An exploration of factors influencing purchase decision making of apparel consumers

Una exploración de los factores que influyen en la toma de decisiones de compra de los consumidores de prendas de vestir

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Abstract

The foci of the present study was multifold: to examine the association and contribution of personal factors, social factor, psychological factors, mass media and clothing choice criteria onto female consumers' decision makings styles. A purposive sample of 443 female consumers with an age range of 15-55 years (M = 28.62, SD = 6.69) was recruited from various shopping malls and households of Karachi. The following set of survey questionnaires were used in the present study to assess the variables of interests: Brief Semi-Structured Interview Form, Social Factors Influence Measure, List of Values Measure (LOV; Kahle, 1985), Risk Reduction Function of Branding Scale (Fischer, Völckner, & Sattler, 2010), Social Demonstrance Function of Branding Scale (Fischer, Völckner, & Sattler, 2010), Mass Media Influence Measure (Shin & Dickerson, 1999), Clothing Choice Criteria Measure (Eckman, Damhorst, & Kadolph, 1990), Consumer Style Inventory (CSI; Sproles & Kendall, 1986), and Brand Relevance in Category (BRiC; Fischer, Völckner, & Sattler, 2010). Linear Regression Analysis, Multiple Regression Analysis, and Hayes' (2013) PROCESS Macro were used to test the hypothesis of the present study. These findings provide useful insight regarding the factors that influence female consumers' apparel purchase decision making styles in general and when making branded apparel purchase decision. These findings have important implications for manufacturers, marketers and retailers in apparel industry.

Resumen

El objetivo del presente estudio fue examinar la asociación y contribución de factores personales, factores sociales, factores psicológicos, medios de comunicación y criterios de elección de ropa en los estilos de toma de decisiones de las consumidoras. Se reclutó una muestra intencional de 443 mujeres consumidoras con un rango de edad de 15-55 años (M = 28.62, SD = 6.69) de varios centros comerciales y hogares de Karachi. El siguiente conjunto de cuestionarios de encuesta se utilizó en el presente estudio para evaluar las variables de interés: Formulario breve de entrevista semiestructurada, Medida de influencia de factores sociales, Medida de lista de valores (LOV; Kahle, 1985), Función de reducción de riesgo de la escala de marca (Fischer, Völckner y Sattler, 2010), Función de demostración social de la escala de marca (Fischer, Völckner y Sattler, 2010), Medida de influencia de los medios de comunicación (Shin y Dickerson, 1999), Medida de criterios de elección de ropa (Eckman, Damhorst y Kadolph , 1990), Consumer Style Inventory (CSI; Sproles & Kendall, 1986) y Brand Relevance in Category (BRiC; Fischer, Völckner, & Sattler, 2010). El análisis de regresión lineal, el análisis de regresión múltiple y la macro de proceso de Hayes (2013) se utilizaron para probar la hipótesis del presente estudio. Estos hallazgos proporcionan información útil sobre los factores que influyen en los estilos de toma de decisiones de compra de prendas de vestir de las consumidoras en general y al tomar decisiones de compra de prendas de marca. Estos hallazgos

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tienen implicaciones importantes para los fabricantes, comercializadores y minoristas en la industria de la confección.

Introduction

The apparel industry across the globe over the last two decades is significantly transformed owning to constantly expanding boundaries (Djelic & Ainamo, 1999) and changes in the business environment (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010). Traditionally, the fashion trends in apparel industry have been forecasted and lead by the fashion designers and apparel retailers (Guercini, 2001). Today's industry is more consumer-driven and consumer's 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 key to maintain and improve profitability is to "sense and respond" (Franks, 2000). The focus of the retailers is more inclined towards the constantly evolving consumer preferences and needs (Ayman & Kaya, 2014; Brannon, 2000). The present study is grounded on the propositions of one of the most influential consumer purchase decision making model, the Engel-Blackwell-Miniard (EBM) model (Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard, 1995). This study attempted to examine the association and contribution of personal, social, psychological factors as theorized by EBM along with inclusion of two additional factors, mass media influence and clothing choice criteria, onto consumer purchase decision making styles in Pakistani culture context.

