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"The differentiation on decision making process between young men and women into consumer goods"

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Abstract

Nowadays modern societies use fashion as lifestyle. Today's trend is towards material possessions as criterion of success. Individuals define themselves to the degree of the material possessions they have. Thus they use fashion clothing as a medium of expressing their ideal self.

Young consumers have been socialized into a materialistic and consumer culture earlier than previous generations. They have been brought up in an era where shopping is regarded as something more complex than just a simple act of purchasing. Furthermore young consumers are at an age where they are trying to construct their personal identity.

Taking into consideration young consumers, the research tries to explore the relationship between gender, materialistic values, and impulsive behavior with fashion clothing involvement. Furthermore this study tries to investigate different decision-making styles and the influence of the marketing mix to the purchasing process. The research focuses on fashion clothing because it is closely related to everyone's daily life, having essential, communicative, sociological and psychological functions in consumers' lives.

A survey was conducted with a sample of 400 young people and rate of respond 74% (295 respond). We interviewed them using a questionnaire consisted from a variety of 52 questions divided in 11 thematic areas. The questionnaire targeted purchasing criteria of young consumers.

Descriptive statistical analysis and comparative methods were used for the compilation of results. Factor analysis using principle components with varimax rotation was used. Also, the Kruscall-Wallis test was conducted in order to reveal interactions and relationship between different variables.

According to research findings young adults have developed materialistic values and therefore material goods are used as symbols by them. The reinforcement of a person's self-

image is probably a motivation that plays significant role in individuals purchasing decisions. Thus consumers are engaged in non-planned purchases, which are considered as impulsive. Moreover, men are those who are more involved with fashion clothing in order to bolster their self-image. However women are those who appear to be more impulsive in their purchasing decisions.

Key words: consumer behaviour, decision making styles, fashion clothing.

1. Introduction

The changes which take place in business environment have affected mainly young consumer behavior. Young consumers nowadays better known as generation "Y" is generally acknowledged as a new market segment. That target has socialized into consuming earlier than previous generations. Generation Y have been brought up in an era where shopping is not regarded as a simple act of purchasing but as a recreational act. Furthermore the proliferation of media choices such as magazines, television, Internet has resulted in greater diversity of product and lifestyle choices. Moreover the shopping malls have become places of social interaction and leisure activities. As a result young consumers may have developed different shopping style in comparison to previous generations. They are considered to be highly involved with apparel products and in particular in fashion clothing.

Therefore there is need to better understand young consumers' behavior, their decision making style and their values concerning fashion clothing. Nowadays possessions according to Dittmar (1992) "have come to serve as key symbols for personal qualities, attachments and interests. Hence an individual's identity is influenced by the symbolic meanings of his/her own material possessions, and the way in which he/she relates to those possessions". Fashion clothing is regarded as a possession that holds a significant position in society. In this research fashion clothing involvement is being viewed to the extent to which the individual views the

activity as a central part of his life, the extent to which fashion clothing involvement is considered as a meaningful and engaging activity. Therefore the need for the study is to explore the relationship between young consumers, their values, and their level of knowledge concerning fashion clothing. The focus on fashion clothing is crucial due to its both social and economic value to many societies, especially western societies where materialism seems to play a significant part to everyday life. Consequently it is of great importance to investigate fashion clothing involvement Moreover it is vital for marketers to identify the attitudes of consumers towards the marketing mix concerning the retail sector, especially the field of apparel products.

2. Consumer Behavior Theories

Consumers' behaviour is the decision processes and acts of people involved in purchasing and using products. People consume in order to fulfil and satisfy their needs and they have different motivations concerning the purchase of different products. Through the studying of consumer behaviour some fundamental questions comes abroad such as appears in (Figure 1).

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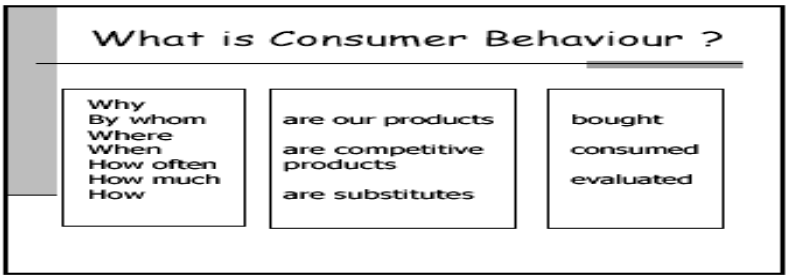
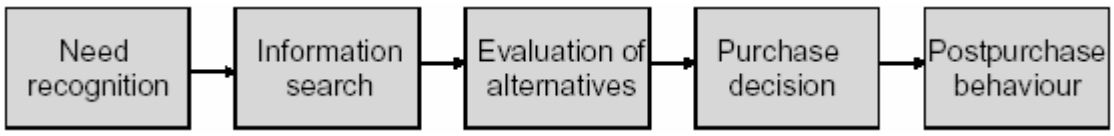
Figure 1: Consumer behaviour fundamental questions



Sometimes consumers are driven to a purchase through logical arguments but other times are persuaded more by emotional or symbolic appeals. Thus one theory of decision-making behavior generally is the cognitive paradigm perspective which focuses on the decision-making process, of an individual, as a sequel of thought processes when making the decision.

According to Assael (1995) “consumer choice is a problem-solving and decision making sequence of activities, the outcome of which is determined principally by the buyer’s intellectual functioning, and rational, goal-directed processing of information”. This implies according to Markin and Narayana (1975) that “the consumer is an intelligent, rational, thinking, and problem solving organism, which stores and evaluates sensory inputs to make a reasoned decision”. Mayor models of consumer behavior such as (Nicosia, 1966; Howard and Sheth, 1969; Engel and Blackwell, 1982) assume that consumers are able to attain large amount of information and are also able to handle and process this amount of information in order to compare and evaluate the entire alternative products related to their needs before they come up to the best solution to them. Most of other cognitive models follow the same patterns. The stages of the model are: 1 Problem definition: a stimulus from the environment triggers information processing from which a consumer perceives a need.2. Information search: the consumer collects information to aid in the satisfaction of the need.3.Evaluation of alternatives: a process of problem solving, which will be affected by a range of influences.4.Purchase.5. Post-purchase evaluation: consumption will be followed by an evaluation to determine whether the need was satisfied or not (Engel, Blackwell and Miniard, 1977) (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Five-Stage Model of the buying process:

