

## **GENDER DIFFERENCES AMONGST AFRICAN GENERATION Y STUDENTS' HEDONIC AND UTILITARIAN SHOPPING MOTIVATIONS**

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### **—Abstract —**

The South African retail industry is a major industry with high public spending. As such, there is a high level of competition among retailers, pressuring marketers and retailers to gain and maintain a competitive advantage. By developing and adapting marketing strategies to target their market effectively, these marketers and retailers can differentiate themselves from their competitors. In order to develop and adapt their marketing strategies, they need to understand and focus on the motivations behind the act of shopping. Accordingly, this paper reports on a study undertaken to determine whether there are any gender differences amongst African Generation Y students' hedonic and utilitarian shopping motivations in order to develop marketing strategies for effectively targeting the different gender segments in this market. In the South African context, individuals born between 1986 and 2005, labelled Generation Y, account for 37 percent of the total South African population, and the African Generation Y individuals represent 84 percent of the total Generation Y cohort. The primary data were collected by means of a self-administered questionnaire completed by a convenience sample of 404 African Generation Y students enrolled at two South African registered public higher education institutions (HEIs), situated in the Gauteng province was taken. The statistical analysis of the collected data included descriptive statistics and a two independent-samples t-test. The results indicate that male and female African Generation Y students appear to have statistically significant different hedonic and utilitarian shopping motivations. The findings of this study contributes to the practice of marketing by providing retailers and marketers with a better understanding of both male and female African Generation Y students by examining their hedonic and utilitarian shopping motivations, which will assist

them in developing appropriate marketing strategies for effectively targeting this cohort.

**Key Words:** Retailing, hedonic shopping motivations, utilitarian shopping motivations, South Africa, Generation Y students

**JEL Classification:** M, M3, M31

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The South African retail industry is considered as one of the major retail industries, within the sub-Saharan region, benefiting from high public spending, and therefore presenting attractive growth opportunities (Market Research, 2011; ILDP, 2015). This is evident as the South African retail sales amounted to R654,1 million in 2017 (Statistics South Africa, 2017). The retail industry has experienced significant changes due to various reasons such as retailers offering discounts more frequently, the proliferation of lifestyle retailing formats, as well as the use of the Internet as a retail platform (Terblanche, 2013). These changes resulted in consumers having a greater diversity of products and lifestyle choices (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003). This challenges retailers to differentiate themselves from their competitors in order to attract their target market. Accordingly, retailers and marketers need to have a good understanding of their target market's needs and motivations regarding shopping.

Cardoso and Pinto (2010) posit that consumers regard shopping as an important part of their lives. These authors further state that the act of shopping is constantly evolving due to consumers' changing needs. According to Arnold and Reynolds (2003), consumers engage in the act of shopping for various reasons, such as when a need for a specific product or service arises, when they seek attention, when they need to spend time socialising, or when they have free time. Terblanche (2013) concurs, stating that the mere purchase of a product or service is not the only reason consumers shop, and that personal and social motives may be the motivation driving them to shop. Jin and Kim (2003) add that shopping motivations are embedded in the internal needs of consumers and are the driving force behind the act of shopping, as consumers try to satisfy those needs. It is imperative for retailers and marketers to understand consumers' shopping motivations, as they may be utilised for marketing activities such as dividing the market into segments and developing strategies targeted at specific segments (Bloch *et al.*, 1994; Westbrook & Black, 1985). Shopping motivations can be

classified in two ways, namely hedonic and utilitarian shopping motivations (Cardoso & Pinto, 2010).

### **1.1 Shopping motivations**

Hedonic shopping motivations pertain to the purchasing of consumer products primarily for effective or sensory gratification purposes (Kempf, 1999). Assael (2004) defines hedonic shopping motivations as the consumption of a product or service for pleasure and with an end-result of satisfying emotions and fantasies rather than the mere collection of products. As such, hedonic shopping is associated with the shopping experience itself rather than the product, and is therefore regarded as being an experiential and emotional act (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982, Hoyer *et al.*, 2013). Furthermore, hedonic shopping motivations have a direct influence on consumers' intention to seek products and services, as well as an indirect influence on their intention to purchase and are therefore of great importance for retailers and marketers to understand (To *et al.*, 2007). Arnold and Reynolds (2003) investigated hedonic motivations behind the act of shopping and found six broad categories, namely gratification, adventure, idea, social, role and value motives. Gratification shopping is used as a tool to relieve stress, to lighten a foul mood, or as a special self-treat (Evans *et al.*, 2009). Adventure shopping motivation is described as a consumer shopping for stimulation, adventure or a shopping experience that is different than normal (Kang & Park-Poaps, 2010). Such a shopping experience involves a consumer experiencing an array of sights, sounds and smells (Kim, 2006). Idea shopping pertains to a consumer shopping in order to collect information about new trends and fashion (Cardoso & Pinto, 2010). According to Jamal *et al.* (2006), consumers driven by social shopping motivations seek opportunities to interact or socialise with other individuals who have similar interests to their own. Arnold and Reynolds (2003) emphasize that role shopping is associated with the satisfaction of shopping for others with the aim of finding the right gift. As such, the consumer plays his or her role in the process of shopping for someone else (Yang & Kim, 2012). Value shopping relates to consumers shopping for sales and discounts or bargain hunting, where consumers consider finding low prices as a challenge to conquer (Kang & Park-Poaps, 2010).