Literature Review

According to an estimate by McKinsey and Company (2016), the developing countries in apparel segment are undergoing increased growth rate. The current growth rate is reported to be 3% which is most likely to increase to 5% by the year 2025. The casual wearing accounts for 37% in total currently and are likely to increase to 50% by the year 2025. The current growth rate for luxury apparel is 7% which is likely to increase to 14% by the year 2025. Pertaining to gender, it is reported that women spend 92% of their spare money on apparel shopping whereas men are seen to spend 62% of their spare money on purchasing clothing (McKinsey & Company, 2016). Ayman and Kaya (2014) showed that 60% women reported purchasing branded apparels whereas 40% men showed a preference for branded apparel. They also found greater influence of mass media i.e. advertising, magazines, television, and catalogues on women. Another study indicated more women than men to buy apparels (Koca & Koc, 2016). This implies that women are relatively more eager to apparel shopping. Age-wise, another estimate demonstrated teens to spend 19% of their income on apparel shopping (Jaffray, 2017). Zollo (1999) demonstrated teens to impact more than $200 billion on family annual purchases. The generation Y i.e. the consumers less than 30 years of age, are estimated to spend two-third of their income on clothing purchase (Ebenkamp, 1999). The textile and apparel industry of Pakistan is regarded as the mainstay of Pakistan's economy with a share of 46% to the total manufacturing (Essays, UK, 2018). Despite the fact that there is substantial market for apparel products in Pakistan, there is real dearth of studies which explored the demographic profile and shopping trends of apparel consumers in Pakistan. This study intends to minimize the gap to an extent.

Consumer decision making process refers to the stages of decision making a consumer goes through before, during and after the purchase of the product and services. It entails a number of actions, beginning from need identification, assembling data, evaluating alternatives, to making a final product purchase (Hemmat, 2013; Nitin, 2015; Orji1, Sabo, Abubakar, & Usman, 2017). It is concerned with consumers' underlying motives, needs and thinking process to selecting one product over the other and buying patterns of varied product and service. In essence, it entails how products and services are chosen, selected, used and disposed of by consumers (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1996; Haliru, 2013; Yakup, 2014). Sproles and Kendall (1986)

put forth the construct of consumer decision making style acknowledging the fact that consumer prefer simple strategies while making a purchase decision rather than undergoing a sequence of logical stages (Bettman, 1979). Sproles and Kendall (1986) defined consumer decision making styles as "mental orientation characterizing a consumer's approach to making choice" (p. 267). They posited this construct as "basic consumer personality" and identical to the conception of personality in psychology. Sproles and Kendal (1986) proposed eight different consumer decision making characteristics. Consumer decision making process refers to the stages of decision making a consumer goes through before, during and after the purchase of the product and services. It entails a number of actions, beginning from need identification, assembling data, evaluating alternatives, to making a final product purchase (Hemmat, 2013; Nitin, 2015; Orji1, Sabo, Abubakar, & Usman, 2017). It is concerned with consumers' underlying motives, needs and thinking process to selecting one product over the other and buying patterns of varied product and service. In essence, it entails how products and services are chosen, selected, used and disposed of by consumers (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1996; Haliru, 2013; Yakup, 2014). Sproles and Kendall (1986) put forth the construct of consumer decision making style acknowledging the fact that consumer prefer simple strategies while making a purchase decision rather than undergoing a sequence of logical stages (Bettman, 1979).

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Theoretical Framework

The variable orientations and perspectives with which consumers approach the marketplace and how/why they behave as they do are referred to as the consumer purchasing decision models (Prasad & Jha, 2014). Diverse models have been posited by various researchers so as to understand and elucidate the consumer buying decisions for numerous types of services or products.

Nicosia Model

The Nicosia Model was put forth in 1966 and pertains to the decision of buying related to the latest goods. The interactive relationship is shown by the model, existing between the consumer and the company; further focus is put on the relationship between the potential consumers and the company. The model further concentrates on the company's efforts to facilitate communication with the consumer, as well as the consumers' predilection to act in a particular manner. The business used marketing messages (advertising) to communicate with consumers, and the purchasing response is reflective of the reaction of the consumers to these messages. Nicosia attempted to elucidate the dynamics which were involved in the process of decision making, where he used a flow chart to present his model (Figure 1). Nicosia demonstrated the stages of decision making that customers implement prior to purchasing services or products, decision aiming was then offered as a sequence of decisions, which have a proclivity to follow one another.