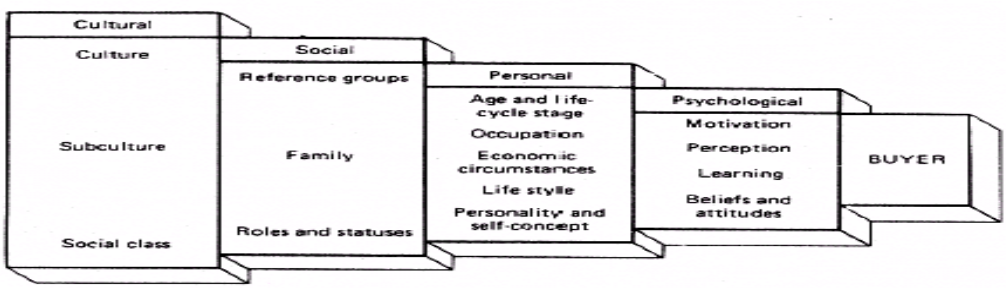


The models of the cognitive paradigm however fail to take into consideration the consumer’s personal characteristics and find out what is going on in consumer’s mind and therefore become predictors of the actual behaviour. Those questions find answers through the study of the factors that influences consumer’s behaviour. Therefore a consumer’s decision-making

process is affected by the following three factors: cultural, demographical and psychological. Those factors and its categories are the following as appears in (Figure 3):

Figure 3

Detailed Model of Factors Influencing behaviour



Kotler 1993, p. 165.

Personal influences on the decision-making process are: Demographic, Situational Involvement. As well as social influences on decision-making are: Reference groups. The information that concerns this set of circumstances is called demographics and includes age, gender, income and education. Another factor that influences the decision-making process is the time available. Nowadays where time is precious for people there is a constant need to reduce the time spent in purchases in order to be spending on other activities. The consumer involvement refers to the level of involvement with which the customer engages in the purchase decision. Levels of involvement are low involvement and high involvement. Nevertheless, as far as it concerns involvement there is a full explanation later.

The psychological influences in decision-making process are: Perception Learning and experience, Motivation, Personality, Attitudes. Perception is an approximation of reality. The way in which the brain attempts to make sense out of the stimuli in which consumer is being exposed is perception. Motivation has been defined as: “the psychological process that gives behavior purpose and direction” (Kreitner, 1995); “a predisposition to behave in a purposive manner to achieve specific, unmet needs” (Buford, Bedeian, & Lindner, 1995); “an internal drive to satisfy an unsatisfied need” (Higgins, 1994). Sproles and Kendal (1986) define decision-making style “as a mental orientation characterizing a consumer’s approach to

making choices." They view this construct as "basic consumer personality". According to their approach, consumers have specific characteristics based on their personality and thus they engage in shopping with certain fundamental decision-making models. Consumer attitudes are a composite of his beliefs, or feelings about a product and his behavioural intentions towards that product. A person might have a positive or a negative belief towards a product.

2.1 Definitions of Consumer Involvement

Rothschild (1979) defines involvement as "a motivation state of arousal and interest, evoked by external factors (situation, the product, the communications), and internal factors (ego, central values). According to this definition the consumer will become highly involved to a product when this product is perceived as important to meet one's needs, goals and values. According to Day (1995) "the involvement construct is based on a hierarchical conceptualization in that general involvement with certain activities, interests, or issues lead to involvement with related products and services. Zaichkowsky (1986) defines involvement as "a person's perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values and interests". Therefore values play a significant role in forming a consumer's involvement to specific products and categories of products. Engel (1993) argues, "Involvement is a central motivation factor that shapes the purchase decision-making process therefore a consumer will became involved when the object of interest is perceived as important in meeting needs, goals, and values". Howard and Sheth (1969) define that "product involvement has been positively associated with awareness or knowledge of product attributes, perceptions of product importance, brand preferences, and ability to elaborate on product/brand advertising".

2.2 Consumer Decision-Making Style

Sproles and Kendall (1986) define consumer decision-making style "as a mental orientation characterizing a consumer's approach to making choices". They view this construct as "basic consumer personality" which is analogue to the concept of personality in psychology. There is the consumer typology approach (Darden and Ashton, 1974), the psychographics/lifestyle approach (Lastovicka, 1982) and the characteristics approach (Sproles, 1985; Sproles and Kendall 1986). The common theme among those three approaches is the perception that consumers engage in shopping with certain fundamental decision making models including rational shopping, price consciousness, and brand seekers. However the approach of Sproles and Kendal (1986) focuses on the mental orientation of the consumers at the time of the purchase and thus is considered to be most powerful and explanatory.

Sproles and Kendal assume that consumers can be classified into different decision-making styles by identifying general orientations towards shopping and purchasing. Kendall and Sproles (1986) identified eight mental characteristics of consumer decision-making: Perfectionism or high quality consciousness, Brand consciousness, Novelty-fashion consciousness, Recreational, hedonistic shopping consciousness, Price and "value for money" shopping consciousness, Impulsiveness, Confusion over choice of brands, stores and consumer information, Habitual, brand loyal orientation towards consumption.

Consumers who fit more to the first decision- making style are those who orientation to the decision is making process are quality. They are seeking for quality and exert extra efforts in order to get products. As far as it concerns price consciousness are those who seek the best value for their money. Consumers who fit this style seek for offers and plan very carefully the amount of money they are supposed to spend over their purchases. The brand consciousness consumers are more into brands. They do not mind spend more money for a well-known product and they consider that the higher the price of the product the better its quality. People

who fit to the fashion consciousness style are usually people who seek for new things. They usually are innovators and try to keep up with the new trends. Recreational hedonistic shopping consciousness consumers are those who see shopping as a leisure activity and as something to cheer them up. This style is quite similar to the impulsive one. Consumers who fit to both categories usually don't consider planning neither their purchases nor the amount of money they are going to spend. As a result are those who usually regret over their purchasing of products. Consumers get confused over the large variety of products they have to choose from and also get confused over the great amount of information due to mass advertising.

2.3 Antecedents and Consequences of Fashion Clothing Involvement

Personal values or needs that motivate consumers' behaviour are linked to involvement. Values are according to Kaiser (1997) "general representations of the basic needs and goals individuals use to guide beliefs about and evaluations of products. Consequently, values guide one's attitudes toward a product and the importance of the product to the self. In addition we use products such as apparel to express and communicate our values to others". Thus according to this notion the linkages between values, the product, and product –related attitudes may influence one's level of involvement. Nowadays the main value of consumption is regarded materialism. "Materialism is defined as the importance people attach to owning worldly possessions" (Solomon, 1996). Therefore materialism leads consumers to give great importance to the possession of material goods. Materialism can have a great influence on people's behaviour because of its influence on forming attachments to possessions.

