

Hedonic and Utilitarian Aspect of Traditional Retail Shopping¹

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Abstract

Consumption consists of quite different concepts compared to the recent past consumption patterns. Traditional retailing has been evolving into online shopping which is getting out of timing/placing limits in this process. This transformation force traditional retailers to present something more than a mere shopping. This research aims to investigate face-to-face shopping from traditional retailers in contexts of hedonism and utilitarianism. A total of 263 respondents participated in the survey. As a result, there were no significant difference between male and female consumers in traditional retail shopping on the utilitarian aspect, but the difference for hedonism were significant. Female customers tend to shop more hedonic. Marital status does not affect the hedonic or utilitarian aspect; but there was significant difference found between employed and unemployed consumers. Unemployed consumers were found to be more hedonic in traditional retail shopping behavior.

Keywords: Hedonism, utilitarianism and hedonic consumer

1. Introduction

In our contemporary world, consumers' shopping pattern has evolved as number of small-sized retailers decreased and of shopping malls increased recently. This evolution fed by socio-economic changes emerged different consumption styles such as hedonism and utilitarianism. On the contrary to the economists who appreciate the value of a product based on the utility obtained by consumption of a good, symbolic consumption concept which puts affection and psychological utility obtained by consumption of a good has altered the view toward the consumption.

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Consumers' consumption styles are taken into consideration in two different consumption contexts: utilitarian and hedonic. This approach is under influence of various factors from consumers' demographic characteristics to their personalities; and they are rather difficult to be kept under control. It is not realistic to assess a consumer behavior as either fully hedonic or utilitarian. Each individual displays unique hedonic or utilitarian tendency. Shopping action takes place under numbers of stimulants difficult to estimate. The essential part is to support purchasing motivation by influencing this stimulus. According to Allard et al. (2009: 41), while shopping malls motivate consumers to develop hedonic values by means of restaurants, movie theatres, interiors, animations and stimulating their affection, they contribute in enrichment of utilitarian value to convince customers to make shopping. The general dual views of the value description: the first, utilitarian output obtained by following conscious chase of an envisaged result, the second, and the outputs relevant more with the hedonic responses which occur spontaneously. These two types of value are useful in explaining value shopping reward together with other behaviors (Babin et al., 1994: 645).

As the number of shopping malls taking advantage of hedonic and utilitarian factors increases, and their scope expands, consumers spend longer period of time at shopping malls. The general expectation from consumers spending more time at a shopping mall is making more purchase.

Each shopping mall needs to offer something unique to ensure their visitors to feel the best shopping experience (Allard et al., 2009: 40). In our contemporary world, offering low prices in a usual fashion, expanding business hours, providing greater selection of products or capturing the best spot in the market are not enough to guarantee the success for a retailer. Entertainment dimension of retailing, in other words, "entertailing" has been further acknowledged as a primary competition tool (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003; Allard et al., 2009). This situation requires applying hedonic motivations more than ever.

Hedonism and Utilitarianism

Pleasure expectation from consumption is usually associated with hedonism in the consumption culture. Hedonism deeply influenced the contemporary consumption society. Hedonic goods are demanded owing to their capacity to provide hedonic and symbolic utility to consumers. Hedonic experience is encountered during travel, shopping, entertainment and internet usage (Teo and Sidin, 2014: 390). The hedonism concept that we could encounter in every aspect of daily life could be result of tens of different causes and effects that could not be envisaged.

It is commonly known that ordinary people are willing to the best interest of themselves. This situation is referred to as self-love. Hedonists

consider that the concept of “the best” could be described over pleasure and pain. Nevertheless, it is not enough to explain hedonism over self-love (Chandler, 1975: 223, 232). Hedonism and intrinsic satisfaction seem competing with each other typically in accurate description of “the thing in the best interest of a person”. As hedonism describes “good life” as the one giving pleasure, the intrinsic satisfaction describes it more rigidly as “there is no need to have pleasure to be good, you just need to acquire what you need”. Although they seem quite different, these two approaches are close each other at reasonable level in description of “good life” (Heathwood, 2006: 539). In the context of marketing, although intrinsic satisfaction seems as a prioritized target, the pleasure gained throughout the shopping process could result in repeating the shopping experience in the future once more, which place emphasis on hedonism.

