

Decision Making Style of Middle Age Consumers of Clothing Belonging To Different Locales

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Abstract: *Present study was conducted to ascertain the effect of locale on decision making style of middle age Indian consumers in purchase of clothing. Survey study was conducted on 600 respondents belonging to Delhi and Gorakhpur. A questionnaire was designed to collect data by face to face interview. Chi square was calculated to know association between locale and decision making of respondents. The result showed significant difference in decision making style of consumers belonging to metropolitan and non-metropolitan city is found.*

Key words: *price, brand, fashion, quality, planned purchaser*

I. Introduction

Clothing is seen as an intimate part of an individual – an expression or extension of bodily self. The value of clothing in meeting certain human needs- physical protection, modesty and decoration is well recognized. Today its role in satisfying other needs is being more clearly perceived such as need for conformity, self expression, social participation etc. Researchers have confirmed the importance placed upon clothing by individuals although importance of clothing varies from person to person (Erwin et al., 1979).

As clothing is an important human need, purchase of clothing is always a matter of making decisions about whether to buy, what to buy, when to buy, how to buy and from where to buy. Consumer has certain strategies and rules guiding the decision while making preference (Sproles, 1983). Each decision making style represents a mental orientation characterizing the consumer's approach to make a choice. The decision process is often used subconsciously, and a person is not even aware of it.

Middle age is generally considered to extend from age forty to age sixty. Middle- aged people are well aware that clothes are important to their image. Men recognize importance of clothing and grooming to business success. As they advance towards the peak of achievement in middle age, they become far more clothes-conscious than they were when they were younger and their status in the business world was lower. Women, by contrast, are less clothes conscious in middle age than in early adulthood, though they, like men, recognize the importance of clothes and grooming to success in business and social world (Ryan, 1966). Middle age group is still the one that exerts the most impact on consumption pattern (Solomon and Rabolt, 2004).

A comprehensive review of literature suggests that studies have mostly focused on clothing purchase decision of teenagers and young adults. Middle aged adults are financially independent, knowledgeable, with more experience than teenagers or young adult. Evaluative criteria and decision making process of middle aged may be different from teenagers and young adults.

Demographic characteristics of consumers impact the methods and means they use to progress through the purchase decision process model (Berman and Evans, 2007). One of the demographics is locale. Metropolitan area is a region consisting of densely populated urban core and its less populated surrounding territories. It features modern infrastructure, contemporary facilities and cultural modernization compared to non-metropolitan area. Present study examines whether locale affects decision making style of middle aged consumers.

II. Methodology

This research is exploratory in nature. Exploratory research includes survey method.

Locale Of The Study

Present study was conducted in two locales- Gorakhpur city of Uttar Pradesh and New Delhi.

Population And Selection Of Sample

Population comprised of middle aged adults residing in Gorakhpur and New Delhi. These two locales were purposely selected to draw comparison between consumers of metropolitan and non-metropolitan city in their choice of clothing. Gorakhpur is neither a metropolitan city nor a town. It is a developing city which is slowly adapting metro culture. As the city is in transitional phase, there are people with traditional values as well as modern outlook. Malls, boutiques are mushrooming in Gorakhpur. Whereas New Delhi is a metropolitan city, it has metro culture; there are lots of malls and boutiques.

Data was collected from 600 respondents- 300 from Gorakhpur and 300 from New Delhi. Random sampling technique was used to select male and female adults from each locale with maximum variation to get a spread in their age, educational and demographic background. A list of citizens was obtained from Municipal Corporation. From list those adults were identified who belong to age group 40 to 60 years. To get accuracy in result, 150 males and 150 females were selected randomly from list of middle age adults.

Development of tool and data collection

A questionnaire was developed to collect the data. It was based on Consumer Style Inventory developed (CSI) by Sproles and Kendall (1986) to examine and describe decision making of consumers. Some items were modified and some new items were added in the inventory to achieve the objectives. Data was personally collected by the investigator. After collection of data, it was coded and analyzed with the help of statistical tools.

III. Result And Discussion

Hypothesis

Ho: There is no association between decision making style and locale of the respondents of middle age. To test null hypothesis chi square was calculated. Significance level of 0.05 was decided to accept or reject null hypothesis.

Table 1: Motivation for clothing purchase

Locale	On special occasions	When needed	Discount sale	Personal enjoyment	χ^2
Gorakhpur	17.33%	61.33%	5%	16.33%	7.787
Delhi	13%	66%	9%	12%	P<0.051

There is significant association between locale and motivation for buying. Hedonic need for ‘personal enjoyment’ and buying on special occasion is more important for Gorakhpur respondents whereas need satisfaction and discount sale is more important for Delhi respondents.