As a result consumers with strong materialistic values use possessions as means to portray and manage impressions, and also as means to communicate with their social environment. From this perspective fashion clothing may represent a key variable in the development of

one's buying behaviour. Fashion clothing involvement gives people the opportunity to express them and also to fulfil values such as acquisition and happiness and assist in portraying acceptable images. Apparel products give to consumers the ability to show off their social status, to express to others an ideal self and become means for impression and social acceptance. According to Richins (1994) "consumers with strong materialistic tendencies use clothing for impression management, leading to greater involvement". As a result to this notion, the degree of materialism of a person will strongly affect his level of involvement.

2.4 Impulse Buying and Materialism

According to Dittmar (1995) consumers impulse buy products that offer them "material symbols of personal and social identity". Dittmar argues that impulse behavior is most likely to occur at situations where there is a gap between a person's perception of his actual self and the ideal self, on the most important attributes of that person. Dittmar also regards impulse purchasing as an expression of freedom and escape from the normal buying pattern. She also considers shopping as a way to change somebody's mood. Many people go on shopping in order to feel better and lift their mood. Thus consumer goods nowadays play a significant psychological role in people's lives. Material goods function as symbols of a person's personal identity of who he is and who he would like to be.

Material goods can give people the means of creating valued experiences, creating interpersonal relationship and maintaining identity and self-continuity. However, materialistic values can prove to be harmful to a person's life. Richins and Dawson (1992) describe materialistic values as "a set of centrally held beliefs about the importance of possessions in one's life". Therefore when a person consider materialistic values are of great importance that leads to a strong commitment to identity construction through material goods. Material goods

apart for helping people construct their identity, may become a central life goal and a yardstick to evaluate self and others. Thus many consumers give great importance to materialistic values and therefore are more probable to make impulse purchases. Those who value material success above all other are more probable to feel feelings of guilt and anxiety after a purchase. Moreover when life is being considered successful through the purchase of material goods, then impaired personal and social functioning may appear.

2.5 Gender and Consumption

Differences between shoppers are of great interest to an industry that is actively seeking methods by which they can better target consumers. Therefore gender poses a time avenue of investigation. Generally speaking women's consumer behavior is considered to be more emotional to men's. Women are also thought of acting motivated by psychological roots than men do, which has as a result of being more susceptible to impulse purchasing. Moreover it has being argued that women have the tense to shop more than men in general and therefore make more impulse purchases (Rook; Hocch, 1985). However later researches have shown that men and women have the same degree of susceptibility to impulse purchases (Kollat and Willett, 1967). Furthermore according to Global Cosmetic Industry (2002) men between the ages of 16-24 have raised their purchases for health and beauty aids in contrast to previous years. However, historically women have been found to be more likely to shop for aesthetic products, while men are more likely to purchase functional products. (Dittmar,1996). Therefore the general idea is that women purchase different kind of products on impulse than men do. Men's purchasing reasons refer more to the practical control and activity related features of possessions. In comparison women's reasons also revolve around the role of possessions as symbols of interpersonal relationships. These gender differences in terms of

possessions can be explained as reflections of the different ways by which men and women construct their identity.

Women tend mostly to be affected by these dimensions while men tend to be concerned primarily with the first. Women seem to see shopping as an act of social interaction, and something, which gives them pleasure, while men see shopping as a task, which they want to accomplish with a minimum input of time and effort. However there are some categories of products, such as tools and electronics, which are predominantly bought by men. According to Beattie, and Friese, 1995 men tend to impulsively buy instrumental and leisure items projecting independence and activity, while women tend to buy symbolic and self-expressive goods concerned with appearance and emotional aspects of self.

2.6 Young Consumer and Consumption

Taking into consideration some of the psychological functions of material possessions, apparel products can perform two main roles to consumers' identity. An emotional role through which gives to the individual a way of self-expression, and a social role through which the person communicates with his environment and states his identity. Clothing products are "often used as symbolic resources for the construction and maintenance of identity". (Elliot and Wattanasuwan, 1998). Therefore the fact that young consumers are so into apparel products derives from the fact that they are in a stage of their life where they form a new identity. According to Dittmar (1992) young consumers are highly motivated to use material possessions in order to create a sense of independent self.

(Moschis and Churchil ,1978) report that there is a great deal of connection between materialism and television viewing. According to Nielsen (1995) young people view at least five hours a day television, fact that makes generation Y one of the most television acculturated generation ever. Schrum (1991) argues that "television programs convey a

wealth of information with respect to consumption and that as television viewing increases, an individual's consumption perceptions more closely reflects the reality of the television world". It is common sense that the characters, which are portrayed in television programs, introduce a more affluent way of life. Therefore television viewing reinforces the notion that material goods and wealth is a good thing.

In addition to television viewing, young consumers have been acculturated into materialistic and consumer culture more than any other generation due to increased technological innovations. Ger and Belk (1996) argue that the increase in communication technologies, mass media, multinational marketing campaigns, have played a significant role in disseminating the notion that material possessions and opulence are good and desirable. Thus according to Mitchell (1995) is the main reason to the increase of the importance of having a lot of money. Furthermore, younger generations tend to believe that higher prices are associated to better quality and therefore are more into spending more money in purchasing of well-known brands.

Nowadays shopping is being seen as a recreational and enjoyable activity. Generation Y consumers have been brought up in an environment which encourages shopping as a hobby. Many large retailing stores have opened during the last decade, which offer to consumers a friendly environment to shop. Moreover many of the retailing stores are open on Sundays giving the consumers more options. Generation Ys have been socialized in a world where shopping is a form of leisure. Herbig (1993) during a research found out that the average US female teenager spends more than eleven hours per week to the shopping malls. Moreover the International Council of shopping centers points out that most of the young consumers go to the shopping centers to browse rather than to make a planned purchase. Telemarketing, Internet and more traditional catalogues offer additional consumption opportunities. Mostly Internet provides to young consumers the opportunity to browse and obtain information

concerning a large amount of consumer goods and also offers them the opportunity to make purchases through it. Most of the generation Y's have been brought up in households where both of the parents work, therefore they have learnt to shop at an earlier stage and also make brand decisions sooner than previous generations.

2.7 Advertising in Fashion Marketing

Big clothing industries are trying to draw young people's attention by being ironic to the established mainstream advertising. Furthermore through their advertising campaigns are trying to provoke feelings, which according to the industries most people have felt, or wish to have felt. It is wide known that people are using apparel products in order to fulfill the gap between their real self and their ideal self. Clothes particularly are used as symbols of expression. Therefore fashion industries are trying to make people identify their ideal selves through their clothing.

