



Rural Adolescents And Mall Behaviour- Exploring The Dimensions During Apparel Buying

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Abstract: The purpose of the study is to find out the factors that contribute to rural adolescent's mall behaviour. The change in habits and preferences of the rural adolescents towards the mall culture is increasing very fast. They also would like to adopt the new culture leaving the traditional culture of shopping from nearby store. The study tries to explore the factors that influence the rural adolescents for shopping from the mall. Data reduction techniques were used in this study to determine the contributing elements to rural adolescent and mall culture. Data were collected from 123 adolescents from the rural areas using the using convenience sampling techniques. The study determined that the brand preference, promotion, hedonic consumption, food and entertainment and the first and most significant aspect is preferred brand. The management should make an effort to include more brands inside store to attract the rural adolescents. The study is a new of its own kind in the Indian context which will add substantial knowledge to the existing theory.

Index Terms -Rural, Adolescent, Mall culture, Factor analysis, preferred Brand Component

I. INTRODUCTION

Indians' purchasing habits are evolving as a result of a shift in views towards buying, a rise in the younger population, and an increase in disposable income. One of the main factors affecting customers' decisions to buy is their desire to feel and look beautiful. Another important aspect influencing a person's decision to spend money is their age. Individuals aged 20 to 24 have a tendency to spend more on movies and electronic/home equipment, whereas those aged 45 to 48 spend more on vacations (<https://www.icrmindia.org/casestudies>). As a result, shopping complexes in Chandigarh, India, are constantly growing in number and size to meet the demands of customers. But in order to make a lasting impact on customers. These days, malls use a variety of techniques to draw patrons and improve their purchasing habits. Shopping centres are essential to the way that people live (Bloch, Ridgway, & Dawson, 1994). Malls' appeal is based on how well they serve the social and personal demands of their patrons (Tauber, 1972).

According to Assael (1987), shopping is one of the most distinctive behaviours that customers engage in. Household goods, groceries, presents, and clothing are a few common products that people commonly purchase. Underhill (2009) argued that shopping is a unique and multifaceted activity. It encompasses not only the act of purchasing but also the customer's engagement and acceptance of brands, products, and stores through various senses, including, seeing, hearing and occasionally tasting. South & Spitze (1994) and Fram & Axelrod (1990) opined that shopping is a women's activity and they are the ones' responsible for household shopping. Oakley (1975) regarded shopping as having the most positive attribute of being a leisure activity. Similarly, Howard (2007) considered shopping a leisure pursuit. With the advent of shopping centres, developers and retailers are striving to enhance the pleasurable aspects of shopping. Howard (2007) highlighted that numerous studies on consumer behaviour have been conducted, providing insights into the situational and personal experiences of shopping and its impact on human behaviour and emotions. Many studies have explored the motives behind shopping. Babin et al. (1994) examined that the purpose of shopping can be utilitarian and non-utilitarian or hedonic. Shopping behaviour of consumers is different in different countries. The reasons for varying shopping behaviour are brought by diversity of culture and the changing economies of the various countries (Millan & Howard, 2007).

In the research conducted by Dholakia in 1999, the analysis of consumers' purchasing habits also takes into account the importance of shopping frequency. This can be defined as the number of times an individual buys a product in person. The time and effort a person put in, as well as their gender and level of family duty, all influence how frequently they buy. Additionally, the circumstances of the purchase influences it. Shopping, according to Dholakia (1999), is going to actual stores or shopping locations. The author went on to say that circumstances and intentions also affect how customers behave when they shop. In addition to being a household chore, shopping is often seen as a way to unwind and have fun. Dholakia (1999) has offered a paradigm for comprehending consumer purchase behaviour. This introduction is followed by the remaining sections of the article, the first of which is Section 2's review of the body of knowledge on the topic. Section 3 explores the theoretical background, in this study section 4 discusses the research methods and section 5 shows the analysis's findings along with a discussion of them. The ramifications of the results of the paper are the main focus of Section 6.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Singh, Gupta and Kumar (2021), highlighted eight critical factors that influence how prospective consumers perceive a shopping center are: availability, alertness, populated, ambiance, storage, aesthetic commercial and terminal subculture. They conducted a study on the behaviour of 100 randomly selected teens in various malls in Delhi. This study revealed that the behaviour was highly dependent on the individual, varying from adolescent to adolescent. Yohannes and Kartika (2021) conducted a survey involving 97 adolescents to explore the relationship between youths' lifestyles and mall attractiveness. In their study, lifestyle was treated as the independent variable, while convenience, luxury, comfort, diversity, and entertainment were considered dependent variables. The findings revealed that among these factors, comfort emerged as the most significant influence on the behaviour of adolescents. Ramandeep, Anil and Rita (2019), did a study of 160 people to get an idea of how young people feel about shopping malls. They