Quality consciousness in middle aged adults

Table 2: Importance of very good quality clothes

Locale	Very important	Important	Not important	χ^2
Gorakhpur	63.01%	29.66%	7.33%	2.838, P< 0.242
Delhi	67.33%	28.33%	4.33%	

Majority of middle age people belonging to Delhi and Gorakhpur consider that quality of clothes is very important i.e. quality of fabric used in apparel, quality of workmanship (stitch, trimming etc). Chi square value is not significant.

Table 3: Make special effort to get best quality clothes

Locale	Mostly	Sometime	Never	χ^2
Gorakhpur	46%	49.66%	4.33%	27.99, P<0.00
Delhi	67.33%	29.66%	3%	

Significant difference is found in respondents of different locale with regard to their efforts to get best quality clothes. Most of the Delhi respondents make special efforts to get best quality clothes.

Store loyalty

Table 4: Preference to buy the clothes from selective shops

Locale	Always	Often	Sometime	Never	χ^2
Gorakhpur	47.33%	39%	11.66%	2%	6.65, p<0.084
Delhi	46%	35.33%	18%	0.66%	

Percentage of respondents who always buy from selected shops is highest followed by those who often buy from selected shops. Preference to buy clothes from selective shops is not associated with locale of respondents.

Table 5: Selection criteria of clothing shop

Locale	Gorakhpur	Delhi	χ^2 37.15 P<0.00
Good Service	18.66%	18%	
Availability of quality garment	38%	42%	
Availability of branded garment	18%	13.66%	
Availability of clothes as per trend	3.66%	6%	
Availability of clothes of good style	4.66%	11.66%	
Availability of garment at right price	16%	4.66%	
Easy to reach	1%	4%	

Table shows that availability of quality clothes is most important criteria for selection of particular shop followed by good service and availability of branded clothes. Chi square calculated shows significant difference in selection criteria of respondents belonging to different locale. Availability of quality garment of good style is more important for Delhi respondents while availability at right price is more important for Gorakhpur adults.

Table 6: Type of shop preferred for purchasing of clothes

Locale	Traditional retail shop	Boutique	Shopping mall	Branded shop	χ^2 20.32 P<0.00
Gorakhpur	43%	6.66%	17%	33.33%	
Delhi	35%	12.66%	28%	24.33%	

Type of shop preferred is associated with locale of respondents of middle age. Higher percentage of Gorakhpur respondents purchase from traditional market while more number of Delhi respondents buys from boutique and shopping malls.

Brand awareness

Table7: Selection of branded clothes

Locale	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	χ^2 12.570 p<0.00
Gorakhpur	29%	36.33%	26.66%	8%	
Delhi	37.66%	37.33%	22.33%	29.33%	

Locale of the respondents has significant association with selection of branded clothes. Number of Delhi respondents who always buy branded clothes is higher while number of Gorakhpur respondents who sometimes or never buy is higher. Mean score of Delhi (3.10) respondents is higher than that of Gorakhpur (2.86).

Table 8: Branded clothes are fashionable

Locale	Agree	Somewhat agree	Disagree	χ^2 2.69 P<0.26
Gorakhpur	34%	58%	8%	
Delhi	9.33%	51.33%	39.34%	

About fifty percent of middle age respondents somewhat agree whereas about one third agree that branded clothes are fashionable. Attitude of respondents of different locale is same in this regard.

Table 9: Branded clothes are costly compared to unbranded clothes

Locale	Agree	Somewhat agree	Disagree	χ^2 2.862 p<0.239
Gorakhpur	71.33%	25%	3.66%	
Delhi	70.33%	21%	5.33%	

Majority of middle age respondents agree that branded clothes are costly compared to unbranded clothes. Attitude of respondents of different locale is same in this regard.

Table 10: Branded clothes are of good quality and last longer

Locale	Agree	Somewhat agree	Disagree	χ^2 11.82 P<0.00
Gorakhpur	50.66%	37.33%	12%	
Delhi	54%	41.66%	4.33%	

There is significant difference in attitude of middle age consumers towards statement that branded clothes are costly. Higher percent of Delhi respondents agree or somewhat agree than those of Gorakhpur.

Table 11: Branded clothes increase the status of person

Locale	Agree	Somewhat agree	Disagree	χ^2
Gorakhpur	43.33%	39.33%	17.33%	11.90
Delhi	54.33%	36.66%	9%	P<0.00

Table 12: Branded clothes create good impression

Locale	Agree	Somewhat agree	Disagree	χ^2
Gorakhpur	43.33%	42.33%	14.33%	6.638
Delhi	53.33%	36.66%	10%	p<0.03

Table 11 and 12 show that significant difference in attitude of middle age respondents is found for the statement that branded clothes increase the status of person and create good impression. Higher percent of Delhi consumers agree than those of Gorakhpur.

