

The Role of Iranian Consumers' Demographic Traits in Their Shopping Behaviors

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationships between demographic traits and shopping behaviours include: prestige sensitivity, price consciousness, value consciousness and shopping hedonism. This study seeks to develop a better understanding of Iranian consumers and determine their shopping behaviours. A structured questionnaire was developed to collect data and totaling 206 questionnaires of Iranian consumers were analyzed. T-Tests, ANOVA and multiple linear regressions are used to analyze the effects of demographics (independent variables) on shopping behaviors (dependent variable). The results indicated that gender and age have significant impact on prestige sensitivity and shopping hedonism. Other demographic variables produce non-significant results. Taken together our findings suggest that among several demographic variables, age and gender may be useful in predicting only two variables of shopping behaviors; i.e. prestige sensitivity and shopping hedonism. In general it seems Iranian marketers should pay special attention to females and younger people. They should consider prestige sensitivity and shopping hedonism in their marketing activities for them. The present findings provide precious information for marketers in Iran by investigation the consumers' demographic traits in shopping behaviors

Key words: Demographics, Shopping Behaviors, Prestige Sensitivity, Price Consciousness, Value Consciousness, Shopping Hedonism.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the greatest paradigm shifts in marketing over the past two decades has been the change in marketer objectives from a transaction focus to a relationship focus (Allawayetal, 2006). Consumer behavior is the study of human responses to products, services and the marketing of products and services. The topic has considerable importance to marketing managers and marketing researchers because the focus on the consumer is the key contribution of marketing to business practice (Kardes, 2003). Indeed, the principle of consumer primacy is the central point on which the marketing field is based. According to this concept, the consumer should be at the center of the marketing efforts (Mowen and Minor, 2001). Many successful companies have recognized the importance of consumers and have sophisticated approaches and detailed data from which to develop organizational and marketing strategies. For many years, the marketing concept was not understood or implemented properly by firms. Often, even firms that accepted the marketing concept in principle did not recognize that the marketing concept required the organization to change its existing practices dramatically. In general, these firms viewed implementing the marketing concept as a marketing task rather than something in which the entire organization had to be involved. Although these companies conducted marketing and consumer research, this research was seldom used as the basis for designing not only the marketing strategy but also the entire organizational strategy (Peter and Olson, 2010). But recently many Companies are making changes to serve consumers better.

In Iran, in spite of the high importance of understanding consumers' apparel shopping behaviors, little research has been done. The aim of this study is providing practical information for apparel retailers to understand Iranian consumers' apparel shopping behaviors, help them in developing and evaluating their marketing strategies to meet the needs of these consumers, and suggest effective way of reaching and targeting Iranian consumers.

The previous research showed that consumers' demographic characteristics such as age and gender were salient predictors of their shopping behavior and basis for market segmentation. The analysis of consumer demographic characteristics may provide valuable information for retailers to understand target customers, to determine their needs, and to identify effective ways of reaching them (Shim and Bickle, 1994). Research by Seock and Saulson Hispanic consumers in the USA were identified six shopping orientation constructs include: shopping confidence, brand/fashion consciousness, price



consciousness, in home shopping tendency, convenience/time consciousness and planned buying tendency and three constructs of store evaluation criteria (convenience merchandise, consumer service, physical appearance) were identified. Results of this study revealed that male and female have different shopping orientation and retail store evaluation criteria (Seock and Sauls, 2008).

In this research we considered four shopping behaviours (prestige sensitivity, price consciousness, value consciousness and shopping hedonism) and examined demographic traits (age, gender, education, marital status and income) differences in Iranian consumers' shopping behaviors.

