Lifestyle, Shopping Orientation, Patronage Behaviour and Shopping Mall Behaviour – a Study of South African Male Apparel Consumers

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The highly competitive South African male apparel market is growing and significantly contributes to the billion dollar industry. However, research on this segment is scant. This paper explores the shopping mall behaviour, lifestyle, shopping orientation and patronage behaviour of male apparel consumers. A mall intercept method (n=297) was implemented for data gathering. Cluster analysis used demographics, eight lifestyle factors, three shopping orientation factors and patronage behaviour as input variables. Four clusters were profiled: Traditionalists (38%), Shopping enthusiasts (19%), Dynamics (30%) and Laggards (13%). Managerial implications and recommendations for future research are indicated.

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Lifestyle, Shopping Orientation, Patronage Behaviour and Shopping Mall Behaviour–A Study of South African Male Apparel Consumers

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The competitive and lucrative nature of the South African apparel market is unquestionable. The projected value of the industry is $7.4 billion by the year 2009, with menswear sales growing substantially and contributing 34.4% ($2.1 billion) to the annual apparel sales of $6.1 billion in 2004 (Datamonitor, 2005, p.3). Male apparel consumer behaviour has developed substantially to warrant further research in order to meet their needs in terms of store design, location, merchandise, customer experience and service provision (Bakewell, Mitchell & Rothwell, 2006). In South Africa research on male apparel shopping behaviour is relatively uncharted (Warrington, 2005).

Objectives

The objectives of this paper on male apparel consumers are to (1) describe their shopping mall behaviour (2) determine if they could be clustered according to lifestyle, shopping orientation and patronage behaviour and (3) profile clusters based on demographics, lifestyle, shopping orientation and patronage behaviour.

Literature

Lifestyle and psychographics address the way in which consumers express themselves in a social and cultural environment. Consumers’ lifestyle and value systems are not only shaped by their family, friends, community and significant events, but also by the era in which they were born (Bakewell et al., 2006; Godrington, 2001a). In South Africa many apparel retailers apply the Saarf Living Standards Measure (LSM) groups to define their target market. To increase the relevancy of these LSM groups, Consumer Scope (2005) introduced four Lifestyle Levels (based on LSM clusters), namely the Bottom, Mass, Emerging and Established Markets.

Due to constant social, cultural and economic changes shopping orientations (shopping activities, interests and opinions) differ over generations (Stoltman Gentry & Anglin, 1991). This supports the generational cohort approach to segment markets (Godrington, 2001b). In order to comprehend patronage behaviour, retailers must understand the determinants of consumers’ shopping orientations. Consumers with different shopping orientations have different consumer characteristics and market behaviour (Shim & Kotsiopulos, 1992a; Stoltman et al., 1991).

According to Assael’s Model of Store Choice (1995, p.630) consumers’ attitudes towards and perceptions of the store’s image and attributes, as well as the influence of in-store stimuli, influence patronage behaviour. Variables such as personal characteristics, information sources and store attributes could determine store patronage (Shim & Kotsiopulos, 1992b). South African consumers’ store choice depends on their lifestyle level (Consumer Scope, 2005).

Research on shopping mall behaviour indicates, amongst others, that age groups differ regarding preferences for mall attributes (Anderson, Burns & Reid, 2003); entertainment available could influence mall choice (Wilhelm & Mottner, 2005) and décor of a mall is important for apparel consumers (Baker & Haytko, 2000). Certain retailer factors influence male shoppers’ enjoyment, namely shopping-centre features, ancillary facilities, value-added features and special events (Lee, Ibrahim & Hsueh-Shan, 2005). Thus, a mall’s management strategies must become more customer-centred (Knee, 2002, p.531) and provide a positive total customer experience (Berry, Lewis & Haeckel, 2002, p.86).

Methodology

The store intercept method was used to collect a convenience quota sample (n=297) of male apparel consumers aged 20–35 years. They were young buyers (57% between 20–24 years), mainly representing the Coloured population group (48%), English speaking (58%) and single (74%). The majority completed grade 12 (92%) and reported an annual expenditure of more than R500 a month.

The questionnaire comprised five sections. A five-point Likert type scale was used for sections B, C and D. Shopping mall behaviour (Section A=6 items) covered mall patronage, shopping companions, mall activities and time spent shopping. Lifestyle (Section B) comprised 23 items adopted from Du Preez (2001) and Shim and Kotsiopulus (1993). Section C (Shopping orientation) used 22 items covering seven shopping orientation categories proposed by Visser and Du Preez (2001). Section D determined patronage behaviour regarding 11 menswear stores (discount, specialty, department and signature stores) and Section E included demographics.

The data was subjected to the following analysis: Descriptive statistics, reliability analysis and factor analysis for the lifestyle and shopping orientation scales (principle component extraction with varimax rotation and Kaizer normalisation). Hierarchical cluster analysis was done to establish whether respondents could be divided into distinct groups based on differentiating variables. One-way ANOVA and Post-hoc Bonferroni analysis were performed (Dillon, Madden & Firtle, 1994; Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 1998). Based on these analyses, profiles of the clusters were compiled.
Results

The respondents' shopping mall behaviour differed regarding motivation for patronage, shopping companions and preferences for mall activities. Reliability analysis showed acceptable coefficient alpha levels for lifestyle ($\alpha = 0.76$) and shopping orientation ($\alpha = 0.84$). For lifestyle, eight principle components were extracted, explaining 59% of the variance, i.e. apparel-oriented, visual and performing arts-oriented, media-oriented, socialising-oriented, sport-oriented, published information-oriented, relaxing-oriented and family/community-oriented. Three shopping orientation components were extracted that explained 52% of the variance, i.e. shopping self-confidence and enjoyment; credit-prone brand conscious and fashion innovating as well as local store patronage. These results partly support those of Du Preez (2001).

All the variables differed significantly between the clusters with the exception of local store patronage shopping orientation. Cluster analysis was performed with the remaining 21 clustering variables (8 lifestyles; 2 shopping orientations and 11 patronage behaviour variables). A four-cluster solution yielded the most interpretable results. Labels were ascribed, i.e. Cluster 1 (38%): Traditionalists; Cluster 2 (19%): Shopping enthusiasts; Cluster 3 (30%): Dynamics and Cluster 4 (13%): Laggards.

Cluster 1 included the older male consumers (25–35 years). Cluster 2 had the highest average monthly expenditure on apparel. All four clusters described themselves as media-oriented (lifestyle). Cluster 2 was the most and Cluster 1 the least apparel oriented (lifestyle). Shopping self-confidence and enjoyment was the dominant shopping orientation for the four clusters. Clusters 2 and 3 portrayed a high shopping self-confidence and enjoyment shopping orientation. Cluster 1 obtained the lowest scores for both shopping orientations. Although the clusters differed pertaining to preference for male apparel stores they mostly shop at speciality stores. Cluster 2 comprised the most active shoppers.

The research findings cannot be generalised due to the exploratory nature and limited scope of the study. Managerial implications include designing an entertaining shopping environment, developing non-traditional persuasive communication messages, building brand personality and brand image as well as cultivating niche markets.

References


