
Identifying Factors Influencing Purchase Decisions to Use Cloth Bag while Shopping amongst Youth

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With the rise of the use of plastic amongst retail buyers and menace created by plastic bags, a number of retail outlets are promoting the use of sustainable purchase bags to discourage the increase the use of plastic bags. To discourage the use of plastic bags amongst shoppers, there are practices wherein the retail outlet is charging for the bags. Buyers are opting for multiple uses of plastic bags lying idle at home or use of cloth bag while shopping. However, the use of cloth bag of the shoppers is limited due to several constraints. Purchase bags are perceived from utilitarian view. It was one of the means of carrying purchased goods. With easy availability from the seller and inclusion of the element of the attractiveness of the bag, buyers' preferences have changed. The tendency to carry bag from home has significantly lowered down during purchase. Expectations of the bag during purchase became of the norm for the buyer. Bags were offered by seller also to promote the product, store and the offers to the prospective buyers. The present research attempts to explore the factors influencing purchase decisions for cloth bag amongst youth. After conducting focus group discussion and recording respondents' responses through a structured questionnaire; factor analysis was performed. Four factors were identified as the influencer in purchasing decisions for cloth bag amongst youth. Cloth bag size based convenience, stylish, affordable and peer influence are the factors which influences a young buyer while purchasing a cloth bag. The research is significant and relevant to the context of sustainability. The research findings are significant for the marketers and policy makers especially in the context of promotion and adoption of sustainable practices. It will help in promoting the use of cloth bags and instilling the habit of using cloth bags amongst shoppers.

Keywords: Cloth bag, youth, factor analysis, retail, no-plastic.

INTRODUCTION

People have been using purchase bags for a variety of purposes. Purchase bags were perceived from utilitarian view. It was one of the means of carrying purchased goods. With easy availability from the seller and inclusion of the element of the attractiveness of the bag, buyers' preferences have changed. The tendency to carry bag from home has significantly lowered down during purchase. Expectations of the bag during purchase became the norm for the buyer. Bags were offered by seller also to promote the product, store and the offers to the prospective buyers. As the norm of sustainable practices and discouraging use of plastics, retail outlets are charging an additional amount for providing plastic bags. Buyers are opting for carrying a bag from home while shopping. Buyers are also experimenting with the use of cloth bag while purchasing.

The use of environment-friendly products is being supported by organizations as well as the policy makers. Though, the buyer endorses the use of environment-friendly products, yet in reality, he may not purchase such products. A number of marketers and corporate organizations have promoted the use of environment-friendly products through commercials and corporate social responsibility respectively. However, buyers' perspective has not been studied from purchase perspective or acceptance perspective. A buyer may endorse such products but he may not accept such

Identifying Factors Influencing Purchase Decisions to Use Cloth Bag while Shopping amongst Youth

products. It is necessary to understand the factors that influence the purchase decisions. In the present study, the objective of the study is to identify factors influencing purchase decision for the cloth bag.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainable consumption

Much of the promotion by the policy makers and the organizations on the promotion of sustainable products or environment-friendly products stresses on the rational choice of the consumer. Rational choice model is proposed in the consumer behavior research theme. Use of sustainable products is emphasized towards sustainable practices (Chahal, 2013). Different aspects have been sought especially in sustainable consumption like authenticity, green practices etc. Use of recycling products is also promoted under the umbrella of sustainable consumption. There are notable business models especially the social enterprise that focused on the use of recycling products towards the sustainable world (Draiss, 2009). Efforts have been initiated by a number of social enterprises in promoting through the social meet and exhibition.

Cloth bag

Bags offer convenience in assorting and carrying goods. The association of bags with humans is quite old enough. Recently, bags became more colorful and the buyers made it as an aspect related to their lifestyle. Plastic bags though are sturdier in its flexibility and convenience; it causes a number of environmental hazards. Plastic bags are discouraged by the shopping malls by charging extra amount from the shoppers. The practice of bags being offered may be linked with sellers' promotional activities related to the product, store, and offers. Buyers with strong ethical inclination have been preferring cloth bags. There is authentic appealing pattern present on the cloth bag viz the long bag and the short one. The

longer one is hanging on the shoulder while the shorter one is preferred while making small purchases. However, purchases at a retail outlet are mainly carried out by the shoppers through trendy bags i.e. plastic bags. It is observed that buyers prefer to use plastic bags for retail purchases while they prefer to use a cloth bag for small grocery purchases near the vicinity.