said that there are 8 main things that young people need to know about shopping malls to form an impression of them: convenience, variety, awareness, overcrowding, atmosphere, parking, indulgence, and the mall culture. They also listed off a bunch of other things that young people like about malls, like how they sit, if there are water bottles, if there's an e-map, if there are ramps, if there's a book section, if there's parking, if there's security, and if there's customer service. The researchers found that the maximum amount of time people spent shopping was up to 3 hours, but weekends were preferred over weekdays. Arvind (2019) has carried out a study on the brand perception among young people in India regarding the purchase of denim jeans. In this study, 350 management students from the Bhopal area have been selected for the sample. The key findings of this study are: Quality Consciousness, Self-Confident, Participation in Purchasing Decision Making, Brand Consciousness and Brand Loyalty. These are 5 key factors that influence the brand preference of young people in India. Narkhade et al. (2018) examined the impact of aesthetically-related factors on the consumption behaviour of under graduate students in Pune. The study revealed that visual factors, such as layout, display, lights and fixtures, play a significant role in influencing the purchasing behaviour of adolescents in shopping malls. A study was carried out in Lahore, Pakistan by Ehsan et al. (2018), which looked at the attitude of adolescents towards pop-up-stores and their hedonistic shopping experiences. The results showed that the hedonistic shopping experience had a big impact on the attitude of the adolescents. Furthermore, the study showed that the attitude towards pop-up stores and hedonistic shopping had a positive effect on the buying behaviour of the youngsters. Porral and Mangin (2018) conducted a study on 253 respondents to investigate the factors that attract consumers to shopping malls. They utilized a structural equation model for data analysis. The results of their study showed that consumer loyalty and buying intention increase based on tenant variety, internal atmosphere, and leisure mix within the malls. Additionally, they found that promotional activities and convenience did not significantly influence consumers as pull factors. The study by Narahari and Kuvad (2017) focused on analyzing customer behavior in relation to shopping malls. The main objective of the research work was to gain insight into the buying behaviour of customers visiting shopping malls and to identify any gender-specific differences in purchasing behaviour. The findings of the study indicate that the customers of Bhavnagar are generally satisfied with the overall shopping experience and feel completely at ease, as they view the mall as a "One-Stop Shop" for a wide variety of items and brands. On the other hand, there is a lack of awareness of safety measures among the customers. In general, the study found that there are no significant gender differences in shopping experiences, decisions and purchasing decisions, which is a positive indication of the increased role of women in the industry. Furthermore, the research suggests that shopping malls are the ideal place for socializing, particularly for younger generations to spend quality time with their families and for dining out in addition to shopping. Tarun, Satnam and Anindita (2017), analysed the factors that influence consumers' choice of shopping malls. Using the mall intercept survey method, the researchers collected data through structured questionnaire responses from 181 respondents. The researchers identified Convenience, Internal atmosphere, Service Quality Experience, Proximity, Utilitarian Factors, Acoustics and Demonstration as 7 important factors which influence consumers to choose shopping malls. Rashmi, Poojary and Deepak(2016), conducted a study on the factors that influence customer behaviour and