Literature review

Prestige sensitivity: Prestige sensitivity is related to socially visible consumption behaviors. It reflects “a favorable perception of the price cue based on feelings of Prominence and status that higher prices signal to other people about the purchaser” (Lichtenstein *et al.*, 1993). Prestige-seeking people tend to purchase expensive brands and consider price as an indicator to show their social status and fulfill a need for uniqueness. People are often concerned about what other people think of them. Some products are image products, and people often buy these products to impress others (Kardes, 2003) prestige-seeking among Asian consumers may have different roots than it does in Western cultures, where it is associated more with the purchasers' internal traits or private consumption. In Asian cultures same people who are price-conscious in their private consumption, purchase prestigious products for special occasions and public consumption and tend to be less conscious about price, and represent the prevailing criteria for purchasing will be prestige, brand name, and packaging (Byun, Sternquist, 2010). In our country that social status and prestige is considered as a very important and valuable matter, this is a critical phenomenon.

Price consciousness: price is central to consumer behavior due to its presence in all purchasing situations. It is ubiquitous in the marketing literature including inquiry into consumer use of reference prices, response to price reductions price as a signal for quality or value, as well as other areas. When price is perceived as a positive cue, it signals quality, prestige or status to the consumer (Lichtenstein *et al.*, 1990; Monroe and Krishnan, 1985). In its negative role, price is perceived purely as an economic sacrifice. The literature identifies a number of constructs that represent price in its negative role including: price consciousness, sale proneness, value consciousness and price mavens. Price consciousness refers to “the degree to which a consumer focuses exclusively on paying low prices” (Lichtenstein *et al.*, 1993). People of various cultures have different value systems which lead to differences consumer shopping attitude and purchase behavior. For example Chinese consumers, whose value system is based on frugality, tend to be very price sensitive, especially when it comes to purchasing goods for personal consumption (Ackerman and Tellis, 2001. Sinha and Batra (1999) consider price consciousness as an attitude-like enduring predisposition that varies in intensity across individuals: some individuals are simply more conscious of the prices they pay than others. Therefore, different consumer segments can be distinguished based on their price consciousness (e.g., high vs. low). Less price conscious consumers are not very involved with the price aspect of the purchase and wish to engage in little price search (Delgado & Palazon, 2009).

Value consciousness: Value is an important marketing concept, marketing research has adopted many varying views on value, and value often has taken a back seat to more focal concepts such as quality and satisfaction (Bobin&James, 2010). Although Importance of customer value is well recognized, there is no clear definition of the concept (Wang *et al.*, 2004). In early studies and traditionally conceptualizations of value were mainly price based and determined by product quality, relative price (Sigsla, 2006). Zeithaml (1988) offers a comprehensive review of value and describes four basic definitions derived from the varying usages of the term in marketing research. Each view is from the perspective of the consumer. The first definition equates value with price. Under this paradigm, a low price means high value, so value can be created by offering consumers' discounts, true everyday low pricing or making coupons available for the goods they want. Under the second definition, value is achieved when a consumer gets all he or she wanted from the purchase of a product. Here, consumers weigh all relevant choice criteria, subjective and objective, qualitative and quantitative, to arrive at an eventual overall perception of product usefulness. Value is obtained ultimately by the benefits linked to specific product attributes and focuses on the get aspects of consumption. Zeithaml (1988) describes a third view in which value is a straightforward calculation of quality received less the price paid. A consumer receives benefits in the form of quality performance on key attributes, and this quality is weighed against the price of the offering in determining perceived value. This is a common operationalization that generally depicts value as intervening between perceived quality, sacrifice and product purchase intentions. The fourth definition takes the third definition and expands on it by stating “value is what I get versus what I give” (Zeithaml, 1988). This concept of value encompasses the overall “give,” which includes factors such as effort, time, opportunity, and emotions as well as the overall “get,” which includes quality as well as emotions, prestige, and convenience.

