

Impact of Online cloth marketing attributes towards the buying behaviour of Singapore consumers

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Abstract— *The basic purpose of this study is to analyse the personal profile and the attributes of online cloth marketing that influence the Singapore consumers towards online cloth purchases. It helps the online marketers as a guideline in retaining its consumers through its customized services and how to plan for effective marketing strategy.*

Design/methodology/approach - *Questionnaires were used in structured for collecting data from the online Singapore consumers. Field survey method was employed to collect the primary data. In total, 200 questionnaires were distributed in all the parts of Singapore, online cloth shopping consumers on Convenience sampling. However, the valid response turned out to be 178 due to incomplete responses, yielding a response rate of 89%.*

Findings - *From this study, it is observed that the personal profile of the consumers have greater influence towards online clothing. It also reveals that the attribute “Best Price” is given the high priority followed by attitude towards purchase, convenience, prompt & safe delivery, availability of various alternatives etc;. From this study, it is understood that there is a significant difference in buying behaviour of clothes between male and female Singapore consumers. Based on mean value, female domination is more in online shopping. This study is also useful to other researchers for future research.*

Research limitations/conclusions - *The study has been conducted in Singapore only with a limited sample size of 178 online cloth shoppers. The study does not cover all the attributes that affect the marketing strategies adopted by online cloth shoppers, the survey is limited to online cloth shoppers alone and not the all online shoppers*

Practical implications - *The study has notorious attributes that could help the online cloth sellers to formulate their marketing strategy, and to focus on customizing the consumers through online attributes that could help the online marketers to have a high market share in this competitive market. This study helps to fill the gap identified in the area of online cloth marketing strategies and the buying behaviour of consumers. Online marketers will be benefited as the study highlights the attributes that simulates and influence the online clothing consumers.*

Originality/value - *Online marketing mainly depends on technology, which is fast- changing so the online marketers must develop the strategies that satisfy the consumers at large. It is not only the technology that is changing, it is also the consumers who change their needs and wants and according to their expectations the online marketers must segment and market their products. Wide range of products is sold through online marketing. But there are only a limited research focusing on online cloth marketing and that too in Singapore.*

Key words: *Online clothing, consumers, consumer buying behaviour, advertising, brand, marketing strategies*

Paper type - *Research paper*

I. INTRODUCTION

A consumer's buying behaviour is influenced by cultural, social, personal and psychological attributes. Most of these attributes may not be in control, but to retain the consumers the marketers need to monitor continuously the complex behaviour of the consumers and their personal wants and needs. The personal consumer is the individual who buys goods and services for his own use or for his household usage. Hence they are called as 'end users,' or 'Ultimate users'. Consumer behaviour is stated as the behaviour that consumer display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products, services and ideas that they expect to satisfy their needs. The study of consumer behaviour is concerned not only with what the consumers buy, but also with why they buy it, when and how they buy it, and how often they buy it. It is concerned with learning the specific meanings that products hold for the consumers. Many people do consume a wide range of products every day, from basic necessities to high-valued collectables. Owing to the proliferation of products in the market, such a phenomenon is one of the most interesting and hence heavily investigated topics in the marketing field. Schiffman, Hansen and Kanuk (2007) indicated that consumer behaviour is about how people make their decisions on personal or household products with the use of their available resources such as time, money and effort. The studies of Blackwell et al. (2006) was also

similar to the above and further provide a holistic view that defines consumer behaviour as the activities and the processes in which individuals or groups choose, buy, use or dispose the products, services, ideas or experiences. But a slight difference in the study done by (Blackwell et al., 2006), highlighted that the consumer buying behaviour is of utmost importance in a number of aspects. Consumer research takes places at every phase of the consumption process, before the purchase, during the purchase and after the purchases. Here the researchers have analysed the personal profile of the Singapore consumers, involved in buying behaviour and also the impact of online marketing attributes that influence the Singapore consumers towards online clothing. It helps the online marketers to plan for effective marketing strategy.

Statement of the Problem and Research Questions

For the past three decades, online marketing has achieved several outstanding to its credit. This is one of the main reasons for the development of world's growth process. Understanding the needs, desires and problems of consumers and redefining the products for satisfying consumers' needs are the major challenges faced by online cloth markers.

