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Shopping Orientations and Retail Format Choice among Generation Y Apparel Shoppers

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ABSTRACT

Generation Y (Gen Y) shoppers are recognized as an important and distinctive market segment and demonstrate differences in shopping styles when compared to previous generational cohorts (Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003; Carpenter and Moore, 2005; Seock and Bailey, 2008; Pentecost and Andrews, 2010), yet there is a lack of extant patronage research specific to the cohort. While initial steps to understand Gen Y shoppers have been taken, few extant studies empirically link shopping orientations to specific patronage behaviors among this sizeable and important market segment. This study explores shopping orientations and retail format choice among a sample of Gen Y apparel shoppers in the U.S. (N = 215). The research examines the effects of shopping orientations (shopping enjoyment, price consciousness, shopping confidence, convenience/time consciousness, fashion/brand consciousness, in-home shopping tendency, brand/store loyalty) on retail format choice within seven distinct retail formats (upscale department stores, traditional department stores, value department stores, specialty stores, fast fashion stores, discounters, off-price stores, outlet stores). The findings provide guidance to both academics and retailers with regard to approaching and attracting Gen Y shoppers.

Keywords: U.S. retail industry, apparel, shopping orientations, retail format choice, Generation Y

Introduction

Apparel retailers in the U.S. currently face an "unprecedented level of competition due to the range of retail formats in which apparel products are sold" (Carpenter and Moore, 2009, p. 1). Compounding the challenges faced by apparel retailers is the economy, which has been suffering from a recession since 2008 (Casabona, 2009). The Consumer Confidence Index has plunged from 144.7 at the beginning of the decade to its current level of 55.9, and the unemployment level has grown from 5.4% to 10% (USA Today, 2010). As a result of the difficult economy, American consumers are shifting their spending toward necessities such as personal care and healthcare, while discretionary purchases such as apparel and home furnishings are suffering (Casabona, 2009). As a result, apparel expenditures declined 4.3% in 2008, while dining at home and health care expenses increased 8.1% and 4.3%, respectively (Murray, 2009).

Gen Y consists of nearly 64 million U.S. consumers born after 1981 (Tran, 2008). This group is recognized as a sizeable apparel market, being socialized into consumption at a younger age than earlier generations (Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003; Pentecost and Andrews, 2010). As a result, Gen Y is grabbing the attention of retailers, particularly during the current economic recession (Tran, 2008). Research suggests that Gen Y has formed dissimilar shopping patterns as compared to those of earlier generations (Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003). Moreover, Misonzhnik (2009) reported that 28% of Gen Y shoppers are purchasing less apparel during the economic downturn and 14% are shopping more often at value and discount stores.

During the past two decades, a number of researchers have investigated factors that influence patronage behavior specific to the apparel context (e.g., Shim and Kotsiopulos, 1992; Cassill and Williamson, 1994; Carpenter and Moore, 2005; Carpenter and Moore, 2009). However, only the more recent studies have examined the drivers of format choice among the current, broad range of retail formats in which apparel is sold. The majority of this research has focused on U.S. consumers as a whole, without attention to specific market segments. Few researchers have examined Gen Ys' shopping orientations (e.g., Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003; Seock and Bailey, 2008), and even fewer have examined retail format choice among Gen Y shoppers (e.g. Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003; Carpenter and Moore, 2005).

Given the intense level of competition among apparel retailers and the current economic climate, it is imperative for apparel retailers to understand how Gen Y consumers make their shopping choices. Specifically, retailers must identify drivers of retail format choice, such as shopping orientations. This study examines the relationships between shopping orientations and retail format choice among Gen Y consumers. The findings of the study will contribute to our knowledge and understanding of this sizeable and important market segment.