Babin *et al.* (1994) build on this approach and propose a multidimensional representation of value capturing the relative and subjective worth of consumer shopping activities. The personal shopping value scale captures value parsimoniously with two dimensions: utilitarian value and hedonic value. Utilitarian value results when a consumer evaluates a consumption activity as successful in that a desired end result is achieved. In a shopping context, this is typified when a

specific product motivates a shopping trip and that product is indeed purchased while shopping. The more efficient the consumption activity, in terms of minimizing the expenditure of resources, the higher is the value. Surprises, distractions, delays, and interruptions usually work against utilitarian value. Hedonic value results when a consumption activity, as experienced by a consumer, is in and of itself gratifying. This can be derived from favorable emotions accompanying the interaction between a consumer and some marketing environment or experience (Bobin & James, 2010). Wang considered four factors for customer value: functional value, social value, emotional value, and customer perceived sacrifices are proposed as the key dimensions of customer value (Wang et al, 2004). In addition, customer value is relativistic because it involves preferences among objects, it varies among people, and it is specific to the context. Value is, therefore, comparative, personal and situational. Further, value is the outcome of an evaluative judgment and thus preferential. Holbrook notes that value (singular) as an outcome differs from values (plural) that are used as standards, rules, criteria, norms, goals or ideals for the evaluative judgment (Rintamäki et al, 2006). Perceived value is the customer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on Perceptions of what is received and what is given. Consumers' perception of value is influenced by differences in monetary costs, nonmonetary costs, customer tastes, and customer characteristics (Andreassen and Lindestad, 1998). The present study concurs with the majority of researchers who have defined customer value in terms of get (benefit) and give (sacrifice) components.

Shopping hedonism

Shopping is both- work and fun Thus, shoppers can be task-oriented or fun-oriented (Rany and Velayudhan, 2008). The pursuit of fun or pleasure in shopping – arises from the desire for hedonic fulfillment rather than to accomplish shopping tasks or utilitarian goals (O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy, 2002). Shopping hedonism is related to “those facets of consumer behavior that relate to the multisensory, fantasy and emotional aspects of one's experience with products (Neely et al, 2010). Traditionally, consumer behavior researchers have regarded shopping as a highly rational process from the utilitarian perspective. Shopping has been viewed as mainly driven by a need for specific product acquisition and with a work mentality. However, researchers have recently abandoned the perspective that shopping is only an activity of cognition and have started examining hedonic values as a drive for shopping, such as shopping for leisure and recreation, or the emotional roles of mood and pleasure In utilitarianism, which is a task-related and rational view, an individual is viewed as a problem solver. Utilitarian shopping motivations are task-oriented, rational, and cognitive, with the intentions or desires to purchase a product efficiently and rationally highlighted. On the other hand, hedonism is motivated by a desire to have fun and be playful. Therefore, hedonic shopping reflects the experiential values of shopping that include fantasy, arousal, sensory stimulation, enjoyment, pleasure, curiosity, and escapism (Kang & Park-Poaps, 2010). Hedonic values of consumer motivations vary for different products categories. Convenience items, like bread, allow little scope for self-congruence, whereas shampoo offers significant scope for pleasurable emotive appeals to boost consumers' status enhancement and social image Shopping items like apparel and specialty items like cosmetics offer prospects of titillating consumer motives of status and self-image enhancement, respectively, by engaging them with reputable merchandise in reputable settings (Miranda, 2009). Irani and Hanzaee (2011) have studied on effects of Iranian consumers' variety-seeking buying tendency and price sensitivity on utilitarian and hedonic value as influencing factors on shopping experience for clothing shoppers in the Iranian market. Based on their study variety-seeking buying tendency was critical factor of shopping values for clothing shoppers. There was a negative relationship between price sensitivity and hedonic value. And, there were no positive relationship between price sensitivity and utilitarian value. Moreover, the result of their study revealed that utilitarian and hedonic value positively influenced shopping satisfaction (Irani and Hanzaee, 2011). Research studies indicate that social aspects relate to shopping, and hedonic motivations in collectivist cultures, which places more emphasis on affiliating with close others and maintaining connectedness are more important (Shannon and Mandhachitara, 2008).

