 and is expected to reach US\$ 974 billion by 2015. The country has a population of over seventy million and almost half of this population is under the age of 25. According to the 2008 report prepared by Strategic Research Institute of Turkey, the retail market is the seventh biggest market in Europe. Food and grocery trade has been dominated by national and foreign supermarket chains.

A number of specialized retailers are taking an increased market share in beauty/cosmetics, apparel, electronics, and consumer durables. There is an intense level of competition among the local and foreign retailers. The present competitive landscape in the market exposes Turkish consumers to vast brand names and purchase options. This eventually compels them to redefine their shopping preferences and patterns as well as their motives. Retailers must

evaluate the changes in their consumers that have been triggered by higher disposable incomes, rapid exposure to brands, scheduling complexities and shifting values/ desires. By doing so, it will be possible to identify the major changes in motives behind the purchase decisions of the consumers.

What does the overall shopping experience represent for the consumer? Is it purely a utilitarian effort for the purpose of obtaining necessary goods and services, or does the experience provide something more, such as hedonic benefits? In that case, are there any systematic differences in what consumers search for in the shopping experience? What can retailers do to identify the motives guiding the purchase decisions of their consumers? The youth market in Turkey is of major importance to local and foreign retailers simply because of its great size and economic affluence. The research presented here looks at the proposition that shopping experiences provide hedonic rewards beyond utilitarian needs, and explores the key motives of young Turkish consumers.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature in marketing and related behavioral sciences suggests a wide array of consumer motives for shopping. The idea that consumers are motivated by more than simply the utilitarian motive to obtain desired items has been acknowledged as far back as the 1960s by Howard and Sheth (1969). Their consumer behavior model, in addition to considering traditional explanatory variables such as needs, brand attitudes, and the impact on shopping behavior of promotions, also examined less explicitly utilitarian consumer motives such as arousal seeking and symbolic communication.

Further, an article by Edward Tauber (1972) hypothesized that shopping trips were not always related to the purchase of goods, and that a number of other social and personal motives account for shopping behavior. Tauber discussed that consumers shop not only for pure utilitarian purposes, but also to make them feel better, to break their daily routines, to learn about new trends and to feel acceptance from their peers. As seen in Table 1 below, a total of eleven social and personal motives are proposed in his work and these motives are what drive consumers to make daily purchase decisions. According to Tauber's categorization, social motives consist of social interaction, status / authority, reference group affiliation, pleasure of bargaining and communicating with others having similar interests.

Personal motives include role playing, diversion, sensory stimulation, self-gratification, physical activity and learning about new trends.

Table 1. Shopping Motives Categories (Tauber, 1972)

| Shooping Motives | |
|--|---|
| Personal Motives | Social Motives |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Role Playing * Diversion * Self Gratification * Learning About New Trends * Physical Activity * Sensory Stimulation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Social Experiences Outside the Home * Communication with Others Having a Similar Interest * Peer Group Attraction * Status and Authority * Pleasure of Bargaining |

Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) discussed the notion of hedonic shopping and advanced the notion that consumers derive pleasure from the experience of shopping itself, regardless of the benefits obtained from the goods ultimately purchased. Their work suggested that traditional emphasis on information processing related to specific product attributes, and resultant focus on what may be termed utilitarian shopping considerations, does not completely explain purchase and consumption behavior (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982).

Since the publication of Hirschman and Holbrook's seminal work, numerous researchers (e.g., Feick and Price; Lichtenstein et al., 1990; Schindler 1989, Slama and Williams 1990) have focused on the feelings of mastery experienced by consumers who feel responsible for being able to obtain good deals. Schindler (1989) suggested that while some consumers may be strongly influenced by the utilitarian benefits of obtaining a valued product at a good price, "ego-expressive" desires to strengthen one's self-concept as a savvy shopper might be a stronger motivator. It is important to note that he has not formally tested this hypothesis yet. Along the same lines, Feick and Price (1987) identified a segment of consumer "market mavens" who are particularly likely to provide other people with information on obtaining the best values for particular purchases. Individuals scoring highest on the maven scale were found not only to engage in more information search and provide others with more information, but also to enjoy shopping more (Slama and Williams 1990). Shopping enjoyment is a lasting individual trait that influences enduring shopping style and has

previously been associated with transient emotional responses (Dawson et al., 1990; Koufaris et al., 2002). The hidden shopping enjoyment trait has an effect on the transient emotions which may arise during that act of shopping.

Parsons (2002) conducted a study on the motives of on-line shoppers and discovered that many of the hidden motivations categorized by Tauber 30 years prior are relevant to internet shopping today. His findings claimed that online shoppers are driven by personal and social motives including diversion, self-gratification, peer group attraction, status and authority, social experiences outside the home, and communications with others having a similar interest.