1. What are the expectations of the consumers regarding the services provided by online clothing?

2. What are the different types of marketing strategies that are adopted by online clothing to retain its consumers?
3. What are the most dominant attributes that influence the consumers towards the particular online clothing?
4. What relationship that exist between online cloth marketing and its consumers?
5. What are the ways in which online clothing can improve their marketing strategies for its effective performance?

The Objectives of the Study

The study was proposed with the following objectives:

1. To analyse the personal profiles that influence the buying behaviour of Singapore consumers towards online cloth marketing
2. To explore the impact of online cloth marketing attributes towards buying behaviour of Singapore consumers
3. To analyse the relationship that exists between online cloth marketing attributes and the buying behaviour of Singapore consumers.

Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were formulated to explore the bond between the buying behaviour attributes of online cloth marketing and Singapore consumers.

Hypothesis 1: There is an association between buying behaviour of Singapore consumers towards the attributes of online cloth marketing.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant difference between gender and buying behaviour of Singapore consumers towards online cloth marketing.

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant difference between buying behaviour of Singapore consumers towards attributes of online cloth marketing.

An understanding of buying behaviour, and its determinants would improve decision making in new product development and product positioning. Thus, this knowledge would benefit marketers by improving their performance in online cloth marketing.

Research Methodology

This study analysed the online marketing attributes that affect the buying behaviour of Singapore consumers towards online clothing. The study was based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected through the structured questionnaire with direct, closed-ended multiple choice questions containing demographic variables and the attributes that influence online cloth marketing. Researchers have done quantitative research through data collected by way of questionnaire survey. Structured questionnaires were used for collecting data from the customers. Field survey method was employed to collect the primary data. In total, 200 questionnaires were distributed in all the parts of Singapore, online cloth shopping consumers on Convenience sampling. Due to incomplete responses, the valid response turned out to be 178 respondents of multi races yielding a response rate of 89%. The following statistical tools are used for the analysis. Chi-square test is used to examine association between buying behaviour of Singapore consumers towards the attributes of online

cloth marketing. t-Test is employed for judging the significant difference between the means of two groups in gender and buying behaviour of Singapore consumers towards online cloth marketing. Friedman test for ranking is used to detect differences in rankings between the buying behaviour of Singapore consumers towards attributes of online cloth marketing

Limitations of the Study

While studying the buying behaviour of Singapore consumers towards online clothing, the researcher has selected only clothing rather than other products this is the main limitation of this study. The data analysed through sample size instead of whole population is also a limitation of this study.

Review of literature

According to Grewal et al (1998), online shopping is more efficient in meeting the consumers' needs, desire and wants. It allows them to easily attain knowledge about the brand's product quality, availability, product specifications and prices, and compare that with those of another brand. This means they can now make more intelligent purchasing decisions in a way which is not possible through traditional shopping. Benefits of E-commerce have been brought in view by (Cuneyt & Gautam, 2004) online marketing has grown very fast because of many advantages associated with buying on internet as the lower transaction and search cost as compared to other types of shopping. Online shopping allows consumers to buy faster, more alternatives and can order products and services with comparative lowest price. And the following variables like Internet knowledge, income, and education level re especially powerful predictors of Internet purchases were emphasised by Burns and Dick, (2001, p.873) in a online survey of 425 U.S. undergraduate and MBA students. (Philip Kotler et al. 2005 p. 401) recommends for gender segmentation, which is usually used for clothing, hairdressing, cosmetics and magazines. Male and female have different viewpoints, such as colour, pattern and some else, therefore marketers always improve their products design and quality as well as advertising and define different strategies to attract men and women. There is evidence to prove that online retailing is likely to be seen as a complement or substitute to offline retailing (Rezaei et al., 2014). Sam, Sharma (2015), in his study explore the factors affecting consumers' decision to shop online and showed that an important factor influencing the consumer's decision to buy online is an availability of brand information on websites. Ease of use is another encouraging factor to buy online. The findings of Dennis et al. (2015), reveals that young women prefer social e-shopping sites. However, although many research participants found the social e- shopping site is more difficult to use, this was outweighed by their enjoyment of the site and its usefulness (Dennis et al. 2015). Dennis views was supported by Ozen & Engizek, (2014), saying that convenience is a major factor which motivates consumers to opt for online shopping (Ozen & Engizek, 2014). Most of the present literature research regarding convenience has focused on the brick-and-mortar traditional retail environment. There has been comparatively less exploration into convenience in online

