
Growing Fashion Consciousness; A Threat to Environment

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Abstract:

The Study stands on an assumption that growing fashion consciousness leads towards a general change oriented behavior and so escort towards an intense consumption pattern. To fulfill that huge demand of all kinds, massive industrialization takes place, which is evidently a threat to the environment. Study ascertains the fashion consciousness of only the most neglected segment of the market to establish that people are getting fashion conscious to a threatening level. This study identifies the fashion information sources, shopping preferences and in particular, measures the fashion consciousness of the underappreciated segment as mature female consumers in Pakistan. A comprehensive questionnaire is exposed to the females aging 45 to onwards who were explained with every question in order to ensure the validity of the instrument. It is found that mature women are fashion conscious but not as much as they share information of fashion. Mature women are more concerned about comfort than style and more concerned about style than brand name, which is a clear evidence of lack of advertisement and focus of businesses on this wealthy and independent segment. Even then, they are fashion conscious and acquire fashion information through catalogues, store display, fashion shows, asking family members, and social gatherings. This amplifying fashion consciousness leads to a change oriented behavior in general. People seek change in everything around (even before it expires) which will obviously generate innovative demands and in result, industrialization will be at its peak; an obvious threat to the environment.

Keywords: *Fashion Consciousness, Environmental Sustainability, Mature Women Consumers, Environment, Change Oriented behavior, Intense Consumption Pattern, Massive Industrialization.*

Introduction:

In present digital age, people are very much aware of their environs. They act in reaction to variations in environment. Businesses nowadays, are the reason of regular changes involved in setting the standards for the people through their effectual promotions. Apparel companies in particular are one of such businesses as they are changing the wearing lifestyles of people although the companies are only targeting the young and kids segment at most. Specially, in the case of young customers who are very much responsive to the promotions of apparel companies. It is assumed that the growing fashion consciousness among people leads to an increase in the consumption patterns with quick variations and adaptations to the environment of any kind. In other words, more fashion conscious people are now seeking the attitude of being fashionable and change adapter in all the ways of their lives whether these are their apparels, rooms, houses, cars and furniture etc, they are just supposed to adapt change frequently. The frequent changes lead to increase in the consumption of the people. The frequent changes in above mentioned articles are supposed to exploit the environment and increase in industrialization as much as the frequency of the changes is. The focus of this study is to seeking the answer to the question that whether the fashion consciousness is strengthening today or not.

Another segment for the apparel companies, which is the focus of this study, is the mature female consumers, who are very much fashion conscious nowadays. The businesses of today may be missing this segment because their main focus is youth market and that's why they are neglecting the segment of mature consumers [1]. Businesses are also neglecting this segment because there is almost no advertisements available which is targeting mature female consumers.

Neglecting this segment by not showing any mature female aging 45 to 55 in the commercial of apparels as it is said that the celebrity should be relevant to the target customer. The endorsing celebrity should be relevant to the brand [2]. Moreover, no dominant effort is made in particular to create positive WOM in this segment. Positive Word of Mouth generation is an efficient way of influencing target market [3]. By neglecting this segment businesses are suffering an ultimate loss. There are numerous factors which are involved in the ignorance of this elderly segment. A major factor behind it is the people who are employed for the promotion of apparel companies, mostly they are young and their ideas towards promotion are related to youth only [4]. It happens due to age mentality. But elder segment should be prioritized by the apparel companies as it is a wealthy and independent segment than the younger one. Normally, teenagers shop from a particular outlet, where their parents take them in developing countries. And if their parents are not pleased or fascinated from apparel company then how they will bring their kids to the outlet of that company. But this matter is associated with some of the families. So, company must focus on this segment, through best and attractive advertisement in which a mature celebrity (aging 50) may endorse the product effectively. This can be an effective move to be a focus for mature female customers. Another factor involved in the lack of interest in mature female consumers is a stereotype that, by focusing on this segment, it will cause unattractiveness towards the

youngsters [5, 6, 7]. A few marketers disregard the mature female consumers. They think that mature consumers give little return as they will die soon. [8]