**Figure 1:** Stages of Decision Making by Nicosia
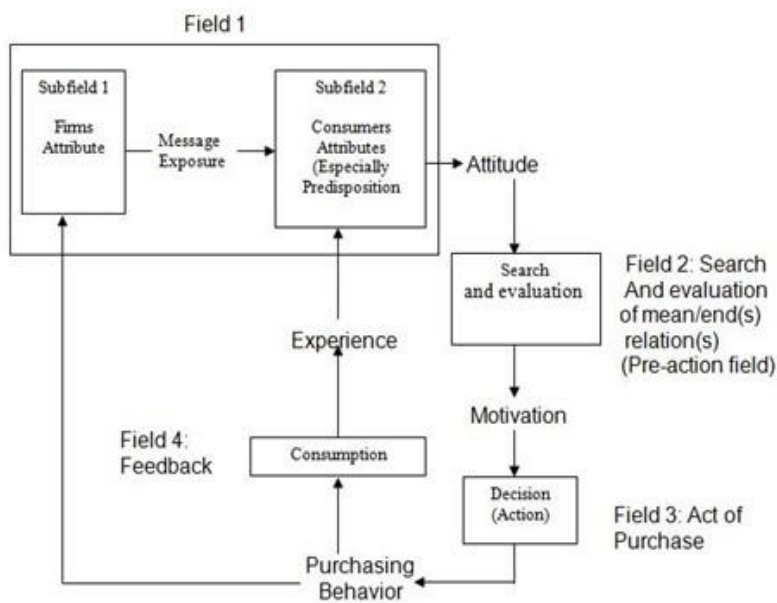
Howard – Sheth Model

Model was presented by Howard and Sheth in the late 1960's (Figure 2). There is significance attached to the model since it focuses on the magnitude of inputs to the process of buying by the consumer along with suggesting ways in which the customer or purchaser orders these inputs before the decision is finalized.

**Figure 2:** Process Model of Buying by Howard & Sheth
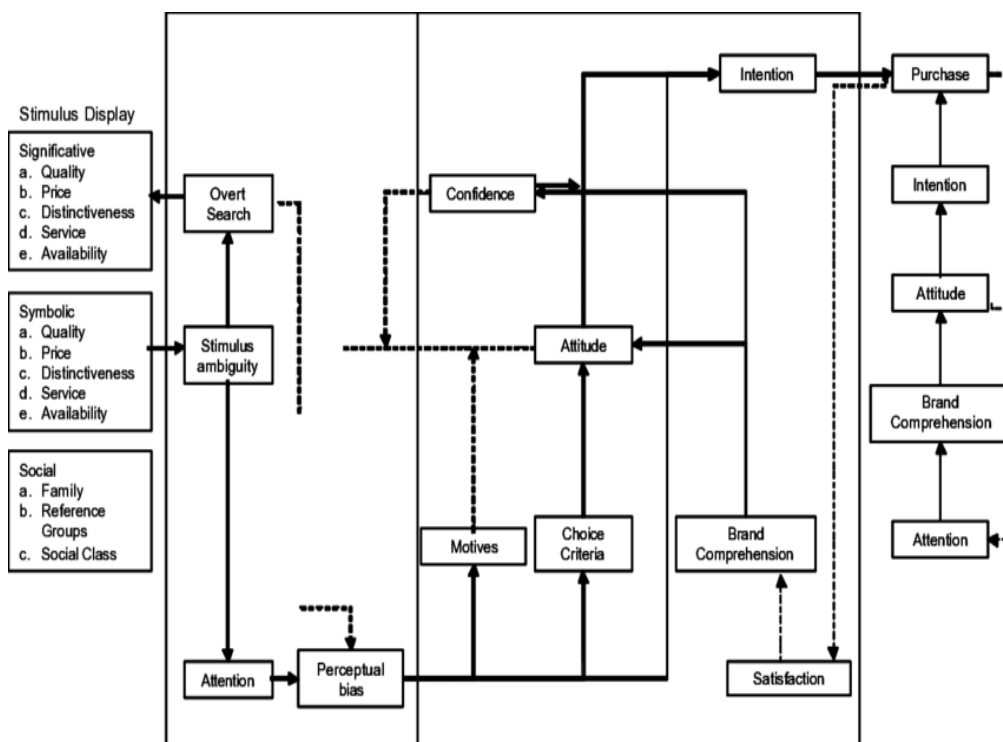
Stimulus-Organism Response Model

In 1974, Mehrabian and Russell explored Stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) model (Figure 3). The affective qualities of this model propose that all stimuli are seen because of their affective abilities, and these emotional states can be reduced into a set of basic fundamental dimensions. Furthermore; the environmental stimuli impact an individual's affective and cognitive responses, which subsequently moved onto some behavior.