Hedonic value adds dimension of affection on to the shopping experience (Jones et al., 2006: 979). Hirschman and Holbrook assert that hedonic consumption reflects multi-sensual, fantasy and affection dimensions experienced by a consumer with the good. In the hedonic consumption perspective, goods are viewed as subjective symbols rather than objective (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982: 92,93).

Taking pleasure of something is temperamental motivation factor of humankind. Nevertheless, taking pleasure could also result in situations of feeling guilty or justification of consumption (Okada, 2005: 43). In such cases, consumers are found to exert utilitarian behavior which suppresses their hedonic motives.

Utilitarian view considers purchasers as rational problem solvers (Sarkar, 2011: 58). Consumers’ choices are steered by means of utilitarian and hedonic assessments. Whereas hedonic goods offer pleasant, exciting, fun-type consumption experiences in general, utilitarian goods offer more functional and mediatory consumption experience (Dhar and Wertenbroch, 2000: 60). In the utilitarian consumption, a female with high responsibility feeling towards her family prioritizes interests of her family when making decision with consumption (Liao et al., 2005: 174). These shopping decision are more realistic and irrelevant with pleasure aspect. Babin et al. (1994) implied that highly utilitarian value could explain the repeating shopping behavior although they are not pleasant; and they associated repeat of these behaviors with satisfaction of needs or with the view of them as fulfillment of a certain task.

Whereas utilitarian motivation is related with functionality of shopping, hedonic motivation is relevant with the enjoying shopping experience (Anderson et al., 2014: 774). Majority of customers, especially low-income tier, are satisfied with the efforts of stores to develop experimental satisfaction. However, efforts to facilitate purchasing process are viewed as a

reward only for high-income tier (Allard et al., 2009: 47). Utilitarian shopping value could rather be necessary. However, this is not enough for developing loyalty (Jones et al., 2006: 979).

Customers' enjoyable experiences and hedonic shopping motivations could vary from one culture to another. For hedonic experience, all shopping motivations are relevant; and the primary difference is viewed with pleasure and collective cultures against individual shopping. In an individualistic culture, if cause of pleasure or adventure shopping motivations is customer experience, shopping is highly enjoyable indeed. On the other hand, in a collectivist culture, individual pleasure from shopping is less acceptable from the social point of view (Evanschitzky et al., 2014).

The model suggested by Yim et al. (2004) asserts that stronger hedonic motivations depend on significantly increasing consumer purchase; and video-graphic analysis results of shoppers indicate that more than half of consumers hang around the departments of hedonic goods just before or after the greengrocer shopping. This situation is assessed as that satisfaction of hedonic shopping motive would contribute in retail sales (Yim et al., 2014). The present study evidences that hedonism and utilitarian shopping are indispensable concepts and rather they are complementary to each other.

Haas and Kenning (2014) conclude with the retailers that consumers' consulting to sales represents provides hedonic motivations such as enjoying shopping besides utilitarian motivation obtained in circumstances of indecisiveness. According to Jones et al. (2006), feeling satisfied with a retailer place is relevant with hedonic aspect irrelevant with the good rather than conventional utilitarian motivations such as word-of-mouth communication and expectation of revisit for shopping. On the other hand, utilitarian shopping value has stronger relationship owing to the intention of consumers' revisit for shopping from the retailer (Jones et al., 2006: 979). However, a consumer is required to enjoy the whole process for revisiting the retailer.

One of the hedonic motivation tools used for consumers to enjoy the shopping process with the retailers is fashion factor. Especially following fashion trend, imitating others, or not to fall back behind fashion feelings are intensively sensed by consumers and these feelings motivate consumers to explore the new-coming goods to the stores. Kang and Park-Poaps (2010) report that innovative fashion is highly correlated with various hedonic shopping motivations. This correlation has positive impact as adventure and shopping ideas. Pursuit of adventure and new idea result in high level of innovation in fashion and desire to try new fashion (Kang and Park-Poaps, 2010). Cinjarevic et al. (2011) find that adventure, pleasure, value and shopping idea have direct impact on impulsive purchasing.