Review of the Literature

Stone (1954) proposed that shoppers exhibit unique styles which contribute to their motivations for shopping, identifying four categories of consumers: economic shoppers, personalizing shoppers, ethical shoppers, and apathetic shoppers. Economic shoppers approach shopping in a functional manner, with the simple goal of purchasing merchandise and focusing primarily the act of buying itself. In contrast, shoppers in the personalizing segment value individualization as well as intimacy between the customer and store personnel. Ethical shoppers feel a "moral obligation" (Stone, 1954, pp. 38) to shop in certain types of stores. Apathetic shoppers have almost no passion for shopping or preference to retail type, as minimizing effort in shopping is crucial to them. Stone (1954) proposed that shoppers with different shopping orientations would prefer to shop in different types of retailers. Darden and Reynolds (1971) studied housewives and were able to confirm Stone's (1954) segments of consumers using psychographic scales.

Bellenger and Korgaonkar (1980) added recreational shoppers to Stone's (1954) original orientations, and reported that recreational shoppers differed from economic shoppers in terms of store patronage. In particular, economic shoppers preferred stores with low prices while recreational shoppers chose stores based on non-price factors such as product assortment and atmosphere. Thus, recreational shoppers view shopping as a leisure activity.

Lumpkin (1985) conducted a national survey among elderly consumers, using shopping orientations to identify three shopping groups among the elderly. The first orientation was similar to economic shoppers as identified by Stone (1954) and consisted of shoppers primarily concerned with the trade-off between quality and price, and was not particularly optimistic toward shopping. The second group was very concerned with finances, using credit cards frequently and shopping more often at specialty retailers as opposed to discounters. The third and final group consisted of shoppers who were socially active, demonstrated strong interest in apparel, and were fashion forward in terms of attitude. Interestingly, the author reported no significant differences between the groups in terms of retail format choice.

Gutman and Mills (1982) studied apparel shopping among female adults in the U.S., segmenting the respondents into seven groups: leaders, followers, independents, neutrals, uninvolved, negatives, and rejectors. Respondents were classified based on a continuum, with leaders and followers being the most interested and involved with fashion products and negatives and rejectors being the opposite. Leaders and followers enjoyed shopping and were not price conscious, while negatives and rejectors were less likely to enjoy shopping, were extremely price conscious, and very practical in their approach to apparel shopping. In terms of store choice, leaders and followers were likely to shop at department stores or specialty stores, while negatives and rejectors heavily patronized discounters.

Shim and Kotsiopulos (1992) conducted an apparel shopping behavior survey among U.S. adult females, identifying 11 shopping orientations: confident, brand conscious, convenience/time conscious, mall shopper, local store shopper, apathetic toward "made in the U.S.A.", catalog shopper, appearance manager, credit user, economic shopper, and fashion conscious. Confident shoppers are secure in their ability to make shopping decisions, whereas brand conscious shoppers seek well known brands. Convenience/time conscious shoppers seek the most convenient store, while mall shoppers prefer to shop at shopping malls. Local store shoppers are drawn to locally owned, small stores, while apathetic toward "made in the U.S.A." shoppers are not concerned that their apparel is made domestically. Catalog shoppers prefer to purchase from catalogs, whereas appearance managers believe that their choice of apparel affects their reputation among others. Credit users were identified as shoppers who most often purchase with a credit card. Economic shoppers are concerned with saving money, while fashion conscious shoppers report purchasing fashion items earlier in the season than their less fashion conscious counterparts.

Shim and Kotsiopulos (1992) reported a direct but weak relationship between shopping orientation and format choice. Economic shoppers, appearance managers, and credit users were likely to be discount store shoppers. Economic shoppers, appearance managers, and fashion-conscious respondents were also identified as specialty store patrons. Mall shoppers were more likely to be department store patrons.

Moye and Kincade (2003) investigated the apparel shopping behavior of adult females, identifying four shopping orientation groups: decisive apparel shoppers, confident apparel shoppers, bargain apparel shoppers, and appearance conscious apparel shoppers. Decisive apparel shoppers are those who purchase whatever they like without hesitation. Confident apparel shoppers show confidence in shopping and choosing appropriate apparel for themselves. Highly involved apparel shoppers were described as those who enjoy shopping for bargains and receiving promotional information through advertisements. Extremely involved apparel shoppers held the opinion that being well dressed was essential and could reflect upon their reputation and fashion sense. However, the authors reported no statistically significant differences among the shopping orientation groups with regard to patronage frequency of different retail formats.