shopping. Online retailing provides benefits in terms of place and time (Gehrt et al., 2012); shoppers can be saved from spending time going to crowded malls. The fact that online shoppers can gain access to a vast amount of information on goods and services they are interested in also relates to convenience. E-retailers can use this to their advantage and create loyalty amongst customers (Jiang et al., 2013).

Traditional Vs Online Marketing

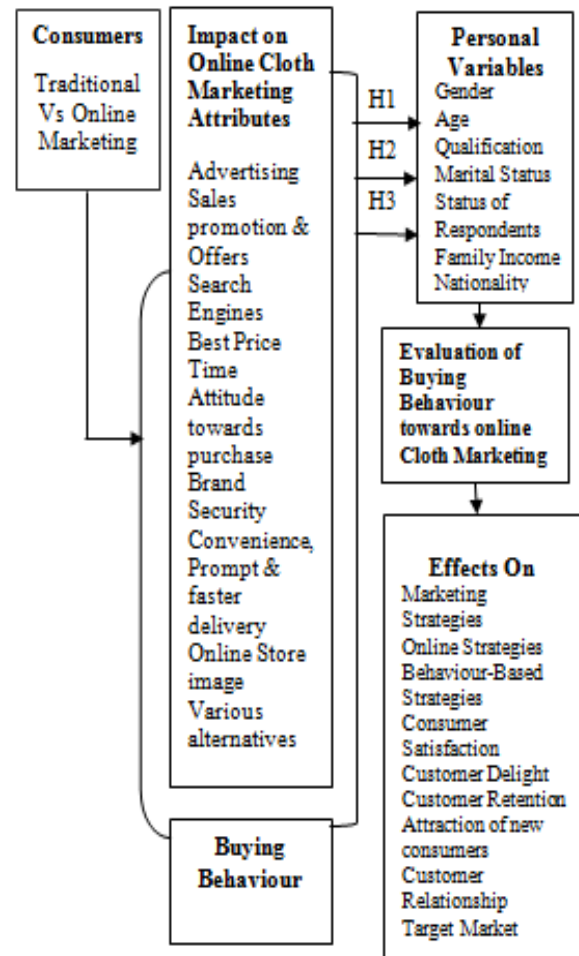
In traditional shopping, the consumers are quite certain with colour, design, size, price, quality of the cloth and meticulously check out with the item to be purchased. They may enjoy the way the clothes are displayed and can experience the pleasure of shopping. Since these features and benefits has not found in online marketing, the marketers must be very cautious in adopting the marketing strategies to attract the consumers at large. But in today's world of technology, all the online clothing in online stores are described through text, with photos and with multimedia files. Many online stores will provide links for extra information about their products. They often make available, safety procedures, instructions, manufacture specification and demonstrations. The traditional shopping was supported by Sherman et al. (1997) by analysing how the traditional shopping features affect the consumers and whether their shopping experience is pleasurable or not. On the divergent, the environment in online shopping includes a much narrower range of experiences and certain technological abilities are needed to function in such a setting. All the senses cannot be used to perceive online shopping experiences. Therefore, Lunt (2000) expressed that the key explanation for consumers not shopping online is because of the limited experience factors involved (Dennis et al., 2007). However, Childers et al. (2001) claimed that online shopping does have several merits and interactions which can bring about interesting experiences (Demangeot & Broderick, 2006). Even though online shopping has many benefits, there are still consumers who have reasons to avoid it. Lee and Turban (2001) keen out that routing websites can prove to be tricky for consumers who are not familiar with online shopping and they do want to trust the internet as a safe source for transactions and Kahn (1999) detected that if consumers face problems while shopping online, they only wait for eight seconds to receive any response from the company's system before giving up the purchase. But, in difference to the traditional shopping brick-and mortar retail environment, marketers of online shopping sites generally put forward more detailed product information. This does give them an edge as these days consumers want to know everything about a product before spending money on it (Chen & Chang, 2003). Online shoppers are more willing to take risks compared to offline shoppers Online shopping has become a growing trend in the marketing world today, particularly in advanced nations. Statistics show that the amount of shoppers purchasing online are rising and the quantity of their purchases is also increasing rapidly (Monsuwé et al., 2004). This change began in the 1990s when e-commerce blew up and significantly transformed the landscape of the retail environment (Chen & Chang, 2003). Consumers are using the internet not just to buy goods and services, but also to