Youth

The world is witnessing a rise in the number of young buyers that, anecdotal evidence suggests, are increasingly brand conscious (Sahay and Sharma, 2010). Youth as a segment has grown into prominence due to the modernization. In marketing literature, the youth is perceived globally as a common phenomenon, with fundamental commonly uniform consumption habits (Kjeldgaard et al, 2006).

Style has become the most prominent cultural medium for expressing the identity aspirations of youth culture by Kjeldgaard et al, (2006). The literature described the emergence of style based sub culture. There were differentiations with such style groups. Researchers have observed that this sub-culture were a representation of culture diversity and rebels within society. There were representations of class struggles. Style remains distinct way to communicate with others. As discussed earlier, a youth was identified with the rebellious attitude. However, rebel does not represent a violent mode of expression. It represents an approach that has a similarity with independence. Youth, therefore, relate with others with their feelings and emotions. In other words, there is a possibility of emotional outburst. The emotional outburst is more with out of box outlet of emotions that are quite radical enough. The researcher believes that since there is the sense of uniqueness that needs to be represented in a coherent manner. The style is a prominent cultural medium for expressing the identity aspirations of

Identifying Factors Influencing Purchase Decisions to Use Cloth Bag while Shopping amongst Youth

youth culture. A youth needn't now to be vocal to express him; rather an acceptance of style can really help him out to relate to the context that he would like to represent.

The purpose of the research is to identify the factors that influence the purchase decision of cloth bag amongst youth. The research questions examine the young consumers' preferences towards cloth bag to better understand the benefits that the cloth bag provides to their consumers.

The research questions are:

- 1) Which aspect of the cloth bag influences the young buyers?
- 2) Which significant factors influences the buying decision?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher conducted a focus group discussion to identify factors influencing the purchase decisions for the cloth bag. The focus group discussion was conducted at the cafeteria with prior invitation of seven days. The discussion was recorded with the consent of the participants. A list of 30 factors was identified for the survey. The identified factors were validated by industry persons and academicians. Further, the 30 factors were finalized to 15 factors.

A structured questionnaire was used to conduct the survey. The preference for the cloth bag with the pool of 15 factors was used in the item statements. The preference was measured with five points Likert scale. Confidentiality of the data was assured to the respondents. The respondents were briefed initially related to the purpose of research. The researcher was involved in the conduct of the survey. The respondents were in the age group of 16 to 25 years. In this study, the sample frame was young consumers. Following this criteria, through a purposive sampling method, the

respondents were identified. Purposive sampling is also called as judgmental sampling. The researcher uses his own judgment in identifying the respondents. The respondents were selected on the characteristics of the population and the purpose of the study.

Data Analysis

Factor analysis is the useful tool to understand the variable relationship. Factor analysis was executed through SPSS 18. Principal component method was employed to extract factors. Because, in the social science there is a high probability of correlation between factors, factors were rotated with direct oblimin. Four factors were identified based on the eigenvalues. Cloth bag size based convenience, stylish, affordable and peer influence are the factors which influences the young buyer while purchasing a cloth bag.

Table 1 Communalities

Communalities		
	Initial	Extraction
Availability of cloth bag	1.00	.55
Trendy	1.00	.83
Word of mouth effect	1.00	.58
Cost aspect	1.00	.75
Convenience	1.00	.82
Peer influence	1.00	.74
Design	1.00	.71
Concern about environment	1.00	.73
Pack size	1.00	.78
Appearance	1.00	.83
Multiple use	1.00	.76
Sturdiness	1.00	.64
Plain bag (no advertisement)	1.00	.64
Less association with the context (purpose)	1.00	.71
Washable	1.00	.75