Bakewell and Mitchell (2003) studied consumer decision-making styles among Gen Y females in the U.K., identifying five shopping segments: recreational quality seekers, recreational discount seekers, trend setting loyals, shopping and fashion uninterested, and confused time/money conserving. Recreational quality seekers were described as those who enjoyed shopping, desired quality products and well-known brands, were fashion conscious, and found low prices undesirable. While recreational discount seekers also enjoyed shopping, they are less interested in brands and were more price conscious. Trend setting loyals were extremely fashion conscious yet price conscious, and exhibited considerable levels of brand and store loyalty. Shoppers in the shopping and fashion uninterested category displayed shopping confidence, but were both price and time conscious. In addition, this group enjoyed shopping less than the recreational shoppers and was less fashion conscious. Confused/time money conserving shoppers were price conscious and were not drawn to high-end stores, and tended to patronize stores with lower prices.

Carpenter and Moore (2005) compared retail format choice for apparel among the four major generational cohorts in the U.S. (Seniors, Baby Boomers, Gen X and Gen Y). The authors report that Gen Y apparel shoppers more often preferred to shop for apparel in specialty stores and off-price retailers than other generations. However, shopping orientations of Gen Y were not explored.

Seock and Bailey (2008) conducted a study to identify the shopping orientations of Gen Y consumers, identifying seven shopping orientation segments: shopping enjoyment, brand/fashion consciousness, price consciousness, shopping confidence, convenience/time consciousness, in-home shopping tendency, and brand/store loyalty. The shopping enjoyment segment enjoys shopping not only for the products purchased, but for the sake of the experience itself, while brand and fashion conscious shoppers seek well known brands and trendy products. Price conscious shoppers seek low prices, while those in the shopping confidence group believe in their ability to make wise decisions when shopping. Convenience/time conscious shoppers seek convenient retailers, while in-home shopping respondents prefer to use non-brick-and-mortar retail formats. Respondents in the brand/store loyalty segment exhibit loyalty to specific brands and retailers. While Seock and Bailey (2008) examined the effects of shopping orientations on online information searches and apparel purchase behaviors, the authors did not examine differences in patronage frequency of retail formats based on shopping orientation.

Method

This study employed a non-experimental survey method to gather the data necessary to investigate the effects of shopping orientations on retail format choice. The targeted respondent was a Gen Y apparel consumer. Thus, undergraduate college students at a large Southeastern university served as the sample. Subjects were required to answer the questionnaire based on their attitudes and behaviors with regard to apparel shopping. Data were collected in classrooms and students were provided with no incentive for completing the survey.

Measurement

All of the measures used in the survey instrument were adopted from previous studies. Shopping orientations were measured using the Seock and Bailey (2008) scale. Shopping orientations were measured using a five-point Likert-type scale anchored by “strongly disagree” and “strongly agree”. Retail format choice (frequency of shopping in various retail formats) was adapted from Carpenter and Moore (2005). The adaptation of the scale included the addition of several retail formats including fast fashion retailers, outlet stores and TV shopping networks. In order to define the retail formats, respondents were given examples of stores within each format. Examples of upscale department stores included Nordstrom, Bloomingdale's and Sak's, traditional department stores included Macy's, Dillard's and JC Penney, and value department stores included Kohl's. Specialty stores included Gap, Limited, Bebe and Talbot's, and fast fashion stores included Forever 21, H&M and Zara. Discounters included Wal-Mart and Target, and off-price stores included TJ Maxx, Marshall's and Ross, while outlet stores included a examples of nearby outlet malls. Internet-only examples included Bluefly.com and Overstock.com, mail order catalogs included J Crew and LL Bean, and TV shopping networks included Home Shopping Network (HSN) and Quality Value Convenience (QVC). Shopping frequency in each retail format was measured on a five-point Likert-type scale, anchored by "never prefer" and "always prefer". Demographic data were also collected.