browse online shops or to attain knowledge about potential purchases. The atmosphere in online shops is also becoming an important factor to consider for marketers when looking for ways to satisfy the consumers (Demangeot & Broderick, 2007)

Consumer Buying Behaviour

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2001), the consumer buying behaviour refers to the buying behaviour of the individuals and households who

Figure 1: A Model for Buyer Behaviour towards online clothing



buy the goods and services for personal consumption. Consumer's attitude towards online shopping refers to their psychological state on terms of making purchases. The process of buying behaviour process consists of five steps. For instance, consumers first identify a need or want and then define the requirements necessary to satisfy that need. Secondly, gather information and evaluate the options that are available. Once they know their options, they will look to make a purchase which will include shopping for or looking for the best price they can achieve. Lastly, consumers will go through several attributes which limits or influence final decision and they will evaluate whether or not they made a good decision. A consumer's buying behaviour is influenced by cultural, social, personal and psychological attributes. Most of these attributes are uncontrollable and beyond the purview

of marketers but they have to be considered while trying to understand the complex behaviour of the consumers. The main purpose of this study is to understand the attributes that may influence consumer behaviours towards online clothing.

Analysis & Interpretation

Table 1: Singapore Consumer's Profile

Consumer Profile		Respondents	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	92	51.7
	Female	86	48.3
	Total	178	100
Age	15-25	41	23.0
	26-35	46	25.8
	36-45	52	29.2
	45&above	39	22.0
	Total	178	100
Educational qualification	Schooling	32	18.0
	Diploma	58	32.5
	Graduation	48	27.0
	Post-graduation	40	22.5
	Total	178	100
Marital status	Married	149	83.7
	Unmarried	29	16.3
	Total	178	100
Status of respondent	Salaried	69	38.8
	Own business	22	12.3
	Student	31	17.4
	Home maker	56	31.5
	Total	178	100
Family income per month	Below \$2500	53	30
	\$2500-\$5000	89	50
	Above \$5000	36	20
	Total	178	100
Nationality	Chinese	76	42.7
	Malay	40	22.4
	Indian	44	24.8
	Others	18	10.1
	Total	178	100

It is found from the Table 1 that majority of the online clothing consumers belong to the head of the family (51.7%), male gender (51.7%), age group of 36- 45 (29.2%), educational level of diploma (32.5%), salaried (38.8%), married (83.7%), belongs to the family income \$2500- \$5000 per month (50%) and majority of the consumers' belong to Chinese(42.7%) Thus demographic variables are the most popular bases for segmenting consumer groups. One reason is that consumer needs, wants, preferences and usage rates are often highly associated with demographic variables. (Kotler and Armstrong, 1997) Consumer buying behaviour refers to the buying behaviour of the individuals and households who buy the goods and services for personal consumption.

Consumers around the world are different in various attributes such as age, income, education level and preferences, which may affect the way they avail of goods and services. This behaviour then impacts how products and services are presented to the different consumer markets. (Kotler and Armstrong 2001).

Ranking the attributes that influence the buying behaviour of Singapore consumers towards online clothing

To find out whether there exist a significant difference between the buying behaviour of Singapore consumers and the attributes that influence the online clothing, Friedman test has been used.

In Table 2 below, it can be found that there exists a significant difference between the buying behaviour of Singapore consumers and the attributes that influence them towards online clothing ($\chi^2 = 88.19$, p-value < 0.01). Since the mean value is given in the form of rank, the low value in the rank will be given high importance.