its influence on customer loyalty towards shopping malls, using structural equation modelling to identify six essential dimensions. The study concluded that shoppers' behavior positively influences both customer satisfaction and loyalty. Consequently, the improvement of the factors that influence shoppers' shopping behaviour will lead to an increase in customer satisfaction and loyalty to the retail shops in chosen shopping malls. Ahmed and Mayya (2015) carried out a study on buying behaviour and consumer perception of shopping malls. The results of their study show that consumers have benefited from organized retail in many ways, such as a wider range of products and popular brands, one-stop shopping, new market launches, festive discounts, and many more. The survey results showed that nearly all income groups benefit from organized retail purchases. Therefore, from the consumer's point of view, organized retailing expansion is more popular as different malls and corporate competing with each other to offer lower prices with good quality products. Amit and Deepika (2015), explores that, product assortment, diversity of offerings, environment and amenities, and accessibility are four broad elements which are essential for any mall to be successful in attracting customers in India. A study by Mazhar (2014) looked at 320 students in Pakistan. The purpose of the study was to understand the preferences of teenagers regarding branded and non-branded products. The results of the study showed that young adults are very aware and well informed about brand, fashion and the use of apparel products. They make their decisions based on their environment. According to the study, female adolescents are more influenced by social media and fashion, leisure and confusion over choice. Whereas, male adolescents rely on media, are brand-conscious and are spontaneous purchasers.

III. OBJECTIVES

Understanding the dimensions and sources of adolescent shopping preference can help to improve it. This necessitates having a correct grasp of the causes of exclusion as well as its significance. Thus, the following are the study's objectives:

- a) To understand the dimensions of shopping preference among rural adolescents while buying apparels;
- b) To identify the relative significance of these dimensions

IV. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and Social Identity

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a foundational framework in psychology and behavioral science, aimed at elucidating how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control collectively shape individuals' intentions and behaviors (Ajzen, 1991). The integration of Social Identity Theory with TPB stemmed from a meta-analysis highlighting that subjective norms exhibit the smallest effect size among TPB constructs concerning intentions (Armitage and Conner, 2001). This amalgamation enriches our comprehension of how group identities and social influences intricately influence individual decision-making and behavior. Substantial predictive validity is lacking for subjective standards in the TPB, according to Chatzisarantis et al. (2009). The reason for this is that the idea of subjective norms only takes into account the reciprocal behaviors between key individuals, such as parents, and does not take into account the influence of groups like peers (Chatzisarantis et al. 2009 and Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2006).

Furthermore, Social Identity Theory posits that individuals' need for self-esteem and improvement is fulfilled through receiving positive feedback and recognition from the groups to which they belong (Fielding and others, 2008). The assertion that consumers' involvement in fashion apparel depends on both their peers' reactions to their choices and their own perceptions supports the justification for using social identity as a variable in this study (Pineiro, 2008). Moreover, the purchase of clothing creates a difficult shopping situation for consumers, leading them to heavily depend on advice and information from their close friends and peers. Additionally, Tan's (1999) study highlights that young consumers pay significant attention to their clothing selections because of their worry about how they are perceived by others and their need for social acceptance. Lastly, Spero and Stone (2004) observed that young consumers are motivated and greatly swayed by their peers.

TPB and self-identity

The self-identity construct has been used by researchers as an additional variable to enhance the predictive relevance of TPB (Hagger and Chatzisarantis, 2006). A meta-analysis conducted by Rise et al. (2010) on intention's independent variables revealed that self-identity contributes 6% to the variance in the intention construct, in addition to the usual variables such as perceived behavioral control, subjective norm, and attitude. They emphasized the significant influence of self-identity on one's purpose and behavior. Ries et al. (2012) explained that the concept of self-identity demonstrates how specific behaviors are formed independently of attitude and societal influences.