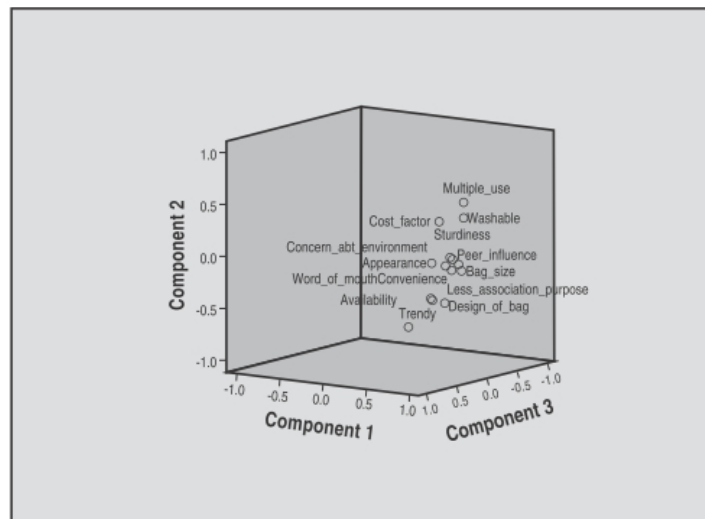
Identifying Factors Influencing Purchase Decisions to Use Cloth Bag while Shopping amongst Youth

Table 2 Component Matrix

Component Matrix				
Component				
	1	2	3	4
Availability of cloth bag	.66	.28	-.14	.13
Trendy	.57	.61	-.16	.33
Word of mouth effect	.75	.06	.12	.02
Cost aspect	.61	-.04	.59	.17
Convenience	.81	.07	.07	-.40
Peer influence	.61	-.29	-.29	.45
Design	.72	.09	-.43	-.03
Concern about environment	.78	.15	.23	-.19
Pack size	.80	-.14	-.21	.27
Appearance	.71	.32	.46	.09
Multiple use	.62	-.53	.26	-.15
Sturdiness	.57	-.29	-.28	-.39
Plain bag (no advertisement)	.73	-.19	-.21	-.12
Less association with the context (purpose)	.69	.30	-.13	-.35
Washable	.66	-.47	.11	.31

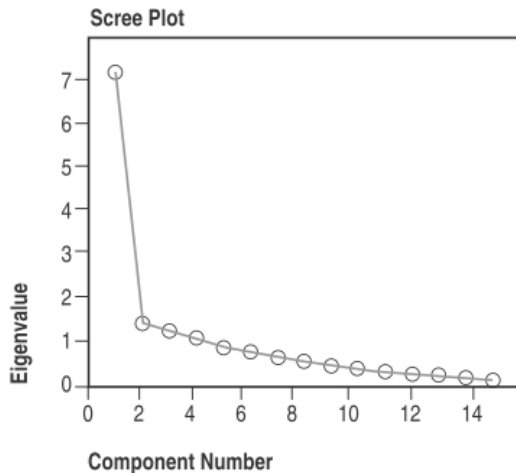
Table 3 Component Plot in Rotated Space

Component Plot in Rotated Space



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Table 4 Scree Plot



DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

There is a considerable influence of sustainable products on young consumers. One of the effective influences occurs through promotions and awareness exercise by the marketers and the policy makers. Although, there is a significant assurance from the young consumers related to their commitment towards sustainable products, the adoption of sustainable products is not impressive. The present study therefore attempted to investigate the factors influencing purchase decisions of youth during a purchase of cloth bag.']

The study examines that the usage of cloth bag is limited due to the hindrance of certain factors, however, the product appeal is intact. Hence appropriate identification of factors will help in influencing purchase decisions amongst youth. Four factors were identified as the influencer in purchasing decisions for cloth bag amongst youth. Cloth bag size based convenience, stylish, affordable and peer influence are the factors which influences a young buyer while purchasing a cloth bag. Researchers have identified earlier the role of style in

purchase decision amongst youth. However, it was not investigated in the context of a cloth bag. Aspects that are found in a plastic bag may not be replicated in the context of cloth bag due to the difference in the product appeal. However, factors like style, peer influence, affordability and pack size convenience do play a significant role based on the responses tabulated from the survey.

The study has important implications for the marketers in the context of promotion and adoption of sustainable practices. As noted earlier, the style, cost, convenience and peer influence the purchase decision for cloth bag. Marketers should use the opportunity to design the cloth bag considering the preferences of young consumers related to style and convenience. Additional efforts should also be given towards the cost of cloth bag and peer influence of young consumers.

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BRIEF PROFILE OF THE AUTHOR

Mahesh Gadekar is Associate Professor in Marketing Area at International School of Business & Media, Pune, India. He has earned Ph.D. on the topic "Relationship between product variants and brand loyalty amongst youth" from University of Pune. His areas of interests are consumer behaviour, fashion marketing and retail management.