

GENDER AND SHOPPING BEHAVIOR OUTCOMES IN THE CONTEXT OF SHOPPING CENTERS

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Abstract

Understanding consumer behavior can be divided into three parts: before visiting the stores or shopping centers, during the visit, and after. From the point of view of the final result intended by retailers, satisfying customers in terms of profitability, all three components are equally important. A relevant segmentation criterion for most products and stores is gender. Review of literature indicates various degrees of the impact of gender on shopping motivations, on the way people shop and on shopping behavior outcomes. The present research intends to investigate if there are, indeed, differences between shopping behavior outputs of women and men (affective loyalty (satisfaction) and conative loyalty), as found by certain researchers, and also in terms of the factors that influence the formation of conative loyalty. The results confirm that there are few significant differences in the satisfaction level, although for women all values are slightly higher, and none in the repurchase and recommendation intentions between the two genders. Conative loyalty formation (defined as intent to repurchase and recommend) takes place differently between the two genders.

Key words: *gender; recommendation intention; repurchase intention; satisfaction; shopping behavior outcomes.*

JEL Classification: *M31, M39.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The ultimate goal of any business, including retailing, is profit. Understanding shopping outcomes can help marketers in their endeavor to develop more suitable marketing strategies to satisfy their customers' shopping motives (Jin and Kim, 2003, p. 403). It is widely accepted that consumer loyalty minimizes marketing costs, maximizes profits and long-term prosperity of companies. Therefore, loyalty is an effective tool for getting profit. For this reason, it is a concept commonly found and researched in literature.

Researchers and academics have not reached a consensus on the concept of loyalty (Uncles et al, 2003; East et al, 2005). Although loyalty has been defined in various ways, there are two main approaches: behavioral and attitudinal (Day, 1969; Dick and Basu, 1994). In earlier days, most researchers had focused on the behavioral concept, measuring loyalty as repeat purchase frequency, relative volume of same brand purchasing, repurchase probability, long-term choice probability or switching (Yi and La, 2004, p. 353), past purchases of the same brand or patronage of the same store and/ or probability of future purchase given past purchase behaviors (Dick and Basu, 1994), share of wallet (Sirdeshmukh et al, 2002). More recently, loyalty has been defined from the attitudinal perspective as well. Attitudinal loyalty is operationalized as brand preference or emotional commitment, and measured as the level of satisfaction, intention of repeat purchase (Cronin and Taylor, 1992), recommendation intention (Yi and La, 2004, p. 354), resistance to alternatives, even to better ones, or willingness to pay a higher price. The measures used in this research include satisfaction and recommendation and repurchase intentions. Attitudinal loyalty includes cognitive, affective, and conative aspects (Oliver, 1999). This paper addresses the concept from Oliver's (1999) standpoint, confirmed by Yavas and Babakus (2009) and Abrudan et al (2015). According to this approach, loyalty has four phases: cognitive, affective, conative and behavioral.

The purpose of this article is to investigate if indeed there are differences between shopping behavior outputs in shopping centers between men and women, as some researchers have found. Affective loyalty (satisfaction) and conative loyalty (recommendation and repurchase intent) are analyzed. Comparisons between genders are extended to the level of the factors that influence the formation of conative loyalty. If between conative and behavioral loyalty the direct relationship of determination is widely accepted, the rapport between satisfaction and repurchase and recommendation intentions is controversial. This is why the aim of the research is to determine whether the factors that predict intention to repurchase or recommend the shopping center are the same for women and men and which they are.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Shopping behavior outcomes – satisfaction, repurchase intention and recommendation intention

Satisfaction (Dawson et al, 1990; Dobre and Milovan-Ciuta, 2015), repatronage intention (Wakefield and Baker, 1998), desire to stay (Wakefield and Baker, 1998) and consumer spending level (Babin and Darden, 1996) are among the most researched retail shopping outcomes (Jin and Kim, 2003, p. 403; Curtis et al, 2011, p. 1). The current research investigates satisfaction and intentions to recommend and repurchase. They are considered equivalents for affective and conative loyalty from Oliver's model. According to this, loyalty has four phases: cognitive, affective, conative and behavioral. Customers' cognitive evaluations of a brand (store) against other brands / stores take place at the cognitive level. The level of emotional loyalty involves affective preferences and emotions (satisfaction), built on several purchase occasions that create satisfaction to consumers. The level of conative loyalty (of behavioral intention) refers to customers' return intentions, to their intent to make new purchases and recommend the store. Action loyalty, the last level, involves the formation of habitual buying.