Prior research has examined how clothing can reflect a person's new identity, as evidenced by Ries et al. (2012). Their study supports the notion that clothes serve as a linguistic code, allowing wearers to "send messages" about their identity. Stets and Burke (2000) further argue that people tend to act in ways that align with their identification criteria, making self-identity a strong predictor of intentions. Incorporating self-identity into the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) provides a robust framework for assessing how Generation Y consumers are influenced by their peers in fashion choices or exhibit autonomy in decision-making. This is underscored by the optimal distinctiveness theory, which suggests that individuals strive to balance their need for peer integration with their desire to stand out and be autonomous (Sorrentino et al., 2007). In addition, Chan et al. (2012) provided an example from the fashion sector, illustrating how individuals can purchase the same brand as their friends to express a need for community. However, to demonstrate their desire to stand apart from their peers, they might choose different colors of the same brand. This behavior exemplifies how people navigate the balance between belonging and individuality within social contexts.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sampling, data collection and data analysis

Data was collected between Septembers to December 2023 by means of convenient sampling. To expand the number of respondents in a short period of time, a non-probability convenient sampling method (Goodman, 1996) is used. For the pilot survey, a total of 123 respondents were collected from the mall visitors particularly among the college students. The perceived service quality is measured using a 5 point Likert Scale, with numerical values ranging from 5 for strongly agrees to 1 for strongly disagree.

Additionally, customer perception and assessment of overall satisfaction is measured using a 5 point Likert Scale, with numerical values ranging from 5 for very satisfied to 1 for very dissatisfied.

VI. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Profile of the Respondents

The data was entered into an IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) datasheet, which was then coded and edited as needed. The missing data imputation technique, which is accessible in SPSS, was used to solve the issues posed by missing data. The information was examined for normalcy. It is agreed to proceed with the final analysis after checking the data normality. The Researcher clearly defines the demographics. The demographic characteristics of the sample were described by dividing respondents into three age groups: 16.1 to 18 years old, 18.1 to 20 years old, and 20.1 to 22 years old. Out of 123 respondents, 33 were aged 16.1 to 18 years, 48 were aged 18.1 to 20 years, and 42 were aged 20.1 to 22 years. This indicates that the majority of respondents were between 18.1 and 20 years old. Additionally, the sample comprised 86 males and 37 females out of the total 123 respondents.

Table-6.1
Demographic Profile of the respondents

Demographic Variables	Demographic Sub-groups	Number	Percent	Mean	S.D
Age (years)	16.1 to 18 years	33	27	2.09	1.202
	18.1 to 20 years	48	39		
	20.1 to 22 years	42	34.1		
Gender	Male	86	69.9	1.42	0.495
	Female	37	30.1		
Education	Higher Secondary	38	30.9	2.84	0.729
	Under Graduate	58	47.1		
	Graduate	25	24.2		
	Others	2	0.22		

6.1 Data Analysis

The sample data appropriateness is determined by calculating the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO). For the study, variable-wise sampling and correlation analysis are also conducted. It was determined that factor analysis was suitable for the collected data (Boyd et al., 2002; Malhotra, 2004). Next, using Varimax rotation, the data was submitted to Principal Component Analysis (PCA). Fifteen variables remained in the study after many removals.

Table 6.2: Kaiser- Meyer- Olkin (KMO) Test and Bartlett's Test

KMO measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.924
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square
	Degrees of Freedom
	Significance level
	2200.004
	253
	.000

Table 6.3: Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
BR1	1.000	.722
BR2	1.000	.658
BR3	1.000	.625
BR4	1.000	.783
BR5	1.000	.710
ATM1	1.000	.669
ATM2	1.000	.731
ATM3	1.000	.835
ATM4	1.000	.820
FN1	1.000	.813
FN3	1.000	.768
FN4	1.000	.737
FN5	1.000	.704
FN6	1.000	.727
PRO1	1.000	.767
PRO2	1.000	.822
PRO3	1.000	.842
PRO4	1.000	.811
HED1	1.000	.645
HED2	1.000	.822
HED3	1.000	.844
HED4	1.000	.736
HED5	1.000	.817

Extraction Method (Principal Component Analysis)