On the other hand, if we move towards optimistic and sensible thinking, researches have exposed that elder market segment is more wealthy, imaginative and they wish to participate enthusiastically in prevailing consumption [9]. Today, mature consumers are vigorous about their look, they are lively about what their life has to proffer, they are excited, passionate consumers who would like to acquire a bunch of goods and services [1]. Reality is that old consumers are the finest goal for elegant and magnificent offerings. [10]

Studies exposed that many people believe themselves younger than the real age [11, 12, 13]. People feel like they are minimum 10 to maximum 15 years shorter than the real age of them [14]. The mature female consumers are extra interested to wear recent apparels. They like to become aware of latest fashion and trends; they can easily make decision about their purchasing of products, can give their opinion and switch brands [15, 16, 17]. People who are mentally younger show more concern in fashion, and that's why they can become enthusiastic customers of companies doing business related to apparels [18, 19].

So,

Objective of the study is to ascertain that whether the people are going fashion conscious to the level of challenging the environment. It will happen with their change oriented behavior that will lead to mass production and massive industrialization. For this purpose, the most neglected segment as mature female consumers is examined to establish the fact about their fashion consciousness and if they are fashion conscious then other segments are considered to be even more conscious. Moreover, if this neglected segment as mature female consumers is found to be fashion conscious or getting fashion conscious that means they have an attitude of changing; hence, changing everything they have. This fashion consciousness leads towards extensive consumption and changing things before these things are expired. So, they change everything like apparels, cars and furniture etc, which will of course, leads to increase the exploitation of natural environment and resources like cutting of trees for furniture, demanding for more fuels, making cars; the leading industrialization.

Moreover this research is to uncover the fashion consciousness of elder female and to examine their apparel and shopping preferences. It highlights the importance of the segment of elder women which is being neglected by the apparel related businesses in Pakistan. It examines the preferences of elder women towards shopping and apparels in Pakistan. The study answers that how much the older mature women are conscious towards apparel fashion and what they prefer to buy among different choices?

This study is significant since it would be able to predict the future consequences on the natural environment of the threatening increase in fashion consciousness of the people. This is most

important to work on, as the change oriented behavior of consumers will start to keep the people from a healthier livable environment where there will be less business' to be allowed to continue and there might be extreme limits on business' to produce. So, the world has to understand the reason of compensating environment and the governments could set some guidelines together.

It is now required to research more about ascertaining real and preferred utilization by the elder customers [9]. So, this study is conducted in obedience with the former statement in a different country like Pakistan regarding many factors like culture and religion etc.

For the better understanding of the issue under study, former researches are at a glance as follows:

Among German consumers fashion consciousness is associated to a wish for advanced styles; they want continual up gradation of someone's clothing and rectifiable buying involvement [20]. Apparently, fashion realization is accommodating user aspect for the attire marketers and anterior concern in clothing can enhance consumers' acceptance to the clothes related promotion [21, 22]. Women disclaim their sequential age, acknowledge they are better young earlier than forty, and commonly describe with an attitude of very young people [23]. Anyhow, none kind of association was established between fashion consciousness and age perception [24]. It was examined that even though majority of elder people exposed that they decided upon to put on 'stylish apparels', just 25% in reality choose that apparel that was up-to-date, and the left behind 75% choose more old styles in last decades, by saying that fashion vary from age to age. Rotfelt, Herbert J; and others conclude that there was certain cooperation between age orientation of product and age of celebrity in advertisement. Senior citizen market has been overshadowed by the youth market; it is exclusively true in apparel market [14]. The mature consumers are an important but neglected market segment it could become a feasible segment for not only the apparel but also for many other businesses by criteria of receptiveness, openness, identifiability and size [25]. They also present different proceedings in regarding product, price, place, promotion and packaging; sellers may apply to fulfill the ignored wants of mature consumers. Wolfe [26] found that elder consumers give importance to their bonding with their family and friends as they are more responsible.