Customer satisfaction is a fundamental marketing concept. On the surface, it seems to be an uncomplicated concept (Mishra and Srivastava, 2011, p. 242). But it has multiple definitions, which have evolved over time. Traditionally it has been described as the fulfillment of consumer expectations. In this sense it is considered a cognitive phenomenon and results from the comparison of the expected experience with the one received. Some authors treat it as an emotional concept (Olsen, 2007) and define it as the personal assessment of the pleasure felt, noting that it is a cumulative concept and not specific to a single transaction. Other authors describe it both as a cognitive phenomenon and as an emotion, saying that it can be explained through cognitive assessment and emotional reaction, based on the comparison between expectations and perceived performance (Westbrook, 1980; Westbrook, 1981; Burns and Neisner, 2006). Ultimately, one can say it is an important measure of customer overall feelings and attitudes (Shun and Yunjie, 2006, p. 276). Mishra and Srivastava (2011, p. 242) have tried to summarize the definitions and present the main features of the concept. In their opinion, satisfaction is "1. Some type of emotional (affective), cognitive and / or an impulse (conative) response; 2. Established on an assessment of product-related standards, product consumption experiences, and or purchase-related attributes; 3. Articulated before choice, after choice, after consumption, after extended experience, or just about any other time a researcher may enquire consumer about the product or product related attributes".

Shopping centers' shoppers or visitors satisfaction has two major components - on the one hand, the satisfaction accumulated during the visit (shopping experience), and the second - in case they have made purchases, satisfaction with the products and services purchased. The satisfaction with the shopping experience is, in turn, made up of (Hawkins and Mothersbaugh, 2010, p. 633): satisfaction with the buying process, generated by the information available, pricing, merchandising, buying experience - relations with sales personnel, their knowledge, etc. (Garton, 1995, p. 33) and satisfaction with the store where the product is bought, which causes about 30% of the variance in satisfaction (Sathish and Venkatesakumar 2011, p. 73).

According to the findings of Payne (1994), 12 positive experiences are needed to offset the effects of a single negative experience, and the cost of attracting a new customer is five times that of retaining an existing customer. As a result, organizations must focus on the perceived satisfaction of their customers (Newell et al, 2011, p. 131). Satisfaction is positively associated with relative attitude, repurchase intentions, likelihood of recommending a product or service, loyalty and profitability (Dick and Basu, 1994; Sivadas and Baker-Prewitt, 2000, p. 75; Wong and Yu, 2003, p. 68; Carpenter and Fairhurst, 2005; Shun and Yunjie, 2006, p. 284; Curtis et al, 2011, p. 3; Mishra and Srivastava, 2011, p. 243). At the same time, dissatisfaction has been considered a primary reason for losing customers (Sivadas and Baker-Prewitt, 2000, p. 75).

Customer's recommendations play a major role in influencing the opinions of other people (Mishra and Srivastava, 2011, p. 244). Recommendation of a store is highly associated with repurchase probability, because this might strengthen consumer's own attitude toward that store (Sivadas and Baker-Prewitt, 2000, pp. 78-79).

Gender and shopping behavior outcomes

Previous research suggests that gender influences the way people shop (Buttle, 1992). In general, women enjoy shopping more than men (Meyers-Levy and Sternthal, 1991; Polegato and Zaichkowsky, 1994). In addition, research demonstrates that women report more positive shopping behavior outcomes than men – such as *satisfaction, recommendation and repurchase intentions*. In general, research shows that women are more satisfied than men with shopping activities (Bryant and Cha, 1996; Mittal and Kamakura, 2001; Yavas et al, 2004; Helgesen and Nettet, 2010; Morrell and Jayawardhena, 2010; Maurer Herter et al, 2014). Also, they tend to involve themselves more in *recommending and have higher repurchase intentions than men* (Meyers-Levy and Sternthal, 1991; Mittal and Kamakura, 2001; Yavas et al, 2004; Maurer Herter et al, 2014, p. 780). In relation to repurchase intentions, research shows that women are usually more loyal customers and are more likely to return to the same store than men (Ndubisi, 2006; Noble et al, 2006; Pan and Zinkhan, 2006; Yavas and Babakus, 2009; Helgesen and Nettet, 2011; Maurer Herter et al, 2014).