Table 6.4: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigen values			Extraction sums of squared loading			Rotation sums of squared loading		
	Total	Percentage of Variance	Cumulative percentage	Total	Percentage of Variance	Cumulative percentage	Total	Percentage of Variance	Cumulative percentage
1	11.127	48.378	48.378	11.127	48.378	48.378	3.856	16.765	16.765
2	2.345	10.197	58.575	2.345	10.197	58.575	3.642	15.836	32.601
3	1.650	7.173	65.747	1.650	7.173	65.747	3.521	15.308	47.909
4	1.273	5.534	71.282	1.273	5.534	71.282	3.365	14.629	62.538
5	1.012	4.400	75.682	1.012	4.400	75.682	3.023	13.144	75.682
6	.604	2.625	78.307						
7	.533	2.318	80.625						

8	.503	2.186	82.811					
9	.489	2.126	84.937					
10	.430	1.872	86.809					
11	.371	1.613	88.422					
12	.337	1.466	89.888					
13	.321	1.395	91.283					
14	.284	1.233	92.515					
15	.272	1.181	93.697					
16	.253	1.101	94.797					
17	.214	.932	95.729					
18	.208	.902	96.631					
19	.198	.860	97.491					
20	.172	.747	98.238					
21	.156	.680	98.918					
22	.138	.601	99.519					
23	.111	.481	100.000					

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table-6.5: Rotated Component Matrix^a

	Components				
	1	2	3	4	5
BR1		.747			
BR2		.571			
BR3		.675			
BR4		.788			
BR5		.729			
ATM1	.633				
ATM2	.741				
ATM3	.836				
ATM4	.748				
FN1				.696	
FN3				.764	
FN4				.625	
FN5				.751	
FN6				.755	
PRO1					.613
PRO2					.796
PRO3					.812
PRO4					.772
HED1			.610		
HED2			.844		
HED3			.858		
HED4			.618		
HED5			.715		

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

6.2 Factor Output

Three factors made up the factor output, which accounted for 75.68% of the problem's overall variation. Table 5.5 provides an overview of the extracted factor output and includes the rotated component matrix.

Factor 1: Four variables make up the first extracted component, which accounts for 48.37% of the cumulative variation overall: "The atmosphere within mall is very hygienic, the mall is well-equipped with air-conditioning, the mall is decorated in an attractive fashion and the mall plays music happen regularly". The range of factor loadings is 0.633–0.836. The component is called "Atmosphere" because these all stand in for various aspects of the ambience.

Factor 2: The second factor consists of five elements: The variables "The well-known national brands are best for me," "The more expensive brands are usually my choice," "The higher the price of a product, the better its quality," "Nice department and specialty stores offer me the best products," and "I prefer buying the best-selling brands" account for 58.57% of the total variation. The factor loadings for these variables are significantly high (greater than 0.5). This set of factors is referred to as "Preferred Brands" since these variables represent preferred brands.

Factor 3: The factor represents five variables: "When I am in a down mood, I go shopping to make me feel better," "To me, shopping is a way to relieve stress," "I go shopping when I want to treat myself to something special," "This shopping trip was truly a joy," and "I enjoyed this shopping trip for its own sake, not just for the items I may have purchased." This factor is named "Hedonic Consumption."

Factor 4: Five percent of the variance is explained by this third component, which consists of five variables. Five statements are considered variables in the food and entertainment: "I go to shopping mall to enjoy food, I like to stay at the mall as long as possible because of the entertainment quotient, I like to visit this mall as there is multiplex, I like to visit this mall as there are cultural performances which happen regularly, and I like to visit this mall for the game arcade." This factor has factor loadings between 0.610 and 0.858. We refer to this component as "Food and Entertainment."

Factor 5: This factor is termed as promotion. This includes the variables like I go to shopping mall when there are sales, I look for discounts while I go shopping in malls, I go to shopping mall when there are festival functions and If I see an interesting promotional offer (sales promotion, exhibitions, shows, reduced price and etc.). This accounts for 4.400 percent of total variance.

6.3 Reliability and Validity of Factor Output

The reliability and validity of the factor output were also tested. Each factor's Cronbach's Alpha scores were more than .7, indicating that their reliability is satisfied.