Table 2 Ranking the attributes that influence the buying behaviour of Singapore consumers towards online clothing

No	Attributes that influence the Singapore consumers	Mean Rank	Rank (Ascending order)	Inferential Statistics
1	Advertising	8.05	12	N= 178 $\chi^2 = 88.19$ df = 12 P=0.000 ** (S)
2	Promotion & offers	7.09	9	
3	Search Engines	6.33	7	
4	Best Price	4.32	1	
5	Less spending Time	6.92	8	
6	Purchase attitude	4.68	2	
7	Brand	5.98	5	
8	Security	7.77	10	
9	Convenience, Prompt & safe delivery	4.93	3	
10	Online store image	6.16	6	
11	Various alternatives	5.40	4	
12	Past experience	7.98	11	

Note: * Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

** Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) S- Significant NS- Not Significant

It can also be found that the high ranking factor is "Best Price" having a mean rank of (4.32) followed by attitude towards purchase (4.68), convenience, prompt & safe delivery (4.98), various alternatives (5.40), brand (5.98), online store image(6.16), search engines(6.33), less spending time (6.92), sales promotions & offers (7.09), security (7.77), past experience (7.98) and at last recommendations is advertising (8.05). The researchers study is supported by Sam, Sharma (2015), and explores that the factors affecting consumers' decision towards online shopping and showed that an availability of brand

information on websites is an important factor. Ease of use is another encouraging factor to buy online (Dennis et al. 2015). Dennis views was supported by Ozen & Engizek, (2014), saying that convenience is a major factor which motivates consumers to opt for online shopping.

Table 3: Association between the attributes that influence the Singapore consumers towards online clothing

For testing the hypothesis, Chi-square test was applied to find the association between attributes that influence the Singapore consumers and online clothing. This is explained in the table given below.

No	Attributes that influence the Singapore consumers	Chi Square observed value	P value	S/NS
1	Advertising	11.854*	0.034	S
2	Promotion & offers	12.018*	0.034	S
3	Search Engines	13.441*	0.042	S
4	Best Price	16.913**	0.001	S
5	Time	11.176**	0.002	S
6	Purchase attitude	8.306**	0.017	S
7	Brand	15.850**	0.005	S
8	Security	12.168**	0.004	S
9	Convenience, Prompt & faster delivery	17.352**	0.006	S
10	Online store image	12.787*	0.047	S
11	Various alternatives	14.015**	0.008	S
12	Past experience	17.470*	0.041	S

Note: * Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

** Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

S- Significant NS- Not Significant

To find whether there is an association between the attributes that influence the Singapore consumers and online clothing. It shows that, there is an association between attributes that influence the Singapore consumers and online clothing. This was supported by (Tech target, 2007-2012) through Online clothing the consumers directly buy goods or services from a seller over the internet. Online clothing is done through an online shop, e-shop, e-store, Internet shop or online store. Thus the results indicate that there is statistically significant association between attributes that influence the Singapore consumers and online clothing.

Table: 4 Impact of gender on buying behaviour on Singapore consumers towards online clothing

Most of the companies are using gender wise segmentation, because gender is an influencing factor in buying behaviour.

Buying Behaviour	Gender	Mean Value	t-value	P Value (S/NS)
Buying Behaviour Overall	Male	185.8	3.269*	0.044 (S)
	Female	174.9		
Advertising	Male	55.64	2.282*	0.030 (S)
	Female	54.09		
Promotion & Offers	Male	58.85	2.681**	0.004 (S)
	Female	57.92		
Search Engines	Male	144.6	2.999*	0.046 (S)
	Female	140.0		
Best Price	Male	9.44	0.034*	0.643 (NS)
	Female	8.99		
Time	Male	9.20	1.555	0.598 (NS)
	Female	9.26		
Purchase attitude	Male	8.90	2.139*	0.029 (S)
	Female	8.50		
Brand	Male	29.78	2.135*	0.012 (S)
	Female	30.78		
Security	Male	10.59	1.791*	0.647 (NS)
	Female	10.12		
Convenient Prompt & faster delivery	Male	10.39	- 2.065*	0.314 (NS)
	Female	10.86		
Online Store image	Male	8.36	- 2.235*	0.012 (S)
	Female	9.00		
Various Alternatives	Male	8.96	1.699*	0.446 (NS)
	Female	9.43		
Past experience	Male	10.39	- 1.885*	0.048 (S)
	Female	10.76		