Analysis

Descriptive statistics (e.g., frequencies, means) were used to analyze the sample characteristics and the overall frequency of shopping in various retail formats. Exploratory factor analysis was used to create the shopping orientation groups. Based on the shopping orientations identified in the exploratory factor analysis, linear regression was performed to examine the effect of shopping orientations on retail format choice.

Results

Sample Characteristics

A total of 264 surveys were collected by the researchers. An opening screening question asked respondents to indicate how often they shop for apparel, ranging from "never" to "always". Among the 264 surveys, 28 respondents indicated they never or rarely purchase apparel for themselves, and 21 respondents did not complete the survey. Therefore, these 49 respondents were removed from the sample. This final sample included 215 Gen Y apparel shoppers (*N=215*). Descriptive statistics including frequencies and means were used to evaluate the characteristics of the sample. Respondents' ages ranged from 19-29 years old, with an average age of 22 years. In terms of class rank, upperclassmen are more heavily represented, with juniors and seniors comprising approximately 75% of the sample. The sample was heavier in females than males, accounting for 75% and 25%, respectively. Caucasians represent the majority of the sample accounting for 81%, followed by African-Americans which account for 12% percent, Hispanics (2%), Asian/Pacific Islanders with 2%, and Other (1%).

Nearly half of respondents indicated they usually/always prefer to shop at fast fashion stores, while 38.1% usually/always prefer to patronize specialty stores (Table 1). Approximately 37% of the respondents enjoy shopping at factory outlets and 34.4% usually prefer/always prefer off-price retailers. In contrast, the results suggest that the majority of respondents never prefer TV shopping. Similarly, only 3.8% of the respondents usually/always prefer shopping via catalog, and only 7.5 % of respondents indicated they usually/always prefer Internet-only retailers. Due to the low shopping incidence for Internet-only, mail order, and TV shopping, these three formats were excluded from all further analyses.

Table 1. Frequency of Shopping in Retail Formats by Percentage of Respondents

Retail format	Never prefer	Rarely prefer	Occasionally prefer	Usually prefer	Always prefer
Upscale department stores (e.g., Nordstrom, Bloomingdales, Saks)	20.2	31	22.5	16	10.3
Traditional department stores (e.g., Macy's, Dillard's, JC Penney)	3.7	27.6	34.6	29	5.1
Value department stores (e.g., Kohl's)	17.8	28.5	26.6	22.9	4.2
Specialty stores (e.g., Gap, Limited, Bebe, Talbot's)	9.8	16.7	35.3	29.3	8.8
Fast fashion stores (e.g., Forever 21, H&M, Zara)	16.9	16	17.8	26.8	22.5
Discounters (e.g., Wal-Mart, Target)	20.7	27.7	31	16.9	3.8
Off-price stores (e.g., TJ Maxx, Marshall's, Ross)	11.6	24.2	29.8	20.9	13.5
Outlet stores (e.g., Tanger outlets in Charleston or Hilton Head)	8.5	22.1	32.4	28.2	8.9
Internet ONLY retailers (e.g., Bluefly.com, Overstock.com)	36.2	35.2	21.1	5.2	2.3
Mail order catalogs (e.g., JCrew, LL Bean)	52.6	25.8	17.8	3.3	0.5
TV shopping networks (e.g., Home Shopping Network – HSN, Quality Value Convenience – QVC)	91.6	8.4	0	0	0

Factor Analysis of Shopping Orientations

Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess scale reliability for the shopping orientation measures including shopping enjoyment, price consciousness, shopping confidence, convenience/time consciousness, and fashion/brand consciousness. The alphas ranged from .68 to .92 (Table 2). The scales for in-home shopping tendency and brand/store loyalty each consisted of two items. Therefore, a correlation coefficient was produced in order to provide evidence of reliability. The coefficient for in-home shopping tendency was .820 (*p.*=.000), while the coefficient for brand/store loyalty was .652 (*p.*=.000).