Utilitarian shopping is focussed on shopping that is task-oriented, instrumental, rational, efficient and functional in nature (Davis *et al.*, 2017; Orth *et al.*, 2016). Utilitarian motivations usually exhibit a work mentality, where the achievement of a certain goal will result in satisfaction (Babin *et al.*, 1994). Making an efficient

and purposeful purchase in a meticulous way will also add to the satisfaction of utilitarian orientated consumers (Davis *et al.*, 2017). A utilitarian consumer uses the act of shopping to find products that they need (Cardoso & Pinto, 2010) in order to acquire a useful benefit or fulfil an economic need (Kim, 2006). As such, a consumer following a utilitarian shopping approach is interested in solving a problem logically (Sarkar, 2011), and may not find shopping to be a pleasurable activity (Assael, 2004). This type of consumer is also not influenced by emotions when shopping (Jones *et al.*, 2006). Efficiency and achievement are identified as dimensions of utilitarian shopping motivation. Consumers who consider achievement to be a shopping motivation evaluate a shopping experience based on the achievement of a planned goal (Cardoso & Pinto, 2010). Yang and Kim (2012) describe a consumer motivated by efficiency as a consumer trying to complete the task of shopping with minimum time and effort.

Gender as a demographic variable, is marked as a factor that influences consumers' shopping behaviours (Hanzaee & Aghasibeig, 2008) and is used as a valuable tool to assist with market segmentation (Barber, 2009). While marketers generally pay more attention to the female segment, due to the buying of consumer goods being more integral to the identity of female consumers (Dittmar *et al.*, 2004), male consumers are becoming increasingly visible in retail environments and part of the shopping community than in the past (Jackson *et al.*, 2011; Otnes & McGrath, 2001). As such, both male and female segments are important market segments for marketers and retailers to target. Various studies suggest that males and females differ in terms of their shopping motivations (Davis *et al.*, 2014; Dittmar *et al.*, 2004) and in the way they process marketing messages (Darley & Smith, 1993; Meyers-Levy & Maheswaran, 1991; Perju-Mitran & Budacia, 2015). Therefore, by understanding the gender differences regarding consumers' shopping motivations and its effect on consumer decision making, marketers can develop or adapt their marketing strategies and activities accordingly, increasing the effectiveness of their marketing by targeting these segments more effectively.

## **1.2 Generation Y**

According to the 2016 mid-year population estimates in South Africa, Generation Y accounts for 37 percent of the total South African population, with the vast majority (84%) of that age cohort comprising black Africans (Statistics South Africa, 2016). While experts differ on the exact start and end dates of this age cohort, Markert (2004) defines individuals born between 1986 and 2005 as the

Generation Y cohort, also known as Millennials or Echo-boomers (Joubert, 2013). Bevan-Dye (2013), Bevan-Dye and Surujlal (2011) and Day and Newburger (2002) opine that the student portion of the Generation Y cohort is an attractive segment to target, based on the assumption that individuals from this cohort pursuing a tertiary qualification have a higher future earning potential, which will most likely lead to a higher level of consumption. Ruzane (2010) reiterates that retailers and marketers who understand the Generation Y cohort, and effectively communicate their products and services to this target market will ensure the growth and profitability of their business.

Understanding the underlying shopping motivations of different target markets are imperative, as Ozen and Kodaz (2012) opine that various markets differ in terms of their culture, and economic and social factors which in turn influence their shopping motivations. As such, marketing strategies aimed at targeting different consumer segments cannot be generalised (Cardoso & Pinto, 2010; Ozen & Kodaz, 2012). Researchers have become increasingly aware of the importance of understanding consumers' shopping motivations (To *et al.*, 2007), and therefore, research on this topic has increased over the past few decades (Ozen & Kodaz, 2012). Shopping motivations have become a widely used topic in academic research, and have proven its value with regards to the planning and determining of market pricing, promotional campaigns and marketing decisions (To *et al.*, 2007). According to Kim (2006), retailers and marketers who identify and understand the variations in the shopping motivations of consumers will be able to segment consumers accordingly, enabling them to address the needs of consumers by emphasizing the aspects of retailing and marketing that support the various consumer segments' underlying motivations. Babin *et al.* (1994) reiterate the importance for retailers and marketers to understand the motivations behind shopping, in order to target a market successfully, especially within the retail industry. Similar studies have been conducted in other countries (Cardoso & Pinto, 2010; Jamal *et al.*, 2006; Kim, 2006; Ozen & Kodaz, 2012; To *et al.*, 2007). However, owing to the African Generation Y student market segment being particularly attractive, research to determine their hedonic and utilitarian shopping motivations is necessary. As such, the primary objective of the study was to determine whether African Generation Y male and female students differ regarding their hedonic and utilitarian shopping motivations within the South African context.