On the other hand consumers use advertising messages as means to evaluate the product's benefits. Product attribute beliefs are formed as results of responding to an advertisement product. According to Lutz (1985) "attitude towards the ad is an affective reaction, a predisposition to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner to a particular advertising stimulus during a particular exposure occasion. Consumers' attitudes towards advertisements are associated to the level of involvement to the product. Consumers with higher levels of involvement with a product category are more probable to acquire and process information about the product through an advertising campaign. Zaichkowsky (1986) argues "consumer involvement with a product influences processing of advertisements related to the product category. The consumer processes advertisements and forms an attitude about the advertised product. Level of involvement with a product may influence attitude formation in relation to specific beliefs about product attributes".

3. Research Methodology

In this research a quantitative research method was followed. A survey of young consumers was carried out in Athens using the convenience sampling method. The number of questionnaires that were complete was 295 in total of 300. That shows an approval rate of 99, 6 percentage. From the 295 questioners answered, 148 were men and 147 women. The type of data collection method that was followed was face-to-face interviews.

The questionnaire targeted purchasing criteria of young consumers, with nominal scale and Likert scales for measurement of responses with poles from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The questionnaire was administered to a non-probability convenience sample of undergraduate students aged between 19 and 24.

The questionnaire consists of 52 questions. These questions were chosen because they demonstrated reliability and validity in previous studies were adaptable to the level of generality of the present study, and because prior use made the findings comparable to existing research. The questionnaire contains 11 items from the materialistic values measure of Richins and Dawson (1992). Fashion clothing involvement was measured via 2 items out of the three-item scale shown in Mittal and Lee (1989), but with their single negative item reworded to be positive. Three items that were taken from Flynn and Goldsmith (1999) were used to measure subjective knowledge of clothing. Two of the three items measuring social identity were adapted from Grewal (2000) and one additional item was adapted from Goldsmith (2002). The three indicators of personal identity were adapted from Goldsmith (2002). The different decision making styles were adapted from the work of Sproles and Kendall (1986) who developed the consumer style inventory. The questions concerning the effect of the marketing mix (advertising, in-store atmosphere, pricing) were adapted from the research of Goldsmith (2002).

Descriptive statistical analysis and comparative methods were used for the compilation of results. The data were initially examined for dispersion and central tendency via means. Following this analysis the data were factor analyzed using principle components with varimax rotation, followed by correlation and reliability estimates. Furthermore the analysis of the scales showed acceptable reliability with Cronbach's alpha 0.838. This value is >0.7 so the scale can be considered reliable with our sample. 31 items were subjected to principal components analysis using SPSS version 12. Prior to performing PCA the suitability of data for factor analysis was assessed. Inspection of the correlation matrix revealed the presence of many coefficients 0f 0.3 and above. The Kaise-Meyer_oklin value was 0.835 exceeding the recommended value of 0.6 (Kaiser 1970, 1974) and the Barlett's test of Sphericity (Bartlett 1954) reached statistical significance, supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. After the factor analysis, the Kruscall-Wallis test was conducted between different variables in order to reveal interactions and relationship between different variables.

3.1 Demographic characteristics

The respondents of the survey were 295 in total. From the total of 148 men, 42% are in the category 18 –20 where 58 % are in the age category 20-24. On the other hand from the total of 147 women, 41, 5 % belong to the category 18-20 where 58, 5 are in the age category 20-24. As far as it concerns their income per year, 59% belong to the income category of 0-3000 euro. However 88 of these are men and 82 women. 13, 2% of the men belong to the category of 3001-7000 where the women who belong to that category are 16, 7%.

The Above 15000 euro per year earns the 13, 9 % of the total responders. According to these numbers there are not great differences as far as it concerns the income between men and women. The majority of the responders earn less than three thousand years per month, and that is absolutely logical due to the fact that the sample was students at the age eighteen to

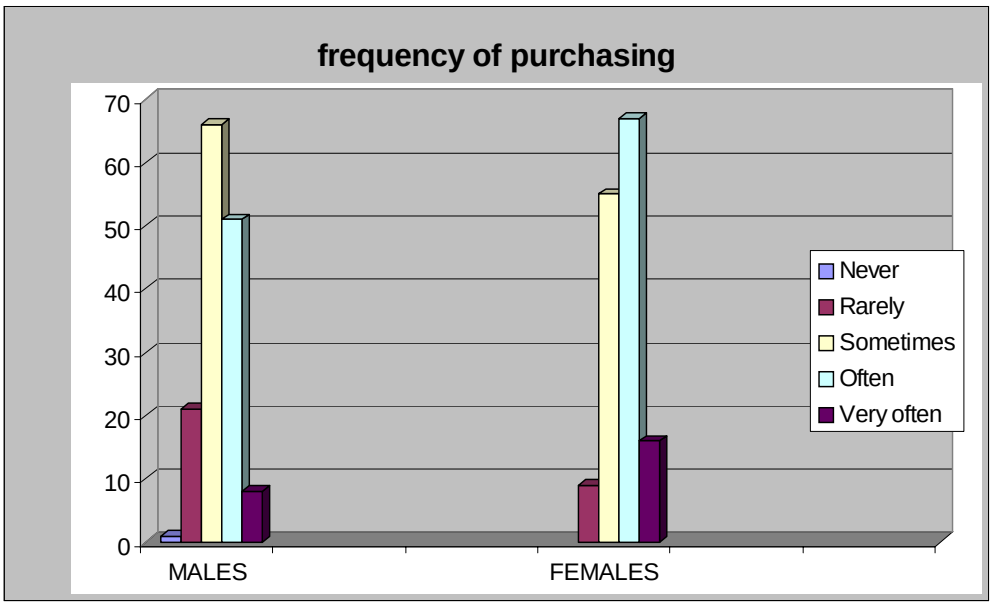
twenty-four. Therefore most of the responders depend on their parents help. The degree of education is the same for all the responders as they are all university students. However great differences can be observed in the question concerning the fashion involvement (Table 1).

Table 1: How they affect by fashion

	MALES			FEMALES			BOTH SEXES		
	Number	% by sex	% by frequency	Number	% by sex	% by frequency	Number	% by sex	% by frequency
YES	63	40,1	42,6	94	59,9	64,8	157	100	53,6
NO	85	62,5	57,4	51	37,5	35,2	136	100	46,4
TOTAL	148	50,5	100,0	145	49,5	100,0	293	100	100,0

In question whether they consider themselves as a person that is affected by fashion 64.8% of women consider themselves as fashion seekers. On the other hand, 42.6 % of men have given a positive answer. Therefore it seems that women are far more concerned to the new fashion trends to clothing, than men are. Moreover to the question concerning the frequency of clothing purchasing there are significant differences between the two sexes. Only 33, 3% of men buy very often, while the number of women that purchase clothes very often is 66, 7%. In general it seems that women buy clothes in greater frequency than men. In contrary men have answered that they buy clothes rarely. In the following (Figure 4) the frequency of clothing purchasing can be better shown.