Hedonic behavior style could differ with respect to variety of products. Teo and Sidin (2014: 390) report evident hedonic consumption behavior with regard to cosmetics goods, apparels and cell phones. On the other hand, Apaolaza-Ibáñez et al. (2011: 798) emphasized both utilitarian and hedonic positive impacts of the brand for the cosmetic goods. Whereas the hedonic impact caused by a cosmetic product is comprised of affection experience of feeling being more adorable or young, the utilitarian impact refers successful physical changes promised such as body shape, wrinkle-free appearance, tight and shining skin (Apaolaza-Ibáñez et al., 2011: 794).

In addition, there are studies reporting impact of geographical factors on consumers' display either hedonic or utilitarian behaviors. Kim (2006) implies that urban consumers display higher hedonic shopping motivation with respect to country. According to Kim (2006), for urban consumers, shopping is entertainment-based motivation and perceived as a leisure activity. The primary reason for similar findings of these two studies is the greater number of retailers and shopping malls in the city center with respect to the rural areas. Consumers are exposed to more stimulators in urban areas.

Another factor explaining the difference among consumers' behaviors is gender. Women's addiction to shopping has always put them in the center of studies on hedonic shopping; and attracted attention of researchers on women's shopping behaviors. Teo and Sidin (2014) report stereotype Malay women living in urban areas exhibit higher hedonistic behavior. According to Teo and Sidin (2014), extrovert behaviors such as "going out", "being entrepreneurial", "expansiveness", "ecstasy" "and "pursuit of adventure" are hedonic and they are found among the fundamental values of contemporary women evidently. For instance, women's going out to indulge in various atmospheres or to make shopping in order to relieve from the weight of the roles expected from contemporary women, such as an employee at the workplace or a mother at home, totally represent hedonic behavior.

Raajpoot et al. (2008) noticed in their study that male consumers mostly take behaviors of sales persons into consideration when they assess their shopping experience. On the other hand, female consumers find shopping experience more exciting when there is high product variety. Aydın (2010) reports that female consumer exhibits greater tendency towards hedonic consumption in comparison with male.

Additionally, the relevant literature includes studies implying the impact of income level on consumption style beside the gender factor. Aydın (2010) addresses significant positive correlation between the consumers' income level and hedonic shopping attitude. Female consumers who feel greater economic independence and who has greater self-esteem would think that they deserve more quality and fashionable goods with the influence of the social status and success that they acquire (Liao et al., 2005: 174). The

significant hedonic and utilitarian difference between employed and unemployed female consumers in their shopping motivation emphasize that female consumer who make their own money and who has high self-esteem would eventually tend towards hedonism.

Raajpoot (2008) compares behaviors of employed and housewife female consumers at shopping malls; and reports that employed female consumers place more emphasis on sales persons when they assess their shopping experience. The author associates this preference with the higher expectations of employed female consumers. For housewife consumers, accessibility is more important and affection responses are more influent in general shopping assessment with respect to employed female consumers (Raajpoot, 2008).

Based on overall literature review, it could be asserted that consumers' hedonic or utilitarian behaviors are subject to variety of goods, influence of fashion, consumers' location, gender and income.

Method

The objective of the study is to investigate hedonic and utilitarian consumption behaviors of consumers from Denizli City in detail. The survey method, the most widely preferred method by the social scientists, was employed in the data collection process. The convenience sampling method was preferred in the study. Totally 263 face-to-face interview was conducted with consumers in the city center. Hedonic and utilitarian shopping scale developed by Babin et al. (1994) was employed as data collection tool. Fifteen items from the aforesaid scale were translated into Turkish and adapted before using in the interview. The scale items were structured with the five-point Likert Scale.

Following hypotheses were tested in the study;

H1a: There is significant difference between consumers' hedonic and utilitarian shopping attitudes with respect to their gender.

H1b: There is significant difference between consumers' hedonic and utilitarian shopping attitudes with respect to their marital status.

H1c: There is significant difference between consumers' hedonic and utilitarian shopping attitudes with respect to their employment status.

Research Findings

Reliability and Factor Analyses

As a result of the reliability analysis conducted for evaluation for items of the scale used in the study, alpha reliability coefficient is estimated at 0.82, which suggest that the employed scale is highly reliable.