Research also shows that satisfaction affects other shopping behavior outcomes (Sivadas and Baker-Prewitt, 2000), such as *recommendation* (Johnson et al, 2003) and *return / repurchase intentions* (Helgesen and Nettet, 2010). However, the relationship is not linear, as many researchers noted, and there may be moderators affecting the satisfaction – repurchase intention relationship, such as personal characteristics - variety seeking, age, and income (Homburg and Giering, 2001) and others.

The aim of this research is to test whether there are differences in shopping behavior outcomes (satisfaction, repurchase and recommendation intentions) between men and women and between the construction processes of repurchase intention of the two genders. The hypotheses formulated are:

- H1: Women do not have significantly higher shopping center behavior outcomes compared to men.
- H1a: Women do not have significantly higher shopping satisfaction compared to men in shopping centers.
- H1b: Women do not have significantly higher repurchase intention than men to shopping centers.
- H1c: Women do not have significantly higher recommendation intention than men for shopping centers.
- H2: Recommendation intention is determined by the same factors for the two genders.
- H3: Repurchase intention is determined by the same factors in case of men and women.
- H4: Repurchase intention is influenced by recommendation intention for both genders.

III. METHODOLOGY

This research focuses on certain aspects of shopping centers customers' behavior. In order to ensure validity of the research, the study population must be representative in terms of social, demographic, professional, etc. characteristics. Since shopping centers are located within or in close proximity to large urban areas, Cluj-Napoca, the second urban agglomeration in Romania, has been selected to perform the survey. The study population consists of shoppers from Cluj-Napoca, 15 years and older. The sampling method is a combination of systematic sampling based on Cluj-Napoca's postal codes with quota sampling, using as variables gender and age of respondents. Data collection has been conducted at respondents' homes to allow for optimum filling in of the questionnaire. Approximately 700 questionnaires have been collected. Of the respondents, only 574 are customers of shopping centers and have answered every question.

Shopping outcomes refers to satisfaction, repurchase and recommendation intentions. All these results have been measured on a six-step Likert scale, from totally disagree to totally agree. If repurchase and recommendation intentions have been measured using a single item for each, satisfaction has been measured through several variables. The aim has been to capture the various aspects of the shopping centers that can generate satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The items used in measuring satisfaction are: "I find here everything I need", "I find here all the shops I like", "I like the products I have purchased", "The visit at the shopping center has been pleasant", "I am satisfied with the super - / hypermarket", "I am satisfied with clothing and footwear stores in the shopping center", "Overall, I am satisfied with the shopping center".

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

To test the hypothesis that women do not manifest higher shopping outcomes than men, t test for equality of means has been performed. In table 1, the t-test results are reported twice. The first line ("equal variances assumed") undertakes that the assumption of equal variances has been met. This is the case when significance values (sig.) for Levene's Test for Equality of Variances (F) exceed the 0.05 threshold. In case of equal variances, the corresponding value of the t test is on the first line. The independent samples t-test compares the difference in the means from the two groups to a given value (usually 0). In other words, it tests whether the difference in the means is 0. The significance level (2-tailed) for the t test is above 0.1, except for two variables "pleasant visit" and "satisfaction with super / hyper", which signifies that, on average, women do not have higher shopping satisfaction, repurchase and recommendation intentions than men. This conclusion is reinforced by the mean values for both men and women for all those variables. Even though it is noted that for all items expressing shopping outcomes, satisfaction and intent to repurchase and recommend, the mean value for females is higher than for men, this difference is not statistically significant, except for the assertion that the visit has been pleasant, at the level of 0.05% and at 0.1% level for the satisfaction with the food anchor. Therefore, hypothesis H1a is partially confirmed, while H1b and H1c are accepted.