Demographic traits and shopping behaviors: Previous research revealed that individual consumer characteristics influence their shopping behaviors. Among consumer characteristics, age and gender, in particular, have been identified as important elements in shaping consumers' shopping behavior. Seock and Sauls (2008) found that in Hispanic consumers, Female respondents had significantly greater shopping confidence and price consciousness than male respondents and male Hispanic respondents had higher brand/fashion consciousness than female Hispanic respondents, which is inconsistent with previous research findings that found women to be more fashion conscious (Goldsmith et al., 1987; Kaiser, 1997; Wesley et al., 2006). Respondents aged between 20 and 30 had greater shopping confidence than those aged under 20. Respondents aged over 30 showed significantly higher planned shopping tendency than other age groups (Seock&Sauls, 2008). In Creusen's study relations between the demographic variables gender, age, education and income level and the importance of aesthetic and symbolic product aspects, functionalities, ease of use and quality in buying a product have been investigated. Its findings show females pay more attention to expressive aspects. And for all three kinds of functional product aspects, namely functionalities, ease of use and quality, older people to be more sensitive to utilitarian brand aspects (Creusen, 2010). Hsieh et al (2004) discover this finding former. Another previous research showed younger people to focus more on hedonic pleasures in choosing their favorite objects (Wallendorf and Arnould, 1988). Creusen's research found no relation between educational level and importance of aesthetics. But, a relation in the opposite direction for symbolic aspects; people with

higher education attach less importance to symbolic aspects in purchasing these products. He found no relation between income level and importance of aesthetic aspects and the importance of symbolic aspects increased for higher income level people and, he found a positive relation between income level and importance of all functional product aspects; functionalities, ease of use and quality (Crusen, 2010). In Williams' study had been find a negative correlation between income and the importance of utilitarian purchase criteria, especially for less socially relevant products (Williams, 2002). Hanzaee and Aghasibeig (2010) examined Iranian generation Y female decision making using Sproles and Kendall's consumer styles inventory as a basis for market segmentation. They recognized six meaningful and distinct groups with unique characteristics (Hanzaee and Aghasibeig, 2010).

However Hernandez *et al.* (2011) in contrast to the majority of research did not show the socioeconomic characteristics of the individual (age, gender and income) on the online shopping behavior. Dimitrovic & Vida (2007) examined consumer motivations for shopping abroad and explores the role of demographic versus socio-psychological factors in explaining the phenomenon of cross-border shopping confirmed the unstable effect of demographic variables(education, income, the number of young children) on out-shopping behavior. Research of Carpenter (2008) confirmed the effect of demographic variables, including gender, age, ethnicity, education, income, marital status, and household size, on supercenter shopping behavior in the USA. Wang *et al.* (2008) detected suggest that younger and more affluent consumers are less influenced by their consumption attitudes. Instead, their adoption of new market offerings seems to Adoption of new consumer products is driven more by financial ability or something other than their consumption preference and attitudes.

On the other hand, the attitudinal impacts appear stronger among consumers who are older and/or have lower income. Prasad and Aryasri (2011) findings suggest that shoppers' age, gender, occupation, education, monthly household income, family size have significant association with retail format choice decisions. Based on their research Hedonic type of consumers belonging to age group 25-40 years having relatively good monthly income, with sound education having greater tendency to indulge in purchase of food and grocery items from hypermarkets. Utilitarian type consumers are consists of more female consumers belonging to working class and housewives.

Hypotheses

From the previous literature on consumers' demographic characteristics and shopping behaviors (prestige sensitivity, price consciousness, value consciousness and shopping hedonism), we anticipated that consumer with various demographic traits may have different shopping behavior. Accordingly, the following research hypotheses were formulated for this study:

H1. Iranian consumers' shopping behaviors (prestige sensitivity, price consciousness, value consciousness and shopping hedonism) will be varied by gender.

H2. Iranian consumers' shopping behaviors (prestige sensitivity, price consciousness, value consciousness and shopping hedonism) will be varied by age.

H3. Iranian consumers' shopping behaviors (prestige sensitivity, price consciousness, value consciousness and shopping hedonism) will be varied by education.

H4. Iranian consumers' shopping behaviors (prestige sensitivity, price consciousness, value consciousness and shopping hedonism) will be varied by income.