Additionally, follow-up studies in this field have revealed that shopping motive scores were often higher among women than men (Eastlick and Feinberg, 1999; Lennon et al., 2003). Eastlick and Feinberg (1999) also reported that there was a negative relationship between consumers' level of education and shopping motivations.

In summary, it is evident that consumers often experience an involvement in the shopping process which exceeds the simple goal to obtain needed products in an efficient and cost-effective manner. Motives can be simply utilitarian by nature or they can be more complex, hedonic based. The intensely competitive retail market environment in Turkey makes it necessary to explore Turkish consumers' motives and preferences in detail. Therefore, this paper aims to understand the key motives that lie behind the purchase decisions of young consumers in Turkey.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The sample in this study consists of 400 young, urban consumers, between the ages of 15-34, that live in the capital city of Ankara. Convenience sampling technique has been used to select the consumers. Surveys were conducted personally as the consumers exited the stores in the three shopping malls that have been designated for the study.

The pre-tested and structured surveys was made up of two parts and consisted of thirty-six questions. The first part included questions about demographic factors such as age, gender, and education level. In the second part, respondents were given thirty-three statements assessing their shopping motives. A five-point Likert Scale was adopted to evaluate the statements. These statements were compiled from Tauber's (1972) study of social and

personal motives. However, adaptations have been made in consideration of social and cultural environment in Turkey.

The reliability of the scale was tested and Cronbach Alpha value was observed at 0,93 (significance=0,000). This value indicated the scale was highly reliable. Prior to the factor analysis, construct validity analysis was done to determine the relationship among the variables and whether the sample was fit for factor analysis. Results of the construct validity analysis yielded a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value of 0,876 and Bartlett's test significance value of 0,000. Thus, it is possible to conclude that the sample of the study is indeed fit for factor analysis and that there is a strong relationship among the variables.

Lastly, factor analysis was applied to identify the shopping motives of consumers. Thirty-three variables were grouped under five major factors with the use of varimax rotation. The factor analysis resulted in five factors, accounting for %73,799 of the total variance. The analysis gave a five-factor solution and these include the following: F1: Peer Group Attraction (Social Motive), F2: Diversion (Personal Motive), F3: Status and Authority (Social Motive), F4: Learning About New Trends (Personal Motive), F5: Sensory Stimulation (Personal Motive). These factor values and related statements are presented in Table 3.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 below shows the demographic profiles of the respondents. The majority of the subjects were between the ages of 15-24. There were 263 female and 137 males consumers in the research. Over 65% of the subjects were high school graduates and the rest had either an undergraduate and/or a graduate degree.

Table 1. Subjects' Allocation According to the Demographic Factors

| Age Groups | Frequency | % |
|----------------------|------------|--------------|
| 15-19 | 127 | 31,8 |
| 20-24 | 142 | 35,5 |
| 25-29 | 76 | 19,0 |
| 30-34 | 55 | 13,8 |
| Total | 400 | 100,0 |
| Gender | | |
| Female | 263 | 65,8 |
| Male | 137 | 34,4 |
| Total | 400 | 100,0 |
| Education Level | | |
| High School Degree | 268 | 67,0 |
| Undergraduate Degree | 77 | 19,2 |
| Graduate Degree | 55 | 13,8 |
| Total | 400 | 100,0 |

Factor 1: Peer Group Attraction

The primary motive that has been discovered is “peer group attraction”. This factor accounts for % 24,597 of the total variance. Peer group attraction is categorized as a social motive (based on Tauber’s earlier work) and there are nine statements related to it. S29:I mostly prefer to shop at the stores that my friends do, S31:I go shopping with my friends on a frequent basis, S3: Shopping malls are a common hangout place for me and my friends, S32: I like shopping because it gives me the chance to spend time with my friends, S24: I like going to the shopping malls with my friends, S7: We go on occasional shopping trips with my family and my friends, S15: I truly enjoy shopping with my friends, S26: I mostly prefer to purchase the brands that my friends choose to purchase, S33: My friends and I share a common taste about shopping. Based on the factor loading of “peer group attraction”, it can be concluded that this particular factor is the strongest motive behind the purchase decisions of young, urban Turkish consumers.

Factor 2: Diversion

“Diversion” is the second motive, this factor explains % 18,263 of the total variance. Diversion, a personal motive, suggests that the act of shopping is a form of recreation, a chance to break away from the struggles of daily life. This factor includes the following eight statements. S2: I go shopping every chance I get, S8: I prefer to spend my spare time at the shopping malls, S22: Shopping is so much fun for me, S17: I really enjoy spending time at the malls, shopping, eating, going to the movies, S19: I enjoy shopping because it provides me

the opportunity to divert myself from the daily routine, S4: Shopping calms me when I am stressed out, S21: Shopping at the mall is free entertainment for me and my family, S25: When I am depressed, I go shopping. This finding suggests that young Turkish consumers prefer to relieve the stress and demands of their lives by the escape that shopping activities provide.