The shopping orientations for the study were produced using exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation. Factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 were retained. In addition, communalities of .40 or greater were required, as well as rotated factor loadings of .50 or greater. Items that loaded at .40 or greater on more than one factor were not retained. Based on these criteria, one item from the fashion/brand consciousness scale was removed due to crossloading on the shopping enjoyment construct, and one item on the price consciousness scale was removed due to a factor loading of less than .50. All other items were retained. Seven shopping orientations were identified including shopping enjoyment, price consciousness, shopping confidence, convenience/time consciousness, fashion/brand consciousness, in-home shopping tendency, and brand/store loyalty (Table 2). These seven segments match those identified among Gen Y shoppers by Seock and Bailey (2008).

Table 2. Factor Analysis of Shopping Orientations

Factor labels	Items	Factor loading	Variance explained	Cronbach alpha or Pearson's r
Total			73.5%	.72
Shopping enjoyment	I enjoy shopping for clothes.	.81	14.5%	.92
	Shopping for clothes puts me in a good mood.	.82		
	I enjoy spending time browsing for clothes.	.83		
	I don't like to spend much time shopping for clothes.*	.80		
Price consciousness	I shop a lot for special deals on clothing.	.76	11.7%	.77
	I pay a lot of attention to clothing prices.	.81		
	I can save a lot of money on clothes by shopping around for bargains.	.81		
	I shop around before deciding to buy clothes.	.65		
	I don't mind paying high prices for clothes.*	.53		
Shopping confidence	I feel confident in my ability to shop for clothes.	.80	11.7%	.89
	I'm able to choose the right clothes for myself.	.89		
	I think I'm a good clothing shopper.	.87		
Convenience/time consciousness	I usually buy my clothes at the most convenient place.	.85	10.6%	.86
	I shop for clothes where it saves me time.	.86		
	I put a high value on convenience when shopping for clothes.	.82		
Fashion/brand consciousness	I like to buy popular brands of clothing.	.85	8.9%	.68
	I try to keep my wardrobe up to date with fashion trends.	.51		
	I don't pay much attention to brand names.*	.65		
	A well-known brand means good quality.	.63		
In-home shopping tendency	I like to shop for clothes by Internet, mail, or telephone.	.91	8.2%	.820 (*p*.=.000)
	I like to shop from home.	.93		
Brand/store loyalty	Once I find a brand I like, I stick with it.	.85	7.5%	.652 (*p*.=.000)
	I try to stick to certain brands and stores when I buy clothes.	.84		

*Reverse-coded item.

Regression Analysis for the Effects of Shopping Orientations on Retail Format Choice

Upscale Department Stores

The regression model for upscale department stores yielded a significant statistic (F=15.019, *p*<.001) (Table 3). Positive predictors of shopping in upscale department stores included shopping enjoyment (β= .402, *p*<.001), shopping confidence (β= .176, *p*<.01), fashion/brand consciousness (β= .362, *p*<.001), and in-home shopping tendency (β= .204, *p*<.01) (Table 4). Negative predictors of shopping in upscale department stores included price consciousness (β= -.349, *p*<.001) and convenience/time consciousness (β= -295, *p*<.001).

Traditional department stores

The regression model for traditional department stores produced a non-significant statistic (F=1.401, *p*.=.207) (Table 3). Therefore, none of the shopping orientations included in the study predicted the frequency of shopping in traditional department stores.

Value department stores

The regression model for value department stores yielded a significant statistic (F=8.699, p<.001) (Table 3). Positive predictors of shopping in value department stores included price consciousness (β= .356, p<.001) and convenience/time consciousness (β= .255, p<.001) (Table 4). Negative predictors of shopping in value department stores included fashion/brand consciousness (β= -.231, p<.01) and in-home shopping tendency (β= -.215, p<.01).

Specialty stores

The regression model for specialty stores produced a significant statistic (F=3.015, p<.01) (Table 3). Positive predictors of shopping in specialty stores included shopping enjoyment (β= .198, p<.01) and fashion/brand consciousness (β= .230, p<.01) (Table 4). The results suggested no significant negative predictors.