H5. Iranian consumers' shopping behaviors (prestige sensitivity, price consciousness, value consciousness and shopping hedonism) will be varied by marital status.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sampling and data collection

A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to a convenience sample of 250 Iranian consumers living in Arak, a city of Iran. After eliminating those completed incorrectly or missing too many questions, Totaling 206 usable questionnaires were collected. Table 1 displays the characteristics of the sample.

Measures

A questionnaire with closed-response questions using five-point-rating scales was developed. Respondents are asked to indicate their levels of agreement from "1" (strongly disagree) to "5" (strongly agree).

All measurement items developed based on the review of the most relevant literature on marketing and shopping behaviors (Table 2 and Table 3). Demographic information is also collected (e.g. gender, age, income and education).

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA), with principal component analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation, is employed to eliminating the items with low loading factor and Determining of the factors. Finally we discover 4 factors, and all of factor loadings were more than 0/5. So, none of items were omitted. Validity was tested through a variation of the whereby each item is qualified by a panel of experts as "clearly representative", "somewhat representative" or "not representative" of the construct of interest. An item was retained if a high level of consensus was observed among the experts.

The internal consistency of the questionnaire was tested through reliability analysis using Cronbach’s alpha. Reliability estimates for the construct variables are, Prestige sensitivity (0.70), Price consciousness (0.78), Value consciousness (0.92) and Shopping hedonism (0.85) revealing a high degree of reliability. All reliability results exceeded 0.70 limit of the acceptability. The Cronbach Alpha indicator considering a minimum value of 0.7, all items were adjusted to the required levels.

Table 1. The representative nature of the data collected
Variable Level Frequency Percent.

Variable	Level	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	114	55.3
	Female	92	44.7
Age	Under 20	40	19.4
	20-34	106	51.5
	35-50	40	19.4
	More than 50	20	9.7
Education	Elementary	48	23.3
	High school or similar	12	5.8
	College	138	67.0
	MA and higher	8	3.9
Monthly income (Million Rials)	<3	8	3.9
	3-5	8	3.9
	5-10	120	58.2
	>10	70	34
Marital status	Single, never married	80	38.8
	Married	98	47.6
	Divorced, widowed	28	13.6

Table 2. Questionnaire items references.

Variable	Adapted From
Prestige sensitivity	Prasad and Aryasri, (2011), Byun and Sternquist, (2010)
Price consciousness	Prasad and Aryasri, (2011), Byun and Sternquist, (2010), Neely et al.(2010)
Value consciousness	Prasad and Aryasri, (2011), Byun and Sternquist, (2010), Kang, and Park (2010)
Shopping hedonism	Byun, Sternquist, (2010), Neely et al.(2010), Millanand Howard(2007)

Analysis

A set of statistical techniques is used to analyze the effects of demographics (independent variables) on shopping behaviors (dependent variable). T-Tests are used to examine differences between males and females, one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) is used to examine the effect of our categorical variable, marital status on each level of shopping behaviors. Significant ANOVA models are further investigated using post-hoc testing (Tukey’s Honestly Significant Difference statistic) to describe specific differences among the demographic variables and each of the four levels of the dependent variable. In addition, Levene’s test for homogeneity of variance is evaluated for each of the ANOVA models as well as for the t-tests. And multiple linear regressions are used to examine the effect of the continuous demographic variables including age, income and education level on shopping behaviors. Four multivariate regression models were fit for each of the four dependent variables of shopping behaviors (prestige sensitivity, price consciousness, value consciousness and shopping hedonism). The SPSS software is used to analyze the data.

RESULTS

T-Tests are used to examine the effect of gender on apparel shopping behaviors (prestige sensitivity, price consciousness, value consciousness and shopping hedonism). Results indicate significant differences between males and females in prestige sensitivity ($t = 3.278, p = 0.001$, mean difference= 0.324) and shopping hedonism ($t = 3.543, p = 0.000$, mean difference = 0.458). Levene’s test for equality of variances is non-significant for prestige sensitivity ($F=5.242$,

$p=0.023$), but is significant for shopping hedonism ($F = 0.249, p = 0.618$) in which case the t-statistic for non-equal variances is interpreted.

Table 3. Questionnaire items retained after purification.