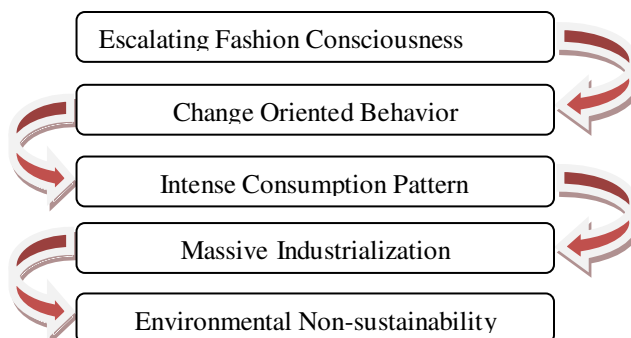
There is a stereotype about mature widowed females usually sit idle, spending an alone and colorless living. Many marketers had this dark image about this segment [27]. As compared to young people, mature households aged 55-64 are reported to have large income, almost average \$65000 per year [5]. People belong to similar age segment aim to participate towards same alike principles and typical, civilizing sophistication that they keep in their whole living style [28]. Mathur *et al.* [29] ascertained that mature people have various value adoptions, mentally young ages and lot of believing in their selves, they are extra responsive towards variations, want to buy new commodities. The number of mature consumers and their spending power is growing day by day; they want more concentration from the outlets, retailers. Still, while mature consumers have enough resources to spend on various commodities, they frequently have confidence in marketers as well as in sellers and do not understand to get in relation with those [30].

Particularly the elder segment shows themselves the second best rising people that use internet (increased only from youth) therefore internet may become an important source of fashion information [31]. Mature female consumers have adoration to associate within communal nets and they are related to technological circle [32]. These elderly users established to become fewer brands dependable than the further segments [33]. Mature female consumers are surely diverse than the customer aging 65 and even much elder "silver seniors" who are considered as non working people and they are lesser social [34]. Except the women who belong to the baby boomer, this segment comprise of forbidden part of people with respect to attire [35, 36]. Elderly consumers represent themselves as a great opportunity for apparel industry [37].

Methodology and Instrumentation

As the study is based upon the assumption that fashion consciousness increase the consumption level of the customers in general which leads to increase in industrialization and exploitation of natural environment in many means. The extensive shopping behavior leads to develop a sense of change in most of the things the people own. This study seeks to measure the fashion consciousness of the most neglected segment of the market and if, even the neglected segment found to be getting fashion conscious then it could be a big question mark at the preservation of the environment.

The stated assumed model can better exhibit the assumption of the study on which the whole study is based.



Definitely, as per the scope of the study is very wide it is nearly impossible to prove the model in full well within a single study. So, partly it is based on assumption which is stated above. By now, to prove that the people are getting deeply fashion conscious the data is collected on the most neglected segment of the market.

In past, various studies were conducted on mature market segment and their focus was the population 55 years old and above. The selected females for this study 45 to onwards majorly comprise of those women who were independent in their decision making by means of income.

Besides previous studies, 45 to 55 aging group is selected considering the expected age in Pakistan. A sample population of 150 women in the above mentioned age category was taken. In this study convenience sampling of mature women was obtained from two educational institutions and one well off residential area. These areas were chosen due to the fact that the

teachers and lecturers and the housewives were able to make autonomous consumer decisions. A questionnaire was developed for getting the results of this research.

Instrumentation consisted of a questionnaire, which assesses elder female's fashion consciousness, their information sources, the why and where of purchasing and perceptions of fashion regarding elder female consumers. The instrument was distributed to the selected sample. For this study, the sample answered to 5-degree Likert scale mined from Lumpkin and Dardens [38]6-question set.

In addition, the survey instrument has additional questions to identify fashion information sources, mature women's shopping behaviors and their relevant demographics.