Fast fashion stores

The regression model for fast fashion stores was significant (F=11.78, p<.001) (Table 3). Positive predictors of shopping in fast fashion stores included shopping enjoyment (β=.671, p<.001), price consciousness (β= .171, p<.05) and shopping confidence (β= .178, p<.05) (Table 4). The sole negative predictor of shopping in fast fashion stores was brand/store loyalty (β= -.182, p<.001).

Discounters

The regression model for discounters yielded a significant statistic (F=4.666, p<.001) (Table 3). Positive predictors of shopping in discounters included shopping enjoyment (β= .203, p<.01), price consciousness (β= .197, p<.01) and convenience/time consciousness (β= .195, p<.05) (Table 4). The single negative predictor of patronizing discounters was fashion/brand consciousness (β= -.241, p<.01).

Off-price stores

The regression model for off-price stores was significant (F=10.386, p<.001) (Table 3). The sole positive predictor of shopping in off-price stores was price consciousness (β= .497, p<.001) (Table 4). Negative predictors of shopping in off-price stores included fashion/brand consciousness (β= -.199, p<.01), in-home shopping tendency (β= -.220, p<.01) and brand/store loyalty (β= -.205, p<.01).

Outlet stores

The regression model for outlet stores produced a non-significant statistic (F=1.448, p.=.188) (Table 3). Therefore, none of the shopping orientations included in the study predicted the frequency of shopping in outlet stores.

Table 5 summarizes the effects of the shopping orientations on retail format choice.

Table 3. Summary Regression Models for Effect of Shopping Orientations on Retail Format Choice

Model/dependent variable	R	R square	Adjusted R-square	Std. error of estimate	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Upscale department stores[1]	.594	.353	.329	1.040					
Regression					113.622	7	16.232	15.019	.000**
Residual					208.587	193	1.081		
Total					322.209	200			
Traditional department stores	.219	.048	.014	.951					
Regression					8.871	7	1.267	1.401	.207
Residual					175.530	194	.905		
Total					184.401	201			
Value department stores[2]	.488	.238	.211	1.017					
Regression					62.951	7	8.993	8.699	.000**
Residual					201.591	195	1.034		
Total					264.542	202			
Specialty stores[3]	.313	.098	.065	1.051					
Regression					23.328	7	3.333	3.015	.005*
Residual					215.500	195	1.105		
Total					238.828	202			
Fast fashion stores[4]	.547	.300	.274	1.184					
Regression					115.722	7	16.532	11.789	.000**
Residual					270.646	193	1.402		
Total					386.368	200			
Discounters[5]	.380	.145	.114	1.052					
Regression					36.123	7	5.160	4.666	.000**
Residual					213.469	193	1.106		
Total					249.592	200			
Off-price stores[6]	.521	.272	.245	1.048					
Regression					79.824	7	11.403	10.386	.000**
Residual					214.097	195	1.098		
Total					293.921	202			
Outlet stores	.223	.050	.015	1.090					
Regression					12.038	7	1.720	1.448	.188
Residual					229.166	193	1.187		
Total					241.204	200			

[1]Predictors: constant, shopping enjoyment, price consciousness, shopping confidence, convenience/time consciousness, fashion/brand consciousness, in-home shopping tendency
[2]Predictors: constant, price consciousness, convenience/time consciousness, fashion/brand consciousness, in-home shopping tendency
[3]Predictors: constant, shopping enjoyment, fashion/brand consciousness
[4]Predictors: constant, shopping enjoyment, price consciousness, shopping confidence, brand/store loyal
[5]Predictors: constant, shopping enjoyment, price consciousness, convenience/time consciousness, fashion/brand consciousness
[6]Predictors: constant, price consciousness, fashion/brand consciousness, in-home shopping tendency, brand/store loyal
* p <.01, ** p <.001

Table 4. Predictor Effects and Beta Estimates for Effect of Shopping Orientations and on Retail Format Choice