Measurement Items
<p>Prestige sensitivity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) I think a well-known brand means good quality (2) Buying a high priced brand makes me feel good about myself (3) Buying the most expensive brand of a product makes me feel classy (4) I enjoy the prestige of buying of a high priced brand (5) People notice when I buy the most expensive brand of a product (6) My friends will think I am cheap if I consistently buy the lowest priced version of a product (7) I have purchased the most expensive brand of a product just because I knew other people would notice (8) I think others make judgments about me by the kinds of products and brands I buy
<p>Price consciousness</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) I am not willing to go to extra effort to find lower prices (2) Lowest price offers attracts me (3) The money saved by finding low prices is usually not worth the time and effort (4) I would never shop at more than one store to find low prices (5) The time it takes to find low prices is usually not worth the effort (6) I will shop at more than one store to take advantage of low prices
<p>Value consciousness</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) I am very concerned about low prices, but I am equally concerned about product quality (2) When shopping, I compare the prices of different brands to be sure I get the best value for the money (3) When purchasing a product, I always try to maximize the quality I get for the money I spend (4) When I buy products, I like to be sure that I am getting my money's worth (5) I generally shop around for lower prices on products, but they still must meet certain quality requirements before I buy them (6) When I shop, I usually compare price for brands I normally buy (7) I always check prices at the store to be sure I get the best value for the money I spend (8) I shop where it saves my time besides the quality (9) For the most part, I go shopping when there are sales (10) I enjoy hunting for bargains when I shop.
<p>Shopping hedonism</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Shopping is truly a joy for me (2) I often buy products for the way they make me feel (3) After I bought the needed products, I continue to shop not because I have to but because I want to (4) Shopping trip truly feels like an escape (5) Compared to other things I could do, the time I spent shopping is truly enjoyable (6) I enjoy a shopping trip for its own sake, not just for the items I may purchase (7) I have a good time shopping because I am able to act on the "spur-of-the-moment" (8) While shopping, I am able to forget my problems (9) I generally buy products for the functions they provide. (10) Buying products that don't perform certain functions is a waste of money (11) Going to the shopping is a good way to spend an afternoon

Results indicated that there are no significant differences between males and females in price consciousness and value consciousness (Table 4). One-way analysis of variance is used to examine the effects of the marital status on shopping behaviors.

ANOVA analysis for marital status in all of the four shopping behaviors (prestige sensitivity, price consciousness, value consciousness and shopping hedonism) didn't show significant results (Tables 5).

The effects of the continuous demographic variables including age, income and level of education on shopping behaviors is examined using four regression models for four shopping behaviors (prestige sensitivity, price consciousness, value consciousness and shopping hedonism) as dependent variables. The overall regression model for apparel yields a significant statistic ($F = 4.103, p = 0.007$) with age ($\beta = -0.242, t = -3.408, p = 0.001$) as significant predictor for prestige sensitivity. The regression model for price consciousness and value consciousness is non-significant.

The regression model for shopping hedonism is significant ($F = 18.080, p = 0.000$) with age generating a significant effect ($\beta = -0.243, t = -2.909, p = 0.004$). All of the regression results are shown in Table 5.

Results indicated did not confirm H3 and H4. But H1 and H2 were supported for two shopping behaviors, i.e.: prestige sensitivity and shopping hedonism.

Table 4. Effect of gender on shopping behaviors: t-Test for equality of means.

Shopping Behaviors	Levene's Test For Equality of Variances F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.	Mean Difference
Prestige sensitivity	5.242	0.023	3.278	203.464	0.001	0.324
Price consciousness	7.540	0.007	1.521	200.938	0.130	0.165
Value consciousness	0.000	0.994	0.809	196	0.420	0.0595
Shopping hedonism $\alpha < 0.05$	0.249	0.618	3.543	204	0.000	0.4585

Table 5. Effect of marital status on shopping behaviors: ANOVA test for equality of means.