Analysis

Data gathered is described and analyzed through descriptive stats which ascertains fashion consciousness, fashion information sources, the why and where of purchasing and perceptions of fashion regarding elder female consumers. Data gathered is shown by the descriptive stats as follows:

	I normally have a couple of apparels of recent style.	I chose more on the basis of fashion than comfort.	This is significant that I will wear the recent style apparels	Everybody should wear stylish clothes.	In general I normally talk about apparels with my friends
N Valid	150	150	150	150	150
Missing	-	-	-	-	-
Mean	1.8200	3.7200	2.4400	1.9600	2.5933
Median	2.0000	4.00000	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000
Mode	2.0000	4.00000	2.0000	2.00	2.00
Sd. Deviation	.77780	.84441	1.02636	.96850	1.06875

Data gathered shows the mature female consumers' usually have one or more outfits in their wardrobes as the responses mean, median and mode shows that they are agreed to the statement of having latest outfits. The females expresses that they don't every time dress for fashion but they dress for comfort most of the time which means as compare to the previous statement this is a bit contradictory expression. They seems to be more conscious of comfort than fashion. It can also be said that their fashion is supported by their comfort. Their impulses of fashion are backed by their comfort. The respondent tries to buy the latest styles to fill up their comfort. All of them are agreed that the person should by stylish. They talk to their friends and family about fashion but not too much.

		During the past six months I informed someone about some fashion/clothing information	My friends believe that I am useful source of fashion information	My shopping behavior is influenced in case if there is a mature female celebrity like television actress(Samina Peerzada) endorsing a particular apparel brand	As I learn about the several apparel products it gets hard to choose one for me	Shopping is a pleasant activity for me
N Valid	150	150	150	150	150	150
Missing	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mean	2.6467	2.7733	2.3333	2.4867	1.9400	
Median	2.000	3.000	2.000	2.000	2.000	
Mode	2.000	2.000	2.000	2.000	2.00	
Sd. Deviation	1.15936	1.25931	1.02103	1.16859	1.02473	

Most of the respondents keep talking about the fashion time to time but they are unsure that they are source of fashion for others. The respondents want to see mature celebrities for their apparel advertisement. This is a critical situation that it is not in practice. It is very clear that they will be more attracted towards fashion if they are attracted by the famous celebrities of their age. All of the women are agreed that they enjoy doing shopping even this is the point of view of only mature female consumers which means this is one of the largest segment which is being neglected at Pakistan.

	Wearing Attractive apparels is significant for me	My wardrobe stays up to dated with varying fashions.	Advertised brands are taken like more valuable	I take the re-knowned national brand as most fit at me	I keep my standard very high for the apparels brands	Significant brands are valuable for me while buying
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N	Valid	150	150	150	150	150	150
	Missing	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mean		2.7933	2.4667	2.5600	2.4600	2.6800	3.0333
Median		3.000	2.000	2.000	2.000	2.0000	3.0000
Mode		4.000	2.000	2.000	3.000	2.000	4.00
Sd. Deviation		1.20009	1.07233	1.14973	1.01419	.99205	1.07076

The women of Pakistan don't think that the fashion is significantly important to them. That shows they do the fashion if it comes to manage their comfort or need; they are more concerned about comfort than fashion but this does not mean that they don't like fashion. One question is important to put here that whether the fashion is not important to them or they don't want to accept it. At the same time they are accepting that they keep the wardrobe up-to-dated. Respondents recognize that the most advertised brands as of better quality. Women's expectation of their purchased apparel is very high which shows their concern towards dressing. This tables shows that the famous brands are more preferable to mature females which means they are of course fashion conscious.

The fashion information source I use the most:

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Catalogues, Friends, Discussion with other women, Internet	27	18.0	18.0	18.0
Window or store display, Asking family members, Observations, wearing, communal get to gathers, community Placing	29	19.3	19.3	37.3
Windows and stores display, Fashion Shows, Asking family , Observations, wearing, Communal get to gathers, Public Placing	59	39.3	39.3	76.7
Windows and stores display, Fashion Shows, Observing, Clothing, Social Gatherings, Public Placing	35	23.3	23.3	100.0

The fashion information source I use the most:

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Catalogues, Friends, Discussion with other women, Internet	27	18.0	18.0	18.0
Window or store display, Asking family members, Observations, wearing, communal get to gathers, community Placing	29	19.3	19.3	37.3
Windows and stores display, Fashion Shows, Asking family , Observations, wearing, Communal get to gathers, Public Placing	59	39.3	39.3	76.7
Windows and stores display, Fashion Shows, Observing, Clothing, Social Gatherings, Public Placing	35	23.3	23.3	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

It is very important to know the source of information widely used for the awareness of mature female apparel which is in experience. There are 18% women who are bold regarding this as they get information from catalogues, friends, discussions and internet. These responds are ranked highest regarding fashion consciousness.