Model/Predictor variable	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
	B	Std. error	Beta	t	Sig.
Upscale department stores					
Constant	2.643	.073		36.039	.000
Shopping enjoyment	.402	.073	.319	5.500	.000***
Price consciousness	-.349	.074	-.275	-4.742	.000***
Shopping confidence	.176	.074	.139	2.392	.018*
Convenience/time consciousness	-.295	.074	-.232	-4.004	.000***
Fashion/brand consciousness	.362	.073	.286	4.933	.000***
In-home shopping tendency	.204	.074	.160	2.761	.006**
Brand/store loyalty			.007	.115	.909
Value department stores					
Constant	2.675	.071		37.483	.000
Shopping enjoyment			-.072	-1.146	.253
Price consciousness	.356	.072	.311	4.977	.000***
Shopping confidence			-.093	-1.485	.139
Convenience/time consciousness	.255	.072	.223	3.571	.000***
Fashion/brand consciousness	-.231	.072	-.202	-3.227	.001**
In-home shopping tendency	-.215	.072	-.188	-3.003	.003**
Brand/store loyalty			-.041	-.650	.516
Specialty stores					
Constant	3.103	.074		42.062	.000
Shopping enjoyment	.198	.074	.182	2.677	.008**
Price consciousness			.062	.917	.360
Shopping confidence			.048	.710	.478
Convenience/time consciousness			-.113	-1.667	.097
Fashion/brand consciousness	.230	.074	.212	3.110	.002**
In-home shopping tendency			.000	-.011	.991
Brand/store loyalty			.026	.379	.705
Fast fashion stores					
Constant	3.215	.084		38.485	.000
Shopping enjoyment	.671	.084	.484	8.031	.000***
Price consciousness	.171	.083	.123	2.046	.042*
Shopping confidence	.178	.083	.129	2.141	.034*
Convenience/time consciousness			-.099	-1.636	.103
Fashion/brand consciousness			.017	.280	.780
In-home shopping tendency			.076	1.262	.208
Brand/store loyalty	-.182	.083	-.131	-2.180	.030*
Discounters					
Constant	2.556	.074		34.450	.000
Shopping enjoyment	.203	.074	.182	2.741	.007**
Price consciousness	.197	.074	.176	2.651	.009**
Shopping confidence			.002	.032	.974
Convenience/time consciousness	.195	.075	.174	2.612	.010*
Fashion/brand consciousness	-.241	.074	-.215	-3.236	.001**
In-home shopping tendency			-.038	-.568	.571
Brand/store loyalty			.030	.453	.651
Off-price stores					
Constant	2.980	.074		40.525	.000

Shopping enjoyment			.112	1.839	.067
Price consciousness	.497	.074	.412	6.735	.000***
Shopping confidence			-.009	-.146	.884
Convenience/time consciousness			.004	.065	.948
Fashion/brand consciousness	-.199	.074	-.165	-2.696	.008**
In-home shopping tendency	-.220	.074	-.183	-2.988	.003**
Brand/store loyalty	-.205	.074	-.170	-2.782	.006**

* p <.05, ** p <.01, *** p <.001

Table 5. Summary of Effect of Shopping Orientations on Retail Format Choice

Predictor[1]	**Upscale dept. stores**	**Traditional Dept. Stores**	**Value Dept. Stores**	**Specialty Stores**	**Fast Fashion Stores**	**Discount Stores**	**Off-Price Stores**	**Outlet Stores**
Shopping Orientations								
Shopping enjoyment	+			+	+	+		
Price consciousness	–		+		+	+	+	
Shopping confidence	+				+			
Convenience/time consciousness	–		+			+		
Fashion/brand consciousness	+		–	+		–	–	
In-home shopping tendency	+		–				–	
Brand/store loyalty					–		–	

[1]Significant positive effects are indicated by (+), negative effects are indicated by (–).