6.4 Ranking of Each Factor

The relative significance of each component was determined by dividing the total number of variables that make up a factor by the sum of the average scores for all the variables that constitute that factor. The most desirable element is the promotion, with an average score of .748 per factor. The factor preferred brand with an average score of .739 is considered to be relevant as well. With a score of .729, the factor designated as hedonic consumption has the lowest ranking.

VII. DISCUSSION

The study aims to investigate the elements that influence rural adolescents' visits to the mall for apparel. The study found atmosphere is the important dimension for a rural adolescent while he/she prefers to buy from a shopping mall. Narkhade et al. (2018) examined the impact of aesthetically-related factors on the consumption behaviour of under graduate students in Pune. The study revealed that visual factors, such as layout, display, lights and fixtures, play a significant role in influencing the purchasing behaviour of adolescents in shopping malls. A study was carried out in Lahore, Pakistan by Ehsan et al. (2018), which looked at the attitude of adolescents towards pop-up-stores and their hedonistic shopping experiences. The results showed that the hedonistic shopping experience had a big impact on the attitude of the adolescents. Furthermore, the study showed that the attitude towards pop-up stores and hedonistic shopping had a positive effect on the buying behaviour of the youngsters.

The study found that preferred brand is the most important dimension for the rural adolescents while they prefer to purchase from the shopping mall. The findings of the study is similar to the work of Ahmed and Mayya (2015) carried out a study on buying behaviour and consumer perception of shopping malls. The results of their study show that consumers have benefited from organized retail in many ways, such as a wider range of products and popular brands, one-stop shopping, new market launches, festive discounts, and many more. The survey results showed that nearly all income groups benefit from organized retail purchases. Therefore, from the consumer's point of view, organized retailing expansion is more popular as different malls and corporate competing with each other to offer lower prices with good quality products.

The study also ranked the factors based on the variables extracted. The most desirable factor is promotion. The mall manager has to update the promotional aspects to attract the adolescents. Promotional aspect need to take care for better engagement of the rural adolescents.

7.1 The Relative Significance of Factors

The preferred brand is the primary component that defines adolescent presence to visit the mall, as indicated by the variation percentage and average score. Contrary to popular belief, atmosphere is the second essential element, followed by the societal setting. In order to attract the adolescents for mall visit, management needs to address factors by attracting the brands which are being evaluated by the adolescents. Once, they are attracted to the mall, then the lively atmosphere inside will engage the adolescents to spend more time inside the mall.

VIII. THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION

This research provides a conceptual structure by applying the theory of planned behavior, social identity theory, and optimal distinctiveness theory to explore the formation of consumer attitudes and intentions. Previous research on buying plans was carried out across various scenarios, including the likelihood of buying eco-friendly clothing (Ko and Jin, 2017), forecasting buying plans on online private sales platforms (Martinez and Kim, 2012), and integrating age, gender, and country elements into the buying of clothing in

the fashion sector (Rocha et al., 2005). In the clothing industry, research has shown that for rural teenagers, the brand, style price, social identity, self-identity, and the country of origin of the product are key elements in shaping their opinions or encouraging them to buy. This research is the initial investigation into what influences a rural teenager when they go to a mall, based on the theoretical considerations. The results indicate that the preferred brand is the key determinant of whether a rural teen will go to a mall. This data can help mall owners develop marketing tactics and approaches to maintain their edge in the clothing industry, especially with rural teenagers.

IX. CONCLUSION

The study intended to understand the dimensions of buying preference of rural adolescents in mall. The first dimension is preferred brand which signifies to attract the rural adolescents, the mall have to bring the brands which they prefer to have. The buying habits and preference of the adolescents has bought many changes in the retail sector. The existing way of attracting the adolescents needs to be redefined keeping in mind the requirements of the young and tech-savvy customers. In this regard, the study intends to validate the new scale by including the new dimensions. The study has conducted study taking data from 123 respondents across different demographic sections. It also identified that the new scale is reliable and valid and can be further extended to study considering a greater number of respondents. Further studies can be considered taking other dimensions. Despite this, the research has gathered feedback from a small group of participants. The study also includes many limitations such as time and the same can be interpreted differently in other retail sector.

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