Figure 3: S-O-R Model
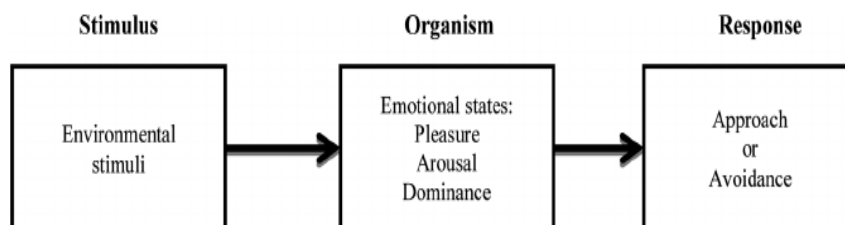
Engel Blackwell & Miniard Model

Engel-Blackwell-Minard (EBM) model of consumer purchase decision-making (Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard, 1995) was originally referred to Engel- Blackwell-Kollat (EKB) model and put forth by Engel, Blackwell and Kollat (1968). The model went through certain revisions and later was renamed as Engel-Blackwell-Miniard (EBM) to recognize the influence of another colleague Miniard. The elements of the model share a close proximity with the Howard-Sheth model of buyer behavior. However, EBM differs from the Howard-Sheth model in terms of structure of presentation and the relative association between various elements. The EBM (Figure 4) comprises of four elements: (i) information input, (ii) information processing, (iii) decision process, (iv) variables which influence the decision process.