Shopping Behaviors	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Prestige Sensitivity	Between groups	0.739	2	0.369	0.682
	Within groups	109.978	203	0.542	
	Total	110.716	205		
Price Consciousness	Between groups	0.238	2	0.119	0.187
	Within groups	129.442	203	0.638	
	Total	129.680	205		
Value Consciousness	Between groups	0.040	2	0.020	0.074
	Within groups	52.374	203	0.269	
	Total	52.414	205		
Shopping Hedonism $\alpha < 0.05$	Between groups	2.289	2	1.145	1.267
	Within groups	183.406	203	0.903	
	Total	185.696	205		

Table 6. Analysis regression reporting summary.

Dependent variables Sig.	F	Sig.	Independent Variables; Demographic Traits	β	t
Shopping behaviors Prestige sensitivity 0.001 0.504 0.122	4.103	0.007	Age	-0.242	-3.408
			Income	0.047	0.670
			Education	0.111	1.555
Price consciousness 0.926 0.149 0.222	2.122	0.099	Age	-0.007	-0.093
			Income	-0.105	-1.448
			Education	0.166	2.305
Value consciousness 0.601 0.052 0.837	1.343	0.263	Age	-0.039	-0.524
			Income	0.145	1.972
			Education	0.015	0.206
Shopping hedonism 0.004 0.925 0.184 $\alpha < 0.05$	18.080	0.000	Age	-0.243	-2.909
			Income	0.007	0.094
			Education	-0.096	-1.332

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Statistical analyses revealed that females engage in prestige and hedonic values more often than males in apparel shopping, which is consistent with previous research findings that found women to be more fashion conscious (Goldsmith et al., 1987; Kaiser, 1997; Wesley et al., 2006). And is inconsistent with Seok and Sauls (2008) research findings that found males had higher brand/fashion consciousness than females. Also previews research findings show females pay more attention to expressive aspects (Creusen, 2010). And age demonstrates inverse relationships to prestige sensitivity and

shopping hedonism. Other previous researches showed younger people to focus more on hedonic pleasures in choosing their favorite objects (Wallendorf and Arnould, 1988; Hsieh *et al.*, 2004; Seok and Sauls, 2008; Creusen, 2010). Therefore, it appears that younger consumers are the most likely to be prestige sensitive and hedonic shoppers for apparel.

In our research other demographic variables produce non-significant results. It is in contrast to the majority of research (Prasad & Aryasari, 2011; Dimitrovic & Vida, 200; Carpetner, 2008; Wang *et al.*, 2008) that confirmed the role of demographic traits on various shopping behaviors, and is consistent with research of Hernandez *et al.* (2011) which did not show the socioeconomic characteristics of the individual (age, gender and income) on the online shopping behavior. Our findings suggest that marital status, education and income may not be effective bases of segmentation among Iranian apparel shoppers. Taken together our findings suggest that among several demographic variables, age and gender may be useful in predicting only two variables of shopping behaviors; i.e. prestige sensitivity and shopping hedonism.

In general it seems Iranian marketers should pay special attention to females and younger people, should include appropriate name-brand apparel for them and should satisfy their prestige seeking and hedonic tendency. And they should consider prestige sensitivity and shopping hedonism in their marketing activities, like promotions, pricing, distribution channels, and packaging for the younger and women.

A dominant contribution of this study is the provision of salient demographic traits for the marketer at the shopping behaviors

Limitations and future studies

This exploratory study was conducted to investigate the relationships between demographic characteristics and shopping behaviours. Some limitations were inherited in this study and are acknowledged here. First, data were collected from a convenient sample from Arak (A medium city of Iran) implying the result generalization should be considered with caution. So generalizations of the findings of this study to other markets are limited due to the differences in consumers and retail formats available in various places. Future research could compare shopping behaviour within large formats across different markets. Furthermore, it would be recommended to identify key demographic predictors of apparel shopping on other shopping behaviours and improve the accuracy of prediction. In addition, lifestyle or psychographic factors could be investigated for their impact on apparel shopping behaviour. This study investigated shopping tendencies in apparel, not other categories, whereas product category may play an important role in the shopping behaviours. Future research could examine additional product categories to further investigate this impact.

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