Figure 4: The frequency of clothing purchasing



As it is shown, women buy clothes at a greater frequency than men do. Men do not seem to be very interested in buying clothes frequently. Therefore women can be better considered as heavy users in the market of fashion clothing. They buy clothes often and they do follow fashion, in contrary to men who do not care about fashion at the same degree to women.

3.2. Descriptive statistics

Materialism: materialistic values referred to the level of possessions as definition of success, acquisitions centrality, and acquisitions as the pursuit of happiness.

As far as it concerns the level of possessions as definitions of success, it is not seems to be a significant difference between the two sexes. Both men and women seem to disagree to the question that “people who own to their possession expensive things are happy”. Both men and women the answers varied close to disagree. To the question concerning acquisition centrality, both men and women agree that they purchase material goods in order to lift their mood. However women seem to have a slight difference concerning the purchase of goods in order to feel better, the 74, 8% agrees to that statement. On the other hand 59, 5 % of men

agree to this notion. Therefore although the mean for this question tend to agree, the number of women that agree is higher to men. It seems therefore that women do buy on impulse just in order to lift their mood. Men are also doing that but not at the same level. In question that states “I only buy only the things I need” men tend to agree more than women.

It can be easily concluded that men purchase only things that seem to be useful to them, in contrary to women that do not agree to that notion. This question can also check the level of impulse to the purchases of goods, 7% of women 49, 7% disagrees to that statement in contrary to men that only 25, 7 % disagrees to that notion. In question that states “you can tell a lot about people from the clothes they wear” both men and women agree. The percentage of those that agree to that statement is the same for the two sexes.

Therefore it can be concluded that clothes is a being seen as a tool to a person’s social identity. Young people seem to use clothes as means of showing their ideal self through clothing. In order to identify the level of regret that a consumer may have towards a purchase the 60,4 % of women have purchased clothes that they have never wear while at the same time 45.8 % of men have regret for a purchase. As far as it concerns the purchasing of goods in order to impress their social surrounding, both the two sexes seem to disagree. Moreover there is not significant difference to this statement. A difference can also be identified to the notion that shopping is a recreational activity. The 77.6 % of women agree in contrary to men. As far as it concerns acquisition as the pursuit of happiness, both men and women agree that their life would be better if they had more material goods or they had the money to purchase them. Also 41, 5 % of men agree that their life would be better if they had in possession of more material goods, and 42.6 % of women also agree. Furthermore of men and women agree that they would be happier if they had the money to buy more material goods.

Therefore it can be assumed that young consumers do not consider material goods as measurements of success, however they agree that material goods can provide happiness.

Furthermore women seem to consider shopping as a recreational activity in contrary to men. Moreover impulse as a trait can be identified in women's consuming behaviour in contrary to men who seem to buy only the things they need.

Personality traits: As far as personality traits of young consumers the level of involvement is defined as the extent to which the consumer views the focal activity as a central part of their life, a meaningful and engaging activity in their life. High fashion clothing involvement implies greater relevance to the self.

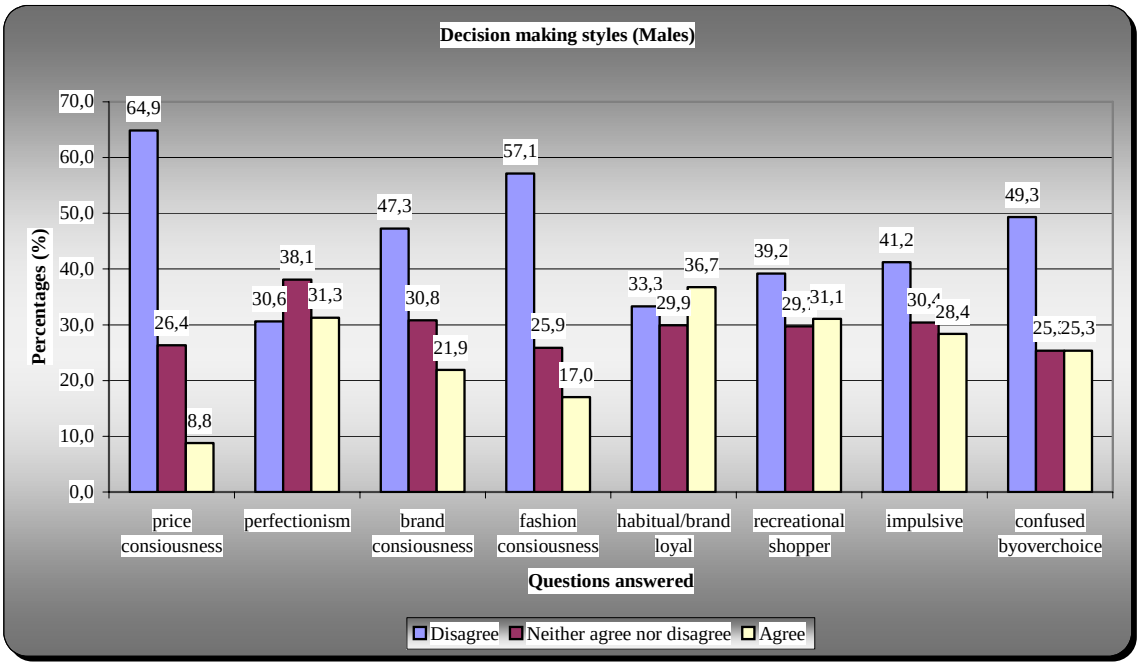
Both the sexes don't seem to reveal great innovative behaviour. To the statement "I usually am from the first to buy something new on the market" only 14.3% of women agree. Furthermore both men and women don't seem to consider clothing purchasing as something of significant importance to their everyday life. However there is a significant difference to the degree of knowledge that men and women have in the field of fashion clothing. 44.4 % of women consider having a high degree of knowledge on fashion clothing, in contrary to men. 35.6 % of women believe that clothing reveal their identity, while 24% of men seem to believe that.

However both men and women don't agree to the statement that fashion clothing can make them more likeable to their friends and family. It seems therefore that there is a significant difference to the level of opinion leadership, knowledge, involvement and social identity as far as it concerns different personality traits of young consumers. Women tend to oppose their opinion to others as far as it concerns the purchasing of clothing, and are also more involved to the field of clothing. They identify fashion clothing as an aspect of great importance to their lives. Furthermore they believe to have a high level of knowledge concerning fashion clothing, in contrary to men who do not seem to share the same level of knowledge. However

both men and women consider clothes as means that help them fit into different social occasions.