The KMO value is estimated at 0.889, which suggests that sampling is appropriate for the factor analysis. Fifteen items cluster around two factors in

the scope of the original scale (Hedonic and Utilitarian); and it is seen that total variance of these two factors explains about 50% of the change. This rate could be assessed as sufficient for further analysis.

Hypothesis Tests

Sampling group is normally distributed and homogeneity of variance is assured. Accordingly, one of the parametric tests, T-test was employed in testing of the relevant hypothesis.

According to the finding of the T-test conducted to investigate the difference between genders in terms of hedonic and utilitarian shopping attitudes, a significant difference was determined with the hedonic aspect. Where Hedonic₍₂₆₁₎= -5,33, $p < 0.05$, Utilitarian₍₂₆₁₎= 1,167, $p > 0.05$, *H1a* hypothesis is found to be partially acceptable. When fundamental statistics are taken into consideration in order to assess the difference, it could be seen that female consumers' hedonic average score is greater than the males (3.06 vs. 2.95). In terms of the utilitarian aspect, both groups display the same average score (Table 1).

Table 1. Consumers' hedonic and utilitarian attitudes with respect to their gender

Gender		N	\bar{X}	S.S	df	t	p
Hedonic approach	Male	114	2.9580	.81771	261	-5.33	.000
	Female	149	3.0629	.81565			
Utilitarian approach	Male	114	3.6138	.62850	261	1.167	.244
	Female	149	3.5421	.66762			

As a result of the T-test result conducted to investigate the difference between hedonic and utilitarian shopping attitudes with respect to respondents' marital status, no difference was determined in both dimensions. Where Hedonic₍₂₆₁₎= -,973, $p > 0.05$, Utilitarian₍₂₆₁₎= -,877, $p > 0.05$ $p > 0.05$, the *H1b* hypothesis is rejected. Married consumers' hedonic average score (2.95) is found to be lower than the single consumers (3.06). The utilitarian average score of married and single consumers are estimated at 3.6 and 3.54, respectively (Table 2).

Table 2. Consumers' hedonic and utilitarian attitudes with respect to their marital status.

Marital status		N	\bar{X}	S.S	df	t	p
Hedonic approach	Married	156	2,9580	,83456	261	-,973	,331
	Single	107	3,0629	,89190			
Utilitarian approach	Married	156	3,6138	,61588	261	-,877	,381
	Single	107	3,5421	,70081			

As a result of the T-test conducted to investigate the difference between the hedonic and utilitarian shopping attitudes with respect to respondents' employment status, a significant difference is determined with the hedonic aspect. Where $Hedonic_{(261)} = -2,72$, $p < 0.05$, $Utilitarian_{(261)} = -.526$, $p > 0.05$, the H1c hypothesis is partially accepted. When average scores are taken into consideration in order to assess the difference, employed and unemployed consumers' hedonic average are found to be 2.88 and 3.18, respectively. Within the scope of the study, unemployed consumers are found to be more hedonic. In the utilitarian aspect, both groups have similar average score (Table 3).

Table 3. Consumers' hedonic and utilitarian attitudes with respect to their employment status

Employment Status		N	\bar{X}	S.S	df	t	p
Hedonic approach	Employed	162	2.8883	.85852	261	-2.72	.007
	Unemployed	101	3.1809	.83056			
Utilitarian approach	Employed	162	3.5679	.65998	261	-.526	.599
	Unemployed	101	3.6114	.63980			

Result and Discussions

According to research findings, it could be concluded that female consumers display more hedonic behavior during shopping with respect to male consumers. This finding corresponds with the current studies in the relevant literature. Female consumers view shopping experience as exciting and fun activity. When the utilitarian dimension is taken into consideration, no significant difference was found between two genders.

It could be concluded that marital status is not influent on hedonic and utilitarian attitudes of participants during shopping. In terms of employment status of participants, unemployed participants were found to be more hedonic. The difficulty experienced by employed participants with making money could be interpreted as adverse impact on their hedonic attitude. These results are general assessment of consumers' shopping behavior. In case consumers' hedonic or utilitarian attitude is taken into consideration for different product groups, the findings could be differentiated and more detailed findings could be obtained. In order to develop effective marketing constituents, marketing managers need to explore the products upon which consumer exhibit hedonic or utilitarian attitudes by taking demographic variables into consideration.

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