Table 1. Independent samples test - t-test for equality of means

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	95% Confid. Int. of the Diff.		Gen	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean
									Lower	Upper				
Stores I like	EVA	0.024	0.877	-0.583	566	0.560	-0.049	0.084	-0.213	0.116	<i>M</i>	4.50	1.006	0.063
	EVNA			-0.581	539.138	0.561	-0.049	0.084	-0.214	0.116	<i>F</i>	4.54	0.981	0.056
Everything I need	EVA	2.702	0.101	-1.028	560	0.305	-0.100	0.098	-0.293	0.092	<i>M</i>	4.39	1.213	0.076
	EVNA			-1.018	517.165	0.309	-0.100	0.099	-0.294	0.093	<i>F</i>	4.49	1.102	0.063
Good products	EVA	14.201	0	-1.313	570	0.190	-0.089	0.067	-0.221	0.044	<i>M</i>	4.77	0.907	0.056
	EVNA			-1.281	478.847	0.201	-0.089	0.069	-0.224	0.047	<i>F</i>	4.86	0.706	0.040
Pleasant visit	EVA	13.022	0	-2.895	570	0.004	-0.207	0.071	-0.347	-0.066	<i>M</i>	4.66	0.925	0.058
	EVNA			-2.848	504.941	0.005	-0.207	0.073	-0.349	-0.064	<i>F</i>	4.87	0.782	0.044
Satisfaction super/hyper	EVA	6.855	0.009	-1.843	568	0.066	-0.128	0.069	-0.264	0.008	<i>M</i>	4.88	0.875	0.055
	EVNA			-1.822	517.455	0.069	-0.128	0.070	-0.265	0.010	<i>F</i>	5.00	0.778	0.044
Satisfaction apparel stores	EVA	0.050	0.823	-0.723	559	0.470	-0.077	0.106	-0.284	0.131	<i>M</i>	4.19	1.271	0.080
	EVNA			-0.721	530.424	0.471	-0.077	0.106	-0.285	0.132	<i>F</i>	4.27	1.227	0.070
Overall satisfaction	EVA	4.010	0.046	-1.274	567	0.203	-0.079	0.062	-0.202	0.043	<i>M</i>	5.00	0.831	0.052
	EVNA			-1.245	481.589	0.214	-0.079	0.064	-0.205	0.046	<i>F</i>	5.08	0.656	0.037
Repurchase intention	EVA	3.436	0.064	-0.578	570	0.564	-0.044	0.077	-0.196	0.107	<i>M</i>	4.97	0.980	0.061
	EVNA			-0.570	515.377	0.569	-0.044	0.078	-0.198	0.109	<i>F</i>	5.01	0.859	0.048
Recommendation intention	EVA	10.886	0.001	-1.528	570	0.127	-0.128	0.084	0-0.292	0.036	<i>M</i>	4.80	1.086	0.068
	EVNA			-1.502	502.740	0.134	-0.128	0.085	-0.295	0.039	<i>F</i>	4.93	0.912	0.051

Notes: EVA = Equal variances assumed; EVNA = Equal variances not assumed; F - Levene's Test for Equality of Variances

Hypothesis H2 refers to the recommendation intention. It assumes that recommendation intention is formed in similar way for the two genders. To determine the causal link between the dependent variable intention of recommendation and satisfaction with the shopping center, multiple linear regression has been used. Satisfaction is measured on several components: satisfaction with the visit to the shopping center, with the products purchased, with the food anchor store and with clothing and footwear stores.

There are a number of assumptions that need to be satisfied in order to perform linear regression analysis. Causality between the dependent variable and the independent ones is justified based on literature review. The inclusion of all relevant independent variables is checked by looking at the presence of a pattern in the (ZPRED, ZRESID) graph. Since no path can be noticed, it seems that all relevant variables have been taken into account and that there is a linear relationship between dependent and independent variables. The histogram of the standardized residuals shows they are more or less normally distributed. The 'normal probability plot' also displays this visually. The homoscedasticity assumption is also met, since no distinct pattern can be noticed in the (ZPRED, ZRESID) graph (Janssens et al, 2008, p. 158). No high correlation (above 0.6) between the independent variables is noted when bivariate correlation is performed. The number of outliers is very small – only 6 for men and 7 in the case of women, which means they do not represent a threat for the results obtained.