Decision making styles: Theory proposes that consumers can be categorised into different decision-making styles concerning their purchases of products. Therefore the next question tries to identify the different decision making styles of young-consumers and the differences between the two sexes. (Figure 5) shows the answers to the questions concerning the different decision making styles.

Figure 5: Decision making styles



As far as it concerns price both men and women are not fashion consciousness concerning their purchases. They do not compromise with products that are of not sufficient quality. 31.9% of men seek for quality despite the price. 29, 25% of women are also looking to buy the best quality in spite of the price. However consumers don't seem to be brand consciousness. 47, 3% of men and 51, 7% of women disagree to the notion that the higher the price of a product, the higher the quality of it. Although women have found to be affected by

fashion trends, however they don’t seem to be fashion consciousness concerning their purchases of clothes. Men also don’t seem to be affected by fashion to their purchases.

However a great difference can be identified as far as it concerns the brand loyalty. 36.73 % of men tend to buy from the same store and prefer the same brand every time, in contrary to women who don’t seem to prefer the same stores every time. Only 27, 21% of women tend to buy the same brand repeatedly. Great difference between men and women can be identified in the decision making style that views shopping as an enjoyable activity. Women enjoy the stimulation of looking for and choosing products. According to the statistics women seem to be recreational shoppers. They consider shopping as an enjoyable activity regardless to whether they want to buy something or not. Furthermore they are considered as impulsive buyers. They do not plan their purchases and are unconcerned to the amount of money they plan to spend.

According to theory impulsive buyers can regret their purchases later. On the other hand men seem to be more habitual consumers and brand loyal. They tend to buy from a specific store and prefer the same brand every time. However they seem to lack confidence to themselves and are confused by the over choice of products. The follow graphics shows better the different decision-making styles and the differences between the two sexes.

The marketing mix: The above question refers to the different channels for receiving depicts the answers (Table 3):

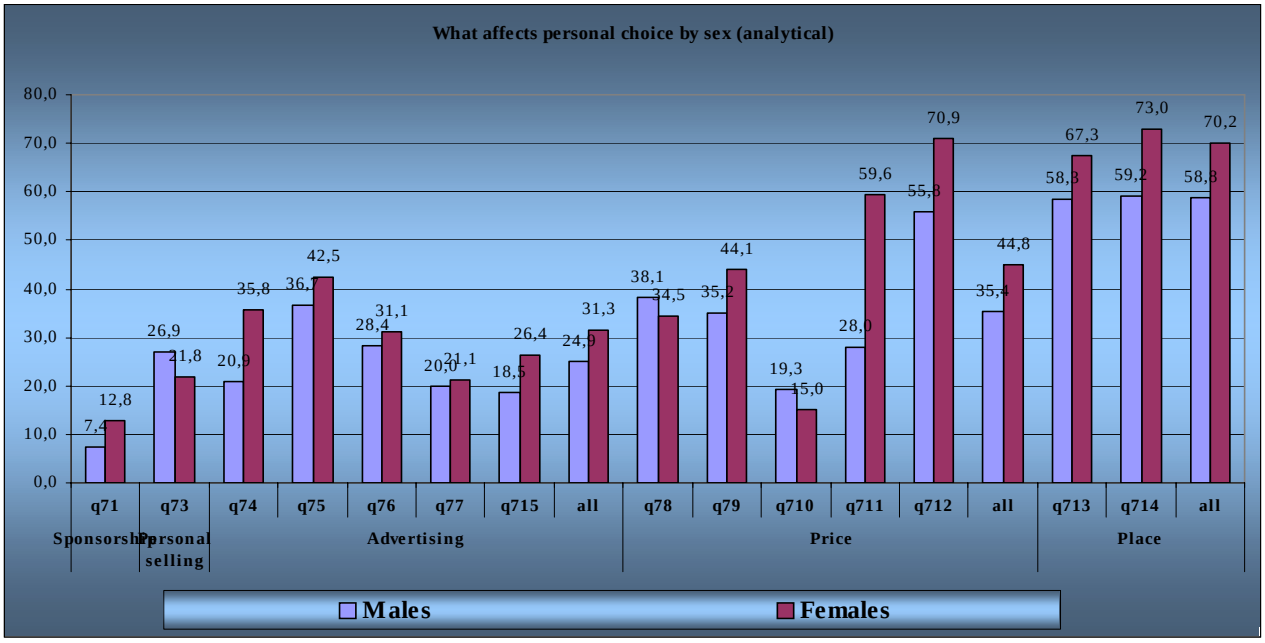
Table 3: Receiving current fashion trend information

MARKETING COMMUNICATION TOOLS	MEN			WOMEN			BOTH SEXES		
	number	% by sex	% by tool	number	% by sex	% by tool	number	% by sex	% by tool
MAGAZINES	56	**37,6**	**18,1**	93	**62,4**	**27,1**	**149**	100,0	22,8
T.V.	74	45,1	23,9	90	54,9	26,2	**164**	100,0	25,1
RADIO	10	50,0	3,2	10	50,0	2,9	20	100,0	3,1
NEWSPAPERS	22	**57,9**	7,1	16	**42,1**	4,7	38	100,0	5,8
SOCIAL SUROUNDIN	90	51,4	**29,0**	85	48,6	**24,8**	**175**	100,0	26,8
THE INTERNET	34	**60,7**	**11,0**	22	**39,3**	**6,4**	56	100,0	8,6
BIILBOARDS	24	47,1	7,7	27	52,9	7,9	51	100,0	7,8
TOTAL *	310	47,5	100,0	343	52,5	100,0	653	100,0	100,0
*IT IS A MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTION									

Both men and women seem to choose television as a channel for receiving information. However there is a great difference as far as it concerns the fashion magazines. More women prefer fashion magazines in contrary to men who are more affected by their social surrounding. Instead to fashion magazines men show that they use the Internet for receiving information in contrary to women. However both men and women seem to choose fashion magazines, television, and their social surrounding, in order to acquire knowledge that affects their purchasing behaviour.

As far as it concerns the marketing mix, the next question shows the influence of the marketing mix to the consumers' behaviour. Figure 6 illustrates the answers to the question concerning the influence of the marketing mix to the purchasing activity of young consumers

Figure 6: Marketing mix affects the gender purchasing



contrary to men who don't seem so enthusiastic. Nevertheless the both sexes disagree to the statement "low-price clothes attract you to buy". 46.9 % of women and 44.1 % of men disagree to this assertion. Even so women seem more willing to enter a store that makes offers, in contrary to men that don't seem that willing. 59, 6 % of women are willing to enter to a store when it is on sale even though they might don't need to buy anything. Only 28 % of men agree to the idea.