## **2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Research design**

A descriptive research design with a single cross-sectional sample was followed in this study.

### **2.2 Sample**

The target population was defined as full-time undergraduate African Generation Y students, registered at South African higher education institutions (HEIs), between the ages of 18 and 24. A list of the 26 registered South African public HEIs (Universities South Africa, 2016) constituted the sample frame of this study. Using a judgement sample method, two HEI campuses situated in the Gauteng province were selected – one a traditional university and the other a university of technology. A non-probability convenience sample of 600 full-time undergraduate African Generation Y students was drawn from these two institutions (300 per institution). This sample size is in the range of other studies of a similar nature, such as those conducted by Morschett *et al.* (2005) (sample size of 560) and Guido (2006) (sample size of 600).

### **2.3 Instrument and data collection**

In order to measure the hedonic and utilitarian shopping motivations among male and female African Generation Y students in South Africa, Cardoso and Pinto's (2010) hedonic and utilitarian shopping motivations scale was used for the empirical portion of this study. This scale was adapted from Arnold and Reynolds's (2003) hedonic shopping motivation scale, and Kim's (2006) utilitarian shopping motivations scale. The required data were collected over a period of two weeks, by means of a self-administered questionnaire, which included a cover letter describing the nature and purpose of the study. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, Section A and Section B. Section A requested the participants to provide their demographical information. Section B comprised the hedonic shopping motivations sub-scale which included six constructs, namely gratification shopping (three items), adventure shopping (three items), idea shopping (three items), social shopping (four items), role shopping (four items), and value shopping (three items), together with the utilitarian motivations sub-scale, comprising two constructs, namely achievement (four items), and efficiency (two items). Response options were presented on a six-point Likert-type scale (1= strongly disagree, 6= strongly agree) based on the

participants agreement or disagreement to the statements pertaining to their shopping motivations.

The questionnaire was piloted on a convenience sample of 44 students at a South African HEI. Respondents in the pilot study were excluded from the main survey. The six-point scale returned a Cronbach alpha value of 0.948, which is above the recommended level of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978:245). The average inter-item correlation of 0.420 for the scale fell within the recommended range of 0.15 and 0.5 (Clark & Watson, 1995:316). The questionnaire was subsequently administered to the sample of the main study. After permission was solicited from lecturers at each of the two HEI campuses, the questionnaires were distributed to their students during class time for voluntary completion. The data were analysed by making use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 23).

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the 600 distributed questionnaires, 404 usable questionnaires were returned, indicating a response rate of 67 percent. The majority of the participants in the sample indicated being 20 years of age, followed by those who were 21 years of age and 19 years of age. The gender distribution regarding this sample indicates that a greater number of females (66%) participated in this study. Furthermore, the majority of participants identified Gauteng as their province of origin, followed by Limpopo. Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the sample.

**Table 1: Sample description**

Age	n (%)	Gender	n (%)	Province origin	of n (%)	Institution	n (%)
18	49 (12.1)	Male	136 (33.7)	Eastern Cape	17 (4.2)	Traditional university	226 (55.6)
19	73 (18.1)	Female	268 (66.3)	Free State	42 (10.4)	University of Technology	178 (44.1)
20	112 (27.7)			Gauteng	215 (53.3)		
21	88 (21.8)			KwaZulu-Natal	13 (3.2)		
22	46 (11.4)			Limpopo	62 (15.3)		
23	27 (6.7)			Mpumalanga	21 (5.2)		
24				Northern Cape	3 (0.7)		
				North-West	29 (7.2)		
				Western Cape	2 (0.5)		

An acceptable Cronbach alpha value of 0.874 was computed for the overall scale in the main study, thereby providing evidence of internal-consistency reliability.

The average inter-item correlation coefficient for the entire scale was 0.22, thus inferring convergent and discriminant validity of the scale.

Mean scores above 3.5 were returned for all the shopping motivations except gratification shopping (mean = 3.333), indicating that both male and female African Generation Y students find value shopping (mean = 4.453), adventure shopping (mean = 4.084), idea shopping (mean = 3.977), social shopping (mean = 3.787), role shopping (mean = 3.704), achievement (mean = 4.930) and efficiency (mean = 3.699) as important motives driving them to shop. Shopping for achievement scored the highest mean, followed by value shopping, adventure shopping, idea shopping, social shopping, role shopping and shopping for efficiency, and gratification shopping. Table 2 outlines the results of this analysis.