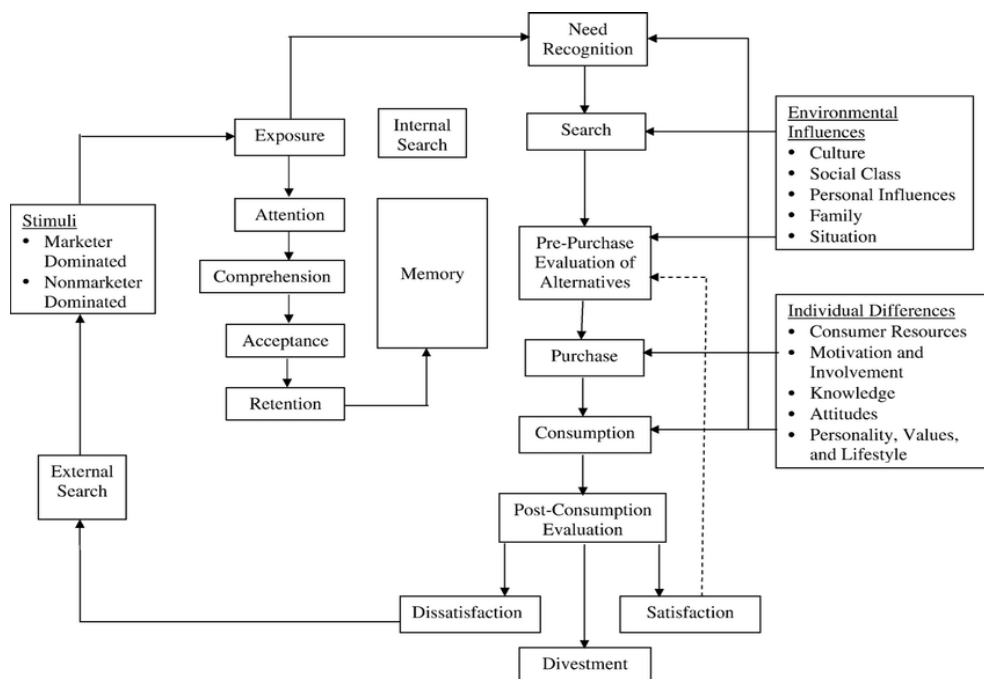**Figure 4:** Consumer Purchase Decision Model by Engel Blackward & Minard
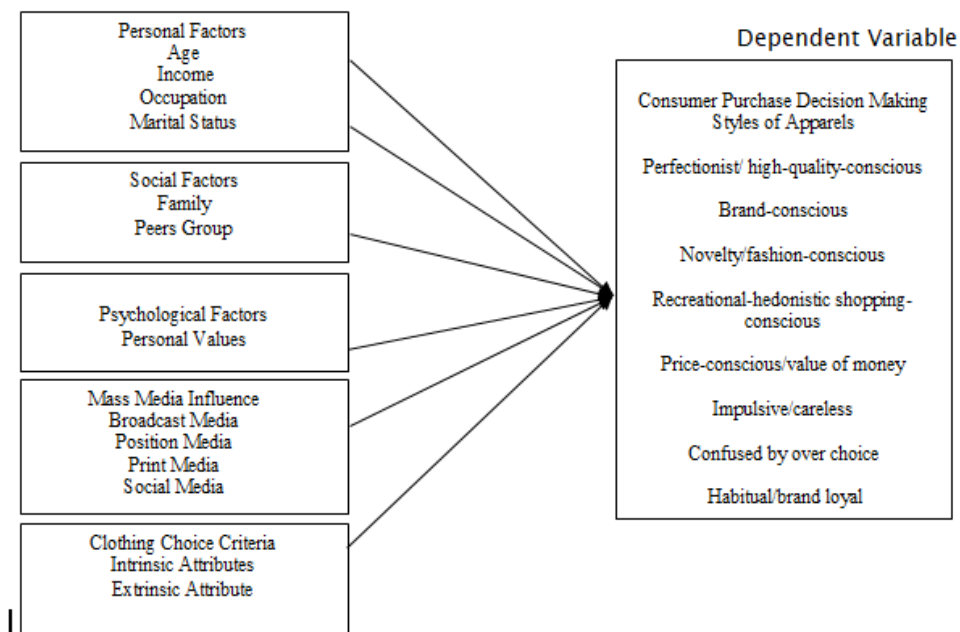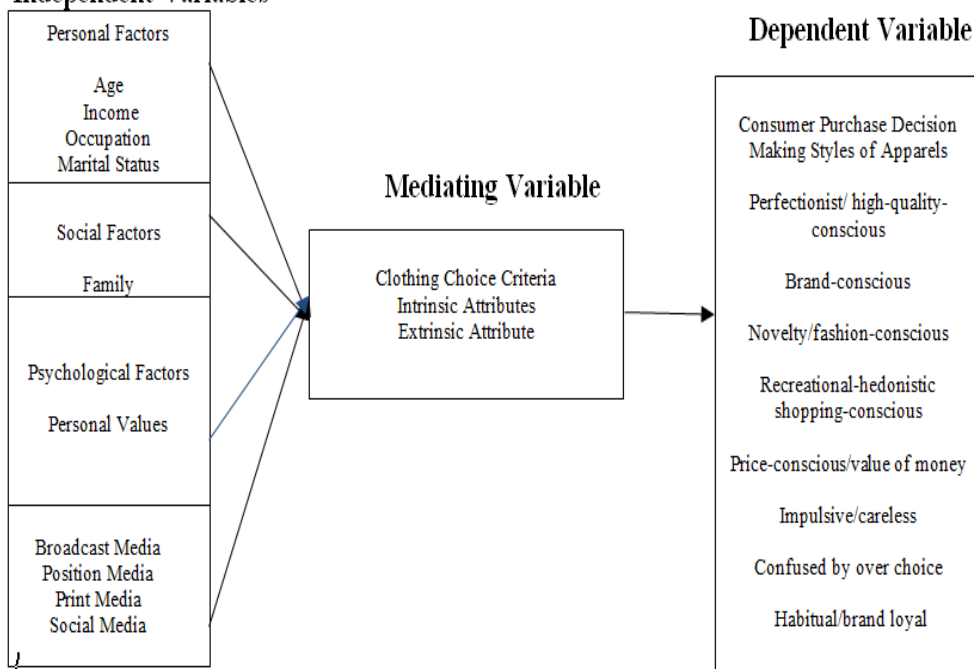
Figure 5: Variables