However both the sexes seem to be affected by the store atmosphere and the service of the store. 67.3% of women agree to the statement "good service has a positive affect on my purchasing decision". Young consumers seem to be very affected by the store atmosphere. 73 % of women agree that the good atmosphere of a store makes them more willing to repeat their purchases from there. 59.2 % of men also agree that store atmosphere affects them in repeating their purchases from there. On the other hand shocking advertising doesn't seem to affect consumers' decision making. To the statement "controversial advertising has a positive affect on me" only 26.4% of women seem to agree, while 18.5 % of men agree to this notion.

As a general view it can be concluded that the store atmosphere can have a positive affect to consumers decision-making as far as it concerns fashion clothing. Furthermore women are more willing to purchase clothes that are on offer in contrary to men who don't seem so enthusiastic to the idea.

Price strategies and store atmosphere seem to affect both men and women. Women are more affected by special offers, but on the other hand are more willing to pay a high price when it concerns its quality and brand name. Furthermore women are keener on entering a store that is on sale whether they want to buy or not. The following Accept from personal selling that affects men most, all the other components of the marketing mix seem to affect mostly women. They seem to be more influenced by the store atmosphere, the advertising campaigns and the sponsorship. Furthermore pricing strategies seem to affect them most. Taking into consideration that women are mostly involved into fashion clothing it can be concluded that people that are involved to a product are keener to attain knowledge for the product and also pay more attention to advertisements concerning the product. Men are more affected by personal selling because they are not so self-confident. They are confused by over choice and afraid that they will not make the right purchase. Therefore they tend to hear the salesperson to what they propose to them.

3.3. Factor Analysis

The data were analyzed using principle components with varimax rotation method, followed by correlation and reliability estimates. Furthermore the analysis of the scales showed acceptable reliability with Cronbach's alpha 0.838. This value is >0.7 so the scale can be considered reliable with our sample. 31 items were subjected to principal components analysis using SPSS version 12. Prior to performing PCA the suitability of data for factor analysis was assessed. Inspection of the correlation matrix revealed the presence of many

coefficients 0f 0.3 and above. The Kaise-Meyer value was 0.835 exceeding the recommended value of 0.6 (Kaiser 1970, 1974) and the Bartlett's test of Sphericity (Bartlett 1954) reached statistical significance, supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. The Table 4 shows the reliability statistics.

Table 4: Reliability statistics

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		**0,835**
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2623,807
	df	465,000
	Sig.	**0,000**

Total variance Explained gives eigenvalues, variance explained and cumulative variance explained for the factor solution. With four factors 41.33% of the total variance is being explained. (Table 5).

Table 5: Total Variance Explained

Component	**Initial Eigenvalues**			**Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings**		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	**6,906**	22,276	22,276	3,546	11,440	11,440
2	**2,150**	6,935	29,211	3,371	10,873	22,312
3	**1,999**	6,449	35,660	3,115	10,047	32,359
4	**1,666**	5,373	41,033	2,689	8,674	**41,033**

The emerged factors from the factor analysis (Table 6) are referring to the personality traits related to fashion clothing involvement. After rotation first factor with eigenvalue 6.996 explained 22.276% of the total variance. Consumers that are highly involved with fashion clothing, feel to have sufficient level of knowledge concerning the product and the new trends. Furthermore they consider fashion clothing as a central activity to their lives, and appear to be innovators and opinion leaders.

Factor 2 is called “fashion products as medium to construct social and personal identity” and includes items such as the use of fashion clothing in order consumers to reveal their ideal self, and also reveals the connection between the usage of clothing as a medium to fit into social environment and feel desirable. This factor with eigenvalue 2.150 explained 6.935% of the total variance. Young consumers use apparel products and especially clothing in order to fill in the gap between their real selves and their ideal concept of who they would like to be. Therefore clothes are used as means of showing to others this ideal concept of self. Furthermore clothes are accepted as means that help to fit into their social surrounding and be accepted by their environment.

Table 6: Factor Analysis

Rotated Component Matrix				
Variables	**Product involvement and personal traits**	**Fashion clothing as a medium for personal and social identity**	**Impulse behavior**	**Materialistic factors**
Knowledge concerning fashion clothing	0.716			
Knowledge concerning the new fashion trends	0.664			
Knowledge amongst my social surrounding	0.577			
Innovation as a personality trait of fashion involvement	0.567			
Fashion clothing as products related to high involvement	0.413			
Fashion involvement as an activity to young consumers’	0,377			
Product involvement leading to opinion leadership	0.328			
Fashion clothing as a medium to fit into the social environment		0.769		
Fashion clothing as a medium to feel more desirable		0.534		
Fashion clothing as a medium of acceptance		0.641		
Fashion clothing reveals the ideal self		0.579		
impulsive behavior and mood			0.682	

buying as a recreational activity			0.667	
shopping being identified as a an activity that reveals joy			0.622	
impulsive behavior and feelings of regret			0.442	
unplanned purchasing of goods (impulsive behavior)			0.361	
possessions as criterion of success				0.653
acquisitions as the pursuit of happiness				0.620
the purchasing of expensive material goods				0.322
financial growth as criterion of happiness				0.578
the purchasing of goods despite their price				0.531
material possessions as indicator of success				0.477
purchasing of products in order to impress others				0.601

Factor 3 is called “impulsive behavior” and includes items such as the connection between impulsive behavior and mood, shopping as a recreational activity, unplanned purchases and feelings of regret. This factor with eigenvalue 1.999 explained 6.449% of the total variance. Young consumers’ behavior reveals impulsiveness. Women mostly gather shopping to be a recreational activity that gives them joy and can lift up their mood.

The fourth factor is called “materialistic values” and is related to relate to possessions as defining success, acquisition centrality and acquisition as the pursuit of happiness. This factor with eigenvalue 1.666 explained 5.373% of the total variance. Materialistic values can lead to the purchasing of goods as means to impress others, or as indicators of success, or even as means to happiness. Hence because apparel products and especially clothing are products, which are often used from people to impress, or show off, therefore, people that have materialistic values are more probable to be highly involved to fashion clothing.

The factor analysis revealed the presence of four components regarding young consumers’ behavior. Young consumers are more likely to purchase on impulse, without a previous planning, either for the things they want to buy or for the amount of money they want to

spend. Furthermore it seems as if young consumers have materialistic values. They consider possessions as indicators of success, and acquisitions as the pursuit of happiness. They purchase goods in order to impress their social surrounding and to feel better. Moreover they use clothes in order to fulfill the gap between themselves and the ideal self they want to impose to their environment. They consider fashion clothing as a medium that will help them construct their social and personal identity. Clothes help them fit into social gatherings and feel more desirable amongst their friends. They are highly involved with fashion clothing and therefore they believe to have sufficient level of knowledge concerning apparel products. Moreover the involvement with a product demonstrates many personality traits. Consumers tend to impose their opinion to others and become opinion leaders. Furthermore they fell confident about the degree of certainty that his or her evaluative judgment of a brand, whether favorable or unfavorable, is correct. That comes up from the level of knowledge they feel to have concerning fashion clothing and the new trends of fashion.