Table 13: Preference to buy favorite brand even if good clothes of other brands are available

Locale	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	χ^2
Gorakhpur	29.33%	31.66%	23%	16%	7.445
Delhi	25.33%	40.66%	23.33%	10.66%	p<0.059

Loyalty to brand is dependent on locale of respondents. More number of Gorakhpur respondents always prefers to buy favorite brand whereas higher percent of Delhi respondents often buy favorite brand.

Table 14: High price of clothes indicates high quality

Locale	Agree	Somewhat agree	Disagree	χ^2
Gorakhpur	22.33%	50.66%	27%	1.753
Delhi	25.33%	52%	22.66%	p<0.416

Attitude of respondents of Gorakhpur and Delhi is same towards 'high price of clothes indicates high quality'. About fifty percent somewhat agree that high price indicates high quality.

Price Consciousness

Table 15: Search for lower price clothes

Locale	Always	Frequently	Sometime	Never	χ^2
Gorakhpur	5%	15.33%	59%	20.66%	7.96
Delhi	4.33%	24%	50.33%	21.33%	P<.047

Significant difference is found in behavior of respondents for search of less price clothes. Higher percent of Gorakhpur consumers sometime search whereas more of Delhi respondents frequently search for lower price clothes.

Table 16: I go to market during sale/ promotional season

Locale	Always	Frequently	Sometime	Never	χ^2
Gorakhpur	6%	9%	57%	28%	19.307
Delhi	8%	20%	43%	29%	P<0.00

Similar behavior as observed for lower price clothes is found for purchase of clothes during discount sale.

Table 17: Focus on good value or money

Locale	Always	Frequently	Sometime	Never	χ^2
Gorakhpur	2.33%	21%	6.66%	0	2.624
Delhi	74.33%	18.33%	6.66%	0.66%	p<0.453

Most of them always focus on good value for money. Chi square value indicates that behavior of consumers of both locales is same.

Planned purchasing vs. impulsive buying

Table 18: Plan carefully before purchasing the clothes

Locale	Always	Frequently	Sometime	Never	χ^2
Gorakhpur	39%	27.33%	24%	9.66%	7.234
Delhi	26%	35.66%	29.66%	9.66%	p<0.00

Planning carefully before buying clothes is significantly associated with locale. More of Gorakhpur residents always plan carefully whereas more of Delhi frequently/sometimes plan do proper planning.

Table 19: Take time in making brand and product decision

Locale	Always	Frequently	Sometime	Never	χ^2
Gorakhpur	10.33%	21.66%	41.33%	26.66%	7.231
Delhi	13%	20.33%	32.33%	34.33%	p<.065

No significant difference is found in the behavior of respondents of different locale. Percentage of those who sometimes / never take time for brand and product decision is higher than those who always or frequently take enough time.

Table 20: Impulsive buying of clothes

Locale	Always	Frequently	Sometime	Never	χ^2
Gorakhpur	26.66%	24.66%	37%	11.66%	37.55
Delhi	18.33%	46%	32%	3.66%	P<0.00

Significant difference in impulsive buying behavior is seen between Delhi and Gorakhpur consumers. Higher percent of Delhi respondents frequently do impulsive buying if they find attractive clothes in pleasing colour and design. Mean score of delhi ()

Table 21: Compare the price of clothes before purchasing

Locale	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	χ^2
Gorakhpur	49.33%	24.33%	16%	10.33%	22.53
Delhi	48%	36%	13.66%	2.33%	P<0.00

Significant difference in the behaviour of middle aged consumer belonging to different locale is observed as chi square value is significant. Mean score of Delhi (3.29) is higher than that of Gorakhpur (3.12). Thus more Delhi consumers often compare price than those of Gorakhpur.

Table 22: Check all aspects of garment before purchasing

Locale	Always	Often	Sometime	Never	χ^2
Gorakhpur	53.33%	35.66%	9%	2%	6.64
Delhi	62.33%	28.33%	8.66%	0.66%	P<.084

Chi square value reveals that locale of middle aged is not associated with the behavior of checking quality of clothes. Thus they exhibit similar behavior.

Table 23: Read label before purchasing the clothes

Locale	Always	Often	Sometime	Never	χ^2
Gorakhpur	42%	29.66%	19.33%	9%	26.85
Delhi	52.33%	32%	15%	0.66%	P<0.00

There is significant association between locale of respondents and habit of reading label. Higher percent of Delhi middle age respondents always or often read label than those of Gorakhpur. Mean score of consumers of Delhi (3.36) is higher than that of Gorakhpur (3.04) establishing the fact that more respondents of Delhi read label.

Table 24: Collect information before purchasing the clothes

Locale	Always	Often	Sometime	Never	χ^2
Gorakhpur	54.33%	21.33%	21.66%	2.66%	6.54
Delhi	49%	30.33%	18%	2.66%	P<0.088

Consumers acquire information to reduce uncertainty and risk in purchasing decision. It is evident from the findings presented in Table that locale of respondents of middle age is independent of behavior of collecting information before purchasing clothes. About fifty percent always collect information.