Table 2. Multiple linear regression model summary for recommendation intention

Gender	Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
						R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
M	1	0.595 ^a	0.354	0.352	0.853	0.354	137.047	1	250	0
	2	0.627^b	0.394	0.389	0.828	0.040	16.251	1	249	0
F	1	0.562 ^d	0.316	0.314	0.748	0.316	140.890	1	305	0
	2	0.584^e	0.341	0.337	0.735	0.025	11.506	1	304	0.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), The products purchased are very good

b. Predictors: (Constant), The products purchased are very good, The visit to the shopping center has been very pleasant

c. Dependent Variable: I intend to recommend it to other people

d. Predictors: (Constant), The visit to the shopping center has been very pleasant

e. Predictors: (Constant), The visit to the shopping center has been very pleasant, I am satisfied with the super- / hypermarket

Recommendation intention of the shopping center by both genders is influenced by the extent to which shopping visit is perceived as pleasant. In case of men the satisfaction obtained from the consumption or use of the products purchased is also relevant. The reason may be that, in general, men show a utilitarian motivation when it comes to shopping. Recommendation intention for women is determined by the satisfaction with the food anchor as well. One explanation is that most women are responsible for purchasing groceries in their household and frequently make purchases from the supermarket or hypermarket in the shopping center. In conclusion, hypothesis H2 is rejected.

The link between satisfaction, intention to repurchase and recommend is also modeled using multiple linear regression. The assumptions needed to perform linear regression have been verified in this case as well.

Table 3. Multiple linear regression model summary for repurchase intention

Gender	Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
						R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
M	1	0.573 ^a	0.329	0.326	0.779	0.329	122.446	1	250	0
	2	0.621 ^b	0.386	0.381	0.747	0.057	23.007	1	249	0
	3	0.637^c	0.406	0.399	0.736	0.020	8.434	1	248	0.004
F	1	0.666 ^a	0.443	0.441	0.644	0.443	242.559	1	305	0
	2	0.687^b	0.471	0.468	0.628	0.028	16.273	1	304	0

a. Predictors: (Constant), I intend to recommend it to other people

b. Predictors: (Constant), I intend to recommend it to other people, I am satisfied with the super- / hypermarket

c. Predictors: (Constant), I intend to recommend it to other people, I am satisfied with the super- / hypermarket, The visit to the shopping center has been very pleasant

d. Dependent Variable: I intend to repurchase mainly from this shopping center in the future

Analyzing the table with model summary, it is observed that recommendation intention significantly influence repurchase intention for both genders. This finding confirms the results obtained by other researchers (Sivadas and Baker-Prewitt, 2000). Thus, hypothesis H4 is confirmed. If for the recommendation intention of men satisfaction with the food anchor is not relevant, it is relevant to stimulate repurchase intention for both genders. In addition, for women it is important how pleasant the visit to the shopping center has been. Therefore, hypothesis H3 is infirmed.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The results obtained from this research confirm that there are no significant differences between the level of satisfaction experienced by women and men. Similarly, recommendation and repurchase intentions of the two genders are similar, although for women the values are slightly higher. But the formation of conative loyalty, defined as intent to repurchase and recommend is different between the genders. Recommendation intent for both genders is influenced by the satisfaction with the visit to the shopping center, and additionally, for men, by the satisfaction with the products purchased, while for females by the satisfaction with the food anchor. Repurchase intention is predicted, for both genders, by the recommendation intention and satisfaction with food anchor, and, for women, additionally by how pleasant the visit to the shopping center has been.

Table 4. Summary of hypotheses

Hypotheses	Conclusions
H1: Women do not have significantly higher shopping center behavior outcomes compared to men.	Partially confirmed
H1a: Women do not have significantly higher shopping satisfaction compared to men in shopping centers.	Partially confirmed
H1b: Women do not have significantly higher repurchase intention than men to shopping centers.	Confirmed
H1c: Women do not have significantly higher recommendation intention than men for shopping centers.	Confirmed
H2: Recommendation intention is determined by the same factors for the two genders.	Infirmed
H3: Repurchase intention is determined by the same factors in case of men and women.	Infirmed
H4: Repurchase intention is influenced by recommendation intention for both genders.	Confirmed

This research can be extended to consider shopping motivation as a factor influencing conative loyalty. Besides this, other personal factors that can influence conative loyalty can also be studied. Another line of research is the inclusion of behavioral loyalty to the shopping centers in a complete model, with personal factors as moderators.

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