Figure 6: Schematic diagram of Mediating Variable

It shows clothing choice criteria as a Mediating variable between relationships of personal factors, social factors, psychological values and mass media with consumer purchase decision making style of apparels

While getting variables in developing the framework our hypotheses are;

H1: A predictive association to personal factors and female consumer purchase decisions
H2: A predictive association to social factors and female consumer purchase decisions
H3: A predictive association to psychological factor and female consumer purchase decisions
H4: A predictive association to mass media and female consumer purchase decision
H5: A predictive association to clothing choice criteria and female consumer purchase decision
H6: A predictive association to personal factors and choice of clothing
H7: A predictive association to psychological factors and choice of clothing
H8: A predictive association to mass media and choice of clothing
H9: Clothing choice criteria (intrinsic & extrinsic attributes) will mediate the relationship between

Methodology

This section includes a comprehensive description of the research design, sample employed, measures used, research procedure describing steps followed in execution of the study, ethical considerations before, during and after execution of the study, scoring of the research measures, data analysis and operational definitions of the variables used in this study.

A cross sectional quantitative research design was employed in the present study. The study examined the relationship and contribution of independent variables onto dependent variables. The best fit for present research was cross sectional quantitative research design as such this design allows data collection at a single occasion while examining the relationship also to make prediction as well (Creswell, 2013; Neale, 2009; Vogt, 2006). The quantitative design accentuates objective measurement and data collection through questionnaires and surveys (Babbie, 2010). The variables of interest in the present study were both quantifiable and were measured through questionnaires.

The purposive technique was used to identify samples. Sample of 443 female consumers was recruited from various shopping malls and households of Karachi, Pakistan. The ages of the participants ranged from 15-55 yrs having mean 28.62 in years (SD = 6.69). Participants belonged to three income groups: Middle Income Group (7%), Upper Middle Income Group (24.6%), and Upper Income Group (68.4%). The income

groups were determined on the basis of criteria given by Survey of Household Integrated Economic (HIE, 2015-16) by the Bureau of Statistics Pakistan (2017). The HIES categorized households into five socio-economic statuses (SES) based on their income level: Lower SES (household with income of less than 20, 000); Lower Middle SES (household with income of 20, 000 to 34, 999); Middle SES (household with income of 35,000-50000); Upper Middle SES (household with income of 51000-65999); and Upper SES (the household with income of 66000 & above). The present study used this classification of five socioeconomic statuses to define five income groups. Out of 443 participants, 34.9% were into Government employments, 29.3% were students 27.5% were housewives, 4.7% were into Non-Government employments, and 3.6% had their own personal business. Half of the participants were single (56.4%) whereas among remaining majority were married (37.2%). The other unique demographics of the participants were presented

As recommended for quantitative research design (Babbie, 2010), the questionnaire method was used to obtain the data. The following set of surveys questionnaires was used in the present study: (1) Brief Semi-Structured Interview Form, (2) Personal Factors Measure, (3) Social Factors Measure, (4) Psychological Factors Measure, (5) Mass Media Influence Measure, (6) Clothing Choice Criteria Measure, and (7) Consumer Purchase Decision-Making Measures. All the questionnaires were translated into Urdu language (the National language of Pakistan) and then back translated following suggestions of Mcgorry (2000). The discrepancies in translation were carefully scrutinized and equivalence of translations was ensured.

The Cronbach's alpha was computed for all the research measures i.e. Social Factors Influence Measure, Psychological Factors Influence Measure, Mass Media Influences Measure, Clothing Choice Criteria Measure, Consumer Styles Inventory, and Brand Relevance in Category

Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviations) was computed for age of the participants and study variables. The frequencies and percentages were calculated for categorical demographic variables.

Multiple Regression Analysis

To quantify the results we run through multiple regression analyses to further assess the qualification of the variables.

Linear Regression Analysis

Linear regression analysis was conducted to assess the association and contribution with predictor and outcome variable addressed in the framework highlighting the variables in detail
.

Results and discussion

The unique results obtained in the overall findings are stated. The regression models examining the association and contribution of personal factors were found to be significant for two decision making styles factors of *(Table 2) and* (Table 3). The regression models were found to be insignificant for the factors *(Table 4),* (Table 5), *(Table 6),* (Table 7) are *confused by over choice and* habitual/brand loyalty warrant further investigations.