3.4. The Kruscall-Wallis test

The Kruskall-Wallis test was conducted in order to identify the level of relationship between different variances.

The first test was conducted in order to identify the relationship of the four factors and sex. Table 7, shows the relationship of the four factors and gender while Table 8 shows the findings of the test.

Ranks

	gender	N	Mean Rank
product involvement	men	133	127,68
	women	131	137,40
	Total	264	
self identity	men	133	151,52
	women	131	113,19
	Total	264	
impulsive behaviour	men	133	98,41
	women	131	167,11
	Total	264	
materialistic values	men	133	124,47
	women	131	140,65
	Total	264	

Table 7: The relationship of the four factors and gender

Test Statistics(a,b)				
	REGR factor score 1 for analysis 1	REGR factor score 2 for analysis 1	REGR factor score 3 for analysis 1	REGR factor score 4 for analysis 1
Chi-Square	1,0696	16,6296	53,4406	2,9617
df	1	1	1	1
Asymp. Sig.	0,3010	0,0000	0,0000	0,0853
a	Kruskal Wallis Test			
b	Grouping Variable: sex			

Table 8: The finding of the test

The results suggest that the significance level for factor 1 and factor 4 is not acceptable (>0, 05). There is a difference concerning factor 2 and factor 3 between men and women. An inspection of the mean ranks for the groups suggests that men had the highest factor 2 scores and that women had the highest factor 3 scores. Therefore men are more related to factor2, which is “fashion clothing as medium of construct personal identity”. However women are more related to factor 3 that is “impulsive behaviour”. Thus women are more related to impulsive behaviour.

The second test was conducted in order to identify the relationship between the factors and the frequency of purchasing. Table 9 depicts the findings of the test while Table 10 identifies the relationship between the factors and the frequency of purchasing.

Test Statistics(a,b)				
	REGR factor score 1 for analysis 1	REGR factor score 2 for analysis 1	REGR factor score 3 for analysis 1	REGR factor score 4 for analysis 1
Chi-Square	8,8050	36,8480	39,1110	13,4530
df	2	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	0,0120	0,0000	0,0000	0,0010
a	Kruskal Wallis Test			
b	Grouping Variable: q3			

Table 9: The finding of the test

The results suggest that the significance level for all factors is acceptable. An inspection of the mean ranks depict that product involvement is related to high frequency of purchasing. Self-identity is not related to the frequency of purchasing, in contrary to impulsive behaviour that is related to frequent purchasing. The mean rank of materialism shows that materialistic values are not related to frequent purchasing. Consequently consumers who are highly involved with fashion clothing purchase clothes real often. Therefore there is close relationship between the frequency of clothes and the involvement with them. Furthermore consumers that use to purchase on impulse tend to purchase clothes frequently.

The next test tries to understand the relationship between self-identity and fashion clothing involvement. Table10 shows the relationship.

Ranks			
	involvement	N	Mean Rank
self identity	totally dissagree	41	60,10
	dissagree	93	119,30
	neither dissagree nor agree	75	165,60
	agree	49	163,98
	totally agree	7	175,86
	Total	265	

Table 10: Relationship between self-identity and fashion clothing involvement

The significance level is <0, 05 and therefore is acceptable. The mean rank shows that totally agree had the highest self-identity scores. Hence there is close relationship between self-identity, and fashion clothing involvement. Therefore there can be concluded that young consumers try to construct their social and personal identity through the involvement with clothes. Therefore the construction of personal identity can be considered as antecedent to fashion clothing involvement.

4. Discussion

The present research has revealed important findings concerning gender differences relating to fashion clothing involvement, in a framework of related antecedents and consequences relating to fashion clothing involvement. According to the research, materialistic values contribute to an individual's involvement with apparel products. Furthermore consumer's involvement is regarded as a continuum from total connection with fashion clothing and related activities. A key question to marketers therefore to understand consumers' behavior and their decision-making process is to identify the level of knowledge about fashion clothing. The more fashion clothing engages in the consumer's life the greater the involvement will be in the product.

Young consumers and especially men seem to seek for products that demonstrate their personalities or status. However they don't give the impression that they are into brand names. Nevertheless they are into quality clothes. Concentration on quality is recommended since quality was highly rated by the responders. Furthermore, as far as it concerns advertising, it seems that young consumers belong to a generation that is not so affected by advertising. They appear to be skeptical towards advertising campaigns, and they seem to be affected only by interested advertising.

Thus marketers should focus on creating advertisements that create and reinforce positive attitude towards a brand. Furthermore advertisements should be designed so as to be open to different meanings and therefore let the consumers bring their own meanings to the advertisements and to the interpretation of the product. Furthermore according to the findings of the research, consumers aren't keen of advertisements where a prominent personality is in the lead. In conclusion, young consumers seem to be informed mostly by fashion magazines, television and their social surrounding. Hence advertisements should be mostly placed in fashion magazines and television.

Furthermore mouth-to-mouth advertising should have a positive effect on young consumers' attitude towards a product. As far as it concerns pricing strategies, it seems that women are very much affected by sales and clothes that are on offers. However both men and women seem to prefer to pay a higher price for a product of sufficient quality.

Nevertheless marketers should take into consideration women's urge into impulsive purchases. Women were found to have a positive buying emotion, cognitive deliberation, mood management, and unplanned purchases. They were also found to differ from men in terms of frequency with which they purchase. Marketers therefore should focus on those components of women's impulsive behavior. They should try to eliminate concerns that the purchase would be unwise, by providing cognitive aspects of impulse buying. Retailers can increase the level of temptation by eliminating barriers that can lead the individual to call off the decision to buy.

Due to the fact that consumers tend to consider shopping as a recreational activity, the attractive atmosphere, appropriate lighting, music and aromas enhance mood and emotions, which affect impulsive behavior. A deeper understanding of the psychology of shopping concerning the store atmosphere and the environment interface is essential for the retailers. Fashion store environments need to be fine tuned and constantly reevaluated in order to

always meet the customer's expectations, and therefore move constantly towards quality marketing orientation. Moreover retailers must be very careful of merchandise placement failure. Careful merchandising of the products that are impulsively purchased more frequent than others can lead to the incensement frequency of impulse purchases.

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