There are 19.3% respondents who are found the most typical segment and are at the lowest category of fashion consciousness as they only get information when they see in the display when asked from their family members to do secure fashion and observing around. The highest percentage as around 40% ladies are fashion conscious like house wives and fond of TV as they get information about fashion from Fashion shows along with discussions with family members and of course from the displays too. 35% ladies do not discuss anything with family members they watch fashion shows, store displays and observe social gathering.

My preferred sources of fashion apparels

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Specialty stores	29	19.3	19.3	19.3
Department stores	27	18.0	18.0	37.3
Catalogue shopping	9	6.0	6.0	43.3
Discount stores	10	6.7	6.7	50.0
Taylor-made	10	6.7	6.7	56.7
Internet	9	6.0	6.0	62.7
Speciality Stores, Departmental stores	20	13.3	13.3	76.0
Speciality Stores, Taylor-made	9	6.0	6.0	82.0
Catalogue Shopping, Taylor-made	18	12.0	12.0	94.0
Speciality Stores, Internet	9	6.0	6.0	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

It is important to know the buying source of the mature females. In this regards, above table shows that there are so many women who buy the apparels from specialty stores which shows their fashion consciousness as they are specific of what they want to buy; they are very much concerned about it. There are females who buy from departmental store too. That does not mean they are not fashion conscious as there are departmental stores like giant departmental stores and their departments are very well organized and quality oriented too. There are significant numbers of females which opt internet to seek wide variety of apparels which is surprising for this locality. Females go for tailor-made apparels too which is an evidence of being more customized and concerned about what they wear. This all shows that the mature female consumers are very much fashion conscious.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Studies have declared that most of the people believe that they are younger than their original age [10], which is also a reason that this study found the mature women to be fashion conscious. It is suggested that the mature market is a wealthier and relatively more independent customers who are to be entertained the way it should be rather than only focusing on younger customers. In Pakistan, the ladies are now flowing with the thoughts of being independent which is the best opportunity for the business' to opt. Probably, the business' will target this customer as it is being suggested by different studies. Mature consumers in Pakistan are fashion Conscious but

not that much as much they talk about it and share information with each other. It is found that going shopping is significantly an enjoyable activity in women's life but they shop more for comfort than for style. Previous studies told that value of comfort increases simultaneously with age [39]. Women of Pakistan are not significantly brand conscious rather they are style conscious; it is regardless that from where they are getting it. The source of fashion information for woman is window or store display, fashion shows, asking family members, observing, clothing, social gatherings, public Placing. This is nothing more than a being typical and homey. Whilst, it is seen that the trend of seeking information on catalogues and internet is significantly increasing which can be taken as an evidence for embracing women as fashion conscious. However, women buy apparels from specialty stores and departmental stores regardless of brand mostly; focusing only on style. They opt. catalogue shopping too. It is suggested that women in Pakistan are found to be fashion conscious and are to be regarded as a major segment to earn riches.

The above information establishes a fact that the people are going fashion conscious and want a continuous change in their living styles. Psychologists suggest that intense behavior towards one aspect in life leads to keep the same behavior in other aspects of life. So, study insists that even the neglected segment is getting highly fashion conscious. This increases the consumption behavior and change orientation. People will like more vehicles with different giant features, they will like to have different buildings with extreme gestures, they will different kind of wood made offerings and finally whatever they will like or like leads to more industrialization and exploitation of natural environment in various means. So, study asks various questions about managing this situation which are un-answered and cannot be answered probably. Study finds no stronger suggestions except of maintaining a strict eye by the governments to let all the things happen ecologically in their countries. Probably, this situation can only be settled through the critical natural junctures; the nature has to finally take steps itself in the end.

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