Note: * Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

** Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

S- Significant NS- Not Significant

“t” test was applied to find the impact of Gender in buying online clothing. The significance difference between gender (male and female) of the respondent and online clothing buying behaviour variables are explained in Table: 4. To find the difference between two groups, t-test was applied. Based on mean value, female domination is more in online shopping and which shows that male and female have a significant difference in buying behaviour. The female domination is more in buying behaviour variables like advertising, sales promotion & offers, search engines, brand, security, online store image and various alternatives. Based on the above result, the impact of buying behaviour variables like the best price, time spend to purchase, security, convenience, safe & prompt delivery, various alternatives don't differs from male respondent to female respondent, that shows both the gender give equal importance to the above variables. The other variables like advertising, sales promotion & offers, search engines attitude towards purchase, brand, online store image and past experience have a significant difference in buying behaviour of clothes between male and female gender clothes. This is supported by Chen-Yu J. Seock Y-K(2003) in their study as the main purpose and examined adolescents' clothing shopping frequency, price, expenditure, purchase motivations, information sources,

and store selection criteria and to determine the similarities and differences between male and female. Price was the most important criterion for store selection. Understanding the gender difference in buying behaviour is important for gender wise segmentation.

Findings

From this study, it is observed that majority of the online clothing consumers belong to the head of the family (51.7%), male gender (61.5%), age group of 36- 45 (29.2%), educational level of diploma (32.5%), salaried (38.8%), married (83.7%), belongs to the family income \$2500- \$5000 per month (50%) and majority of the consumers' belong to Chinese(42.7%) Thus demographic variables are the most popular bases for segmenting consumer groups. . It can also be found that the high ranking factor is "Best Price" having a mean rank of (4.32) followed by attitude towards purchase (4.68), convenience, prompt & safe delivery (4.98), various alternatives (5.40), brand (5.98), online store image(6.16), search engines(6.33), less spending time (6.92), sales promotions & offers (7.09), security (7.77), past experience (7.98) and at last recommendations is advertising (8.05)It shows that, there is an association between attributes that influence the Singapore consumers and online clothing. Based on mean value, female domination is more in online shopping and which shows that male and female have a significant difference in buying behaviour. The female domination is more in buying behaviour variables like advertising, sales promotion & offers, search engines, brand, security, online store image and various alternatives. Based on the above result, the impact of buying behaviour variables like the best price, time spend to purchase, security, convenience, safe & prompt delivery, various alternatives don't differs from male respondent to female respondent, which means that both the gender give equal importance to the above variables. The other variables like advertising, sales promotion & offers, search engines attitude towards purchase, brand, online store image and past experience have a significant difference in buying behaviour of clothes between male and female gender. Based on mean value, female domination is more in online shopping. This study is useful to other researchers for future research.

Conclusion

Usually, the consumer behaviour studies help to identify the unfulfilled needs and wants of consumers. The researchers examine the trends and conditions that prevail in the marketplace, consumer's lifestyle, income levels, etc.; that have emerging influences. And conclude that the online attributes have greater influence in the Singapore buying behavior towards online clothing. This study might contribute not only to a better understanding about the attributes that influence buying behavior of Singapore consumers towards online clothing but also helps the on-line cloth marketers to have a clear view about the purchase decisions made by their consumers, the Marketing Strategies, Online Strategies, Behaviour-Based Strategies, Consumer Satisfaction, Customer Delight, Customer Retention, Attraction of new consumers, Customer Relationship, Target market and strategies to

increase the market share of their product. Since the needs and wants of the consumers keep on changing, the online cloth marketers should have a bird's eye view towards their consumers and implement the effective customization in retaining the existing consumers and in attracting the new ones.

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