Factor 3: Status and Authority

Another factor that seems to have an impact on shopping motives is “status and authority” Able to account for % 13,793 of the total variance, this factor is classified as a social motive as well. Status and authority is related with five statements in this study. S16: I would like to be treated with respect while I am shopping at a store, S10: I like receiving some extra personal attention as I shop at a store, S14: I would like to have all my demands met at the store that I shop, S30: I prefer to purchase products that people at my social status level choose to purchase, S18: I use my financial strength to overpower the salespeople in the stores. The statements loading on this factor reveal that receiving respect and attention is an important motive for the young consumers. Shopping activities provide the opportunity to attain respect along with power and this may help to explain the underlying force behind this motive.

Factor 4: Learning About New Trends

“Learning about new trends” is discovered as the fourth factor and explains % 9,378 of the total variance. There are three statements related to this factor. S1: Browsing the stores enables me to catch up on the latest fashion and trends in the market, S27: Sometimes I shop only to get ideas about the products, S8: As I browse through clothing stores, I get inspired by the new models and styles I see. This factor reflects that young people have a keen interest in keeping updated about hot trends, new brands, and product innovations in the market.

Factor 5: Sensory Stimulation

The last factor in the study is “sensory stimulation”. Three statements are associated with this factor and based on the factor analysis, it accounts for % 7,769 of the total variance. S24: I like to touch and feel the products when I shop, regardless of whether I purchase them or

not, S5: I like listening to music as I shop in a store, S23: A pleasant scent in a store will have a positive effect on me.

Table 3. Factor Loadings

| | Motive Category | Factor Loads | % of Variance |
|--|-----------------|--|---------------|
| <p>Factor 1: Peer Group Attraction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I mostly prefer to shop at the stores that my friends do. ▪ I go shopping with my friends on a frequent basis. ▪ Shopping malls are a common hangout place for me and my friends. ▪ I like shopping because it gives me the chance to spend time with my friends. ▪ I like going to the shopping malls with my friends. ▪ We go on occasional shopping trips with my family and my friends. ▪ I truly enjoy shopping with my friends. ▪ I mostly prefer to purchase the brands that my friends choose to purchase. ▪ My friends and I share a common taste about shopping. | Social | ,934 ,918 ,882 ,832 ,821 ,739 ,690 ,601 ,534 | 24,597 |
| <p>Factor 2: Diversion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I go shopping every chance I get. ▪ I prefer to spend my spare time at the shopping malls. ▪ Shopping is so much fun for me. ▪ I really enjoy spending time at the mall, shopping, eating,etc... ▪ I enjoy shopping because it provides me the opportunity to divert myself from the daily routine. ▪ Shopping calms me when I am stressed out. ▪ Shopping at the mall is free entertainment for me and my family. ▪ When I am depressed, I go shopping. | Personal | ,862 ,859 ,767 ,741 ,722 ,666 ,631 ,602 | 18,263 |
| <p>Factor 3: Status and Authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I would like to be treated with respect when I am shopping. ▪ I like receiving some extra personal attention while I am shopping. | Social | ,886 ,769 | 13,793 |

| | | | |
|---|-----------------|----------------------|--------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I would like to have all my demands met at the store that I shop. ▪ I prefer to purchase products that people at my social status level choose to purchase. ▪ I use my financial strength to overpower the salespeople in the stores. | | ,674 ,605 ,449 | |
| <p>Factor 4: Learning About New Trends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Browsing the stores enables me to catch up on the latest fashion and trends in the market. ▪ Sometimes I shop only to get ideas about the products. ▪ As I browse through clothing stores, I get inspired by the new models and styles I see. | Personal | ,828 ,828 ,577 | 9,378 |
| <p>Factor 5: Sensory Stimulation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I like to touch and feel the products when I shop, regardless of whether I purchase them or not. ▪ I like listening to music as I shop in a store. ▪ A pleasant scent in a store will have a positive effect on me. | Personal | ,821 ,580 ,434 | 7,769 |

5. CONCLUSION

Young consumers are an important consumption class coming from dual career families with increasing disposable income levels. It is pertinent for retailers to identify the characteristics of these consumers and identify the prime motives that compel them to shop. This research explores the important dimensions of motives for the young people when they shop. The results suggest that young people focus mostly on the hedonic benefits of their purchases. Apparently, they are influenced more by social than personal motives. Peer group associations mean a great deal to most of them and they view the act of shopping as a form of entertainment.

Receiving respect and commanding attention are also reported as strong motives for shopping. Sensory elements such as the scent or the music played at a store have a positive impact on their motivation to shop as well. In a market where there are over thirty million young consumers, marketers are required to put an effort to achieve a clear understanding of this important target segment. There is a big potential that can be tapped into by applying the appropriate strategies that these young consumers will respond to. The list of motives identified here can be incorporated into the competitive marketing strategies developed by foreign and domestic retailers in the Turkish market.

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