Table 25: Sources of information of clothes before purchasing the clothes

Locale	Window shopping	Friends and colleagues	Newspaper advertisement	Internet	TV	Shopkeeper	χ^2
Gorakhpur	13%	29.66%	9.33%	6.66%	15.33%	26%	27.74 P<0.0
Delhi	24%	17%	12.33%	12%	13.33%	21.33%	0

Significant difference is found in source of information used by respondents of different locale. Friends and colleagues are main source for people of Gorakhpur followed by shopkeeper whereas window shopping is main source for Delhi and then salesman.

Fashion Consciousness

Table 26: Preference for fashionable trendy clothes

Locale	Always	Frequently	Sometime	Never	χ^2
Gorakhpur	16%	23.66%	49%	11.33%	29.55, p<0.00
Delhi	26.33	35%	33.33%	5.33%	

Significant association is found between locale of middle aged respondents and preference for fashionable clothes. More number of respondents belonging to Delhi always or often prefers trendy clothes in comparison to those of Gorakhpur. On the other hand higher percentage of Gorakhpur respondents sometimes prefers or never prefers trendy clothes. Mean score of Delhi (2.87) is higher than that of Gorakhpur (2.43).

Table 27: Knowledge of fashion trend

Locale	Always	Frequently	Sometime	Never	χ^2
Gorakhpur	14%	25%	45.66%	15.333%	30.81, p<0.00
Delhi	22.66%	37.66%	33.33%	6.33%	

There is significant association between awareness about fashion trend and locale of respondents. Consumers of middle age belonging to Delhi are always/ often aware of current fashion trend than those of Gorakhpur. Mean score further confirms the fact because mean score of Delhi (2.76) is higher than Gorakhpur (2.37).

Table 28: Preference to purchase high priced fashion clothes

Locale	Always	Frequently	Sometime	Never	χ^2
Gorakhpur	14%	21%	40.66%	24.33%	2.83 P<0.41
Delhi	9.66%	21%	44%	25.33%	

There is no significant association of locale of middle age consumers and buying of costly fashion clothes. About 40-44% would sometimes prefer to wear costly fashion clothes while twenty percent will never buy.

Table 29: Preference of clothes similar to friends and colleagues

Locale	Always	Frequently	Sometime	Never	χ^2 value
Gorakhpur	12.33%	23.66%	41.66%	22.33%	12.00 P<0.00
Delhi	13%	34.33%	38.66%	14%	

Significant difference in attitude of middle aged respondents belonging to Delhi and Gorakhpur towards conformity to friends and colleagues is found. Percentage of respondents of Gorakhpur who sometimes or never prefer clothes similar to friends is higher than those of Delhi. On the contrary more number of Delhi respondents often wears clothes similar to their colleagues. Further, mean score of Delhi respondents (2.44) is higher than that of Gorakhpur (2.26).

Table 30: Advice of husband/wife and family in purchase of clothes

Locale	Always	Frequently	Sometime	Never	χ^2 value
Gorakhpur	10%	15.33%	17%	57.66%	9.92

Delhi	12%	7.66%	21.66%	58.66%	P<.01
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Calculated value of chi square indicates that advice of husband and family in purchase of clothes is dependent on locale. More number of consumers of Gorakhpur often takes advice of spouse /family members whereas more number of Delhi consumers sometimes take advice. Mean score of Gorakhpur (1.78) is higher than that of Delhi (1.73) indicating they are more influenced by family members.

Table 31: Search for clothes that are new and different from others

Locale	Always	Frequently	Sometime	Never	χ^2
Gorakhpur	20%	19%	26.66%	34.33%	65.72
Delhi	22%	35.66%	34%	8.33%	P<0.00

Individuality in clothing selection of middle aged respondents is reported in above table. Locale of middle age respondents affect search for new & different clothes. There is more number of people of Delhi who always, often or sometimes search new clothes compared to Gorakhpur. 34.333% of Gorakhpur never search new or different clothes compared to 8% of Delhi. Mean score of Delhi respondents (2.74) is higher than that of Gorakhpur (2.24). This also shows higher preference for new, trendy clothes by consumers of Delhi than by consumers of Gorakhpur.

IV. Conclusion

Significant difference in preference for shop and selection criteria of shops by respondents belonging to different locale is found. Locale of the respondents has significant association with selection of branded clothes. Significant association is found between locale of middle age respondents and preference for fashionable clothes as well as knowledge of recent trend in fashion. Conformity in dress, similar to friends, is more important for Delhi respondents than those of Gorakhpur whereas respondents of Gorakhpur are more influenced by their family members.

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