**Table 2: African Generation Y students' shopping motivations**

Constructs	Mean	Standard deviation	Rank order
Achievement	4.930	0.912	1
Value shopping	4.453	1.233	2
Adventure shopping	4.084	1.238	3
Idea shopping	3.977	1.376	4
Social shopping	3.787	1.289	5
Role shopping	3.704	1.126	6
Efficiency	3.699	1.509	7
Gratification shopping	3.333	1.499	8

A two-independent samples t-test was conducted to determine whether male and female African Generation Y students differ concerning their shopping motivations. The significance level was set at the conventional five percent level. The means, standard deviation, t-values and p-values between male and female African Generation Y students' shopping motivations are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Gender differences**

Shopping motivations	Male		Female		t-values	P-values
	Mean n=136	Standard deviation	Mean n=268	Standard deviation		
Gratification shopping	2.674	1.409	3.667	1.434	-6.615	0.000*
Adventure shopping	3.525	1.319	4.368	1.093	-6.423	0.000*
Idea shopping	3.767	1.399	4.085	1.354	-2.178	0.028*
Social shopping	3.340	1.299	4.014	1.225	-5.022	0.000*
Role shopping	3.208	1.141	3.955	1.033	-6.421	0.000*
Value shopping	4.005	1.402	4.680	1.071	-4.936	0.000*



Achievement	4.588	1.041	5.104	0.785	-5.085	0.000*
Efficiency	4.213	1.438	3.438	1.479	5.021	0.000*

**\*Statistically significant at the 0.05 level**

As evident from Table 3, statistical differences were found between African Generation Y male and female students regarding all hedonic and utilitarian shopping motivations. This suggests that African male and female Generation Y students differ regarding their hedonic and utilitarian shopping motivations. According to these results, it may be inferred that African Generation Y male students consider efficiency to be a more important motivator when it comes to shopping than female students do. Furthermore, these results suggest that the female students scored higher than the male students did on the hedonic motivations subscale. These results are in keeping with previous research conducted by Arnold and Reynolds (2003), Asraar Ahmed (2015) and Otnes and McGrath (2001), indicating that female consumers find hedonic shopping motivations as a stronger motivator while male consumers are more inclined to be driven by utilitarian shopping motivations. However, both male and female consumers indicated that achievement as a shopping motivation has the strongest influence on their shopping behaviour suggesting that they perceive shopping as something purposeful and goal-oriented. What could be the reasons behind these results.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Developing unique marketing strategies that effectively attract a specific target market is imperative in the current competitive retail industry. As such, it is essential that marketers and retailers define and understand their target markets clearly, placing emphasis on understanding the behaviour and motivation behind these consumers' purchases. Knowledge of the shopping motivations of different genders is essential in the development of marketing communications and promotional strategies, as well as market segmentation. When a retailer or marketer finds that a large segment of its consumers are from a particular gender, they can focus on segment relevant ways to facilitate and promote a shopping experience that will drive shopping value and create potential for re-patronage. The findings of the study reported on in this paper indicate that African Generation Y male and female consumers are motivated by different shopping motivations. Accordingly, marketers and retailers have to target these segments differently. When targeting African female Generation Y students, marketers and retailers should employ advertisements accentuating individuals that feel good when shopping at a particular store, as they achieved what was set out to achieve.

Marketing campaigns should emphasise intelligent decision-making as part of the shopping experience offered by the retailer. Furthermore, marketers and retailers need to focus on marketing messages that highlight value for money, ongoing sales, and promotions, as well as quality products offered at discounted prices. Marketers should also make use of advertisements that portray consumers experiencing shopping as an adventure, as well as experiencing various sensory stimulation while shopping. Conversely, when targeting African male Generation Y students, marketers should portray advertising messages emphasising consumers accomplishing the goal set for the specific shopping trip, and highlighting a shopping trip that takes as little time as possible. Furthermore, retailers targeting this male segment should ensure that they offer all the possible products consumers would want to buy when visiting the store, and design the store and train staff in such a way as to ensure that shopping will be done swiftly and with little effort.

## **5. LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

This study, as with most studies, has certain limitations, which provide opportunities for future research. The study reported on in this paper examined the gender differences amongst African Generation Y students' hedonic and utilitarian shopping motivations by means of a quantitative research approach and did not uncover the reasons for these differences. Therefore, the opportunity exists to determine the reasons for such gender differences by making use of a qualitative research approach. Furthermore, the sample characteristics in this study were limited to the African Generation Y cohort in Gauteng. Therefore, future research could be extended to conduct a comparative study between the different ethnic groups and other generations and across the nine provinces in South Africa. Sample limited to university students only

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