Table 2:

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig	R²	ΔR²	F (Sig.)
	B	SE B	B					
Age	-.02	.03	-.03	-.55	.59	.04	.03	4.04 (.00*)
Income	1.14	.37	.15	3.07	.00*			
Occupation	-.12	.15	-.04	-.83	.41			
Marital Status	-.24	.32	-.04	-.74	.46			

*p <.05, df = 2, 438

Table 3:

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig	R²	ΔR²	F (Sig.)
	B	SE B	B					
Age	-.01	.03	-.01	-.17	.87	.03	.02	3.11 (.00*)
Income	1.31	.38	.16	3.43	.00*			
Occupation	-.12	.15	-.04	-.83	.41			
Marital Status	.12	.33	-.02	-.38	.71			

*p <.05, df = 2, 438

Table 4:

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig	R²	ΔR²	F (Sig.)
	B	SE B	β					
Age	−.01	.02	−.05	−.91	.36	.01	.00	1.22 (.30)
Income	−.41	.29	−.07	−1.43	.15			
Occupation	−.14	.11	−.06	−1.31	.19			
Marital Status	−.29	.24	−.06	−1.21	.23			

p >.05, df = 2, 438

Table 5:

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig	R²	ΔR²	F (Sig.)
	B	SE B	β					
Age	−.01	.02	−.04	−.74	.46	.01	.00	1.27 (.28)
Income	.16	.25	.03	.63	.53			
Occupation	−.16	.10	−.08	−1.66	.10			
Marital Status	.27	.21	.06	−1.28	.20			

p >.05, df = 2, 438

Table 6:

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig	R²	ΔR²	F (Sig.)
	B	SE B	β					
Age	.03	.01	.09	1.10	.06	.02	.01	2.03 (.09)
Income	−.04	.18	−.01	−.25	.81			
Occupation	−.11	.07	−.08	−1.60	.11			
Marital Status	.01	.15	.00	.08	.94			

p >.05, df = 2, 438

Table 7:

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig	R²	ΔR²	F (Sig.)
	B	SE B	β					
Age	.01	.02	.03	.67	.50	.01	.00	.943 (.44)
Income	−.21	.22	−.05	−.96	.34			
Occupation	−.10	.08	−.06	−1.24	.22			
Marital Status	.14	.19	.04	.79	.43			

p >.05, df = 2, 438

Conclusions

The apparel industry globally and in Pakistan has gone through rapid transformation and accelerated evolution and now the consumers' needs and preferences are the driving force behind it. Hence, it became imperative in today's era of consumer-centric market to gain insight into consumers' preferences and varying choices and understand the specific factors. To this end, the current study is having an exclusive endeavor in examining influential propositions of models used to elaborate the study with inclusion of two additional factors, clothing choice criteria and mass media onto female consumers' purchase decision making within Pakistan cultural context. The findings are the reflections of some unique trends of Pakistan users and their behavior

against purchases. To encapsulate, pertaining to personal factors positively influenced the two decision making styles. Pertinent to social factors i.e. family and peer group, a significant positive influence of family was suggested on price-conscious/value of money over choices in decisions and to their habits being loyal. A significant positive influence of peer group was depicted on perfectionist and novelty of fashion. Regarding psychological factors i.e. personal values a significant positive influence was suggested on perfectionist and conscious over price and quality to decision. As in concerning mass media, we have a positive influence in significance of broadcast media; on the other side we have influence of print media on brand along with its novelty in decision was evident Pertaining to clothing choice criteria, a significant positive influence of intrinsic apparel attributes showed a significant negative influence. Moreover, a significant positive influence of extrinsic apparel attributes on perfectionist was evident. Pertinent to psychological factors of buying motives, a significant positive influence in risk as a reducing agent of branding on consumers' purchase of branded apparels was revealed.

Limitation of Study

To our knowledge, the present study was an exclusive initiative grounded on models (Figure1-4) with inclusion of two additional factors. It has examined the influence of various unlinked factors on female consumers' purchase decision making within the Pakistan sub-cultural contextual frame of references. By in large the study with the factors highlighted could not define all expected responses hence the present study also has its bounded limits and confines that has to be acknowledge in making the findings as per the concept of the present study.

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