Conclusions and Implications

The results of this study confirm the Gen Y shopping orientations identified by Seock and Bailey (2008). Moreover, the results reflect that different shopping orientations influence preferences of retail formats among Gen Y apparel shoppers. Among the retail formats examined in the study, shopping orientations were most often predictive of shopping in the upscale department store format. Specifically, the results suggest that upscale department store shoppers enjoy shopping and are confident in their ability to make wise shopping decisions. Upscale department store shoppers are also fashion/brand conscious and enjoy shopping from home. Taken together, these findings suggest that upscale department store retailers should strive to create an enjoyable environment filled with trendy fashions and recognized brands. In addition, providing non-store channels such as an appealing website is appropriate for the upscale department store shopper. In contrast, the results suggest that upscale department store shoppers are not particularly price or convenience/time conscious. Therefore, upscale department stores can afford to stock well-regarded brands that demand premium prices while placing less emphasis on convenience than what is found in lower-end apparel stores.

In contrast, the results suggest that value department store shoppers are both price and time/convenience conscious, but less fashion/brand conscious and they do not tend to shop from home. The formula for value department stores, then, would appear to be the opposite of upscale department stores. Value department stores should primarily focus on offering competitive prices and convenient locations. In terms of fashion and brands, the results suggest that value department stores should place less emphasis on these attributes. In addition, value department store shoppers do not exhibit in-home shopping tendencies, suggesting that value department stores should focus on brick-and-mortar locations since non-store formats do not appear to be of great importance to the value department store customer.

The findings suggest that specialty store patronage is predicted by shopping enjoyment and fashion/brand consciousness. Therefore, specialty stores should focus on providing a unique, enjoyable shopping environment filled with the latest fashions. In addition, specialty store retailers should invest considerable resources in brand building, as the results suggest that specialty store patrons are brand conscious.

Like specialty store shoppers, frequent patrons of fast fashion stores enjoy shopping, but are also price conscious and confident. Fast fashion stores, then, should focus on creating an appealing shopping environment but should also take care to maintain competitive pricing. Moreover, the results suggest that brand/store loyalty is not a driver of fast fashion patronage. This finding suggests that fast fashion retailers may face a unique challenge in terms of creating a loyal following for their brands.

Similar to value department store patrons, the results suggest that frequent discounter patrons enjoy shopping, are price and time/convenience conscious, and are not particularly fashion/brand conscious. Accordingly, discounters should maintain competitive prices and offer convenient store locations. In contrast, discounters should focus less on providing the latest fashions and brand building. Discount store patrons also exhibit high levels of shopping enjoyment. Therefore, while discount retailers may sacrifice the focus on fashion and brands in favor of competitive pricing and convenient locations, they must still provide an appealing shopping experience for frequent patrons.

The results suggest that frequent patrons of off-price stores are price conscious. Therefore, like discounters, off-price retailers should primarily focus on competitive pricing. The results suggest that providing the latest fashions or well-known brands is not important to off-price patrons. Further, frequent patrons of off-price stores do not demonstrate brand/store loyalty. Lastly, the results suggest that frequent off-price shoppers are not interested in-home shopping, which means that off-price retailers should primarily focus on physical, brick-and-mortar stores rather than non-store channels.

Interestingly, the results for the effects of shopping orientations on patronage frequency of traditional department stores and outlet stores were non-significant. Therefore, none of the shopping orientations examined in the study predict patronage of traditional department stores or outlet stores. This may be because shoppers of these formats exhibit different shopping orientations not included in the current study.

Limitations and Future Research

Although the current study provides academic and managerial benefits as previously discussed, there are several limitations which must be acknowledged. First of all, the sample was limited to a single university in the Southeastern U.S. Second, while a broad range of retail formats was included in the study, the range was limited to current retail formats common in the U.S. Third, as research on shopping orientations continues to evolve, there will be more potential shopping orientations to discover and examine in order to make our understanding of shopping orientations more comprehensive.

Future studies could include a larger and more representative sample of Gen Y shoppers, perhaps involving data collection across a number of universities. In addition, future studies could include newly developing retail formats (e.g., recycled clothing retailers). Further investigation of the two retail formats for which the shopping orientations included in this study could not predict patronage (traditional department stores and outlet stores) is warranted. Such research could incorporate additional shopping orientations that may apply to patrons of traditional department stores and outlet stores. Lastly, subsequent studies could examine the effect of shopping orientations within and across additional product categories.

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