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INFLUENCE OF STORE ATTRIBUTES ON SHOPPING INTENTIONS IN FACTORY OUTLET MALLS

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the effects of eight types of consumer decision-making styles and shopping behaviour on future shopping intentions at factory outlet malls. Results indicate that six out of eight decision-making styles are positively related to future shopping intentions. Conclusions drawn from the current study's findings and their implications for consumer decision-making and shopping behaviour are discussed.

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini menganalisa lapan jenis pengaruh stail pembuatan keputusan pengguna dan gelagat membeli-belah ke atas kecenderungan membeli-belah pada masa akan datang di gedung, kedai dan kilang. Keputusan menunjukkan hanya enam daripada lapan jenis stail pembuatan keputusan tersebut menunjukkan kesan positif relatif kepada kecenderungan membeli-belah pada masa akan datang. Kesimpulan yang diperoleh daripada kajian ini dan implikasinya kepada pembuatan keputusan pengguna dan gelagat membeli-belah turut dibincangkan.

INTRODUCTION

Factory outlet centres have already made a mark on the American retail landscape with an average of 50 stores per centre and average area of 142,922 square feet (Hathaway & Hughes, 2000). Growing at an annual rate of 10% per year over the last decade, there are now over 350 outlet centers in the United States and they generate 12 billion dollars of revenue annually, which is about 2.5% of total retail sales (Karande & Ganesh, 2000). Although factory outlets are located out of town (allowing for a higher regional market share), the sites are close to highway exits, providing both convenience and visibility for stop-and-shop consumers (Hathaway & Hughes, 2000; LaBay & Comm, 1991). The biggest advantage of factory outlets over other retail formats is that they offer numerous types of branded merchandise to cater for the needs of many types of market segments at 20% to 70% below regular retail prices (LaBay & Comm, 1991; Reynolds, Ganesh & Luckett, 2002).

Originally recognised as places that sold low quality and damaged merchandise, consumers have demanded more value for their money, more product variety, and greater emotional and psychological satisfaction from their purchases. Therefore, this image has changed over time (LaBay & Comm, 1991). By offering branded merchandise at comparable value, quality, and price, the factory outlet industry rose from their niche status to lure consumers away from larger retail competitors.

Understanding future shopping intentions through the identification of different types of market segments and consumer shopping behaviours will help factory outlet retailers increase their market share and position their businesses with better marketing strategies (LaBay & Comm, 1991; Fernie 1995; Karande & Ganesh, 2000). Therefore, to properly account for consumer responses to factory outlets' marketing strategies it is also necessary to understand how different consumers use product, store, brand, and price information with regards to their decision-making.

Most of the studies on factory outlets are exploratory research and only a few of them (Morganosky, 1995; Reynolds *et al.,* 2002) can be categorised as empirical research. Although previous research identified different types of consumer market segments and shopping behaviour, no researcher has examined these variables specifically in relation to their future shopping intentions at factory outlets. Karande and Ganesh (2000) and Reynolds *et al.* (2002) for example, only examined and classified the factory outlet consumer typology. The present study examines the effect of consumer decision-making styles and shopping behaviour on future shopping intentions at factory outlets and will provide useful managerial information for consumers, manufacturers, and business practitioners.

Conceptual Framework

In the current study, we examine the variables of consumer decision-making styles and shopping behaviour through the perspective of attribution theory. Swanson and Kelley (2001) defined attribution theory as "a collection of several theories that are concerned with the assignment of causal inferences and how these interpretations influence evaluations and behavior." Mowen (1990) stated that attribution theory can be applied to a wide variety of consumer behaviour. He explained that consumers are "motivated to make attributions as to the cause of actions in order to determine how to act in the future."

Attribution theory has brought new ideas to the study of consumer decision-making, shopping behaviour, and provides some explanation for the consumers' future shopping intentions. It also informs us about consumer preferences based on their decision-making, including decisions about product attributes such as product quality to which consumers refer to when buying their desired products. Additionally, attribution theory suggests that consumers' future shopping intentions depend on attributes such as personal budgets, which may restrict the consumer choice and ability to satisfy their wants and needs. By identifying the vital attributes that influence consumer decision-making and shopping behaviour, marketers can refer to important attributes that are relevant to each of the market segments. Attribution theory can also be applied to consumer shopping behaviour contexts. Behaviour is often influenced by attributes such as the distance traveled and the amount of time and money spent at outlets; these attributes may also influence the consumers' future shopping intentions (Folkes, 1988).

Hypothesis Development

The area of research relevant to the current study deals with consumer decision-making, shopping behaviour, and future shopping intentions. In understanding the relationship between consumer buying behaviour and decision-making, Walsh, Thurau, Mitchell, and Wiedman (2001) maintained that it is important to segment consumer behaviour for the purpose of retailers' strategic positioning and effective communication. Decision-making styles can be used to segment consumers, while catering to specific needs and product desirability.

Consumer Decision-Making

In order to predict future shopping intentions, researchers examine different ways to segment consumers. Sproles and Kendall (1986) defined consumer decision-making styles as mental orientations, characterising a consumer's approach in making choices. It is also a process of choosing a preferred option from different sets of alternatives. Sproles and Kendall classified eight types of consumer characteristics based on their decision-making styles, including perfectionist/high quality conscious, brand conscious/price equals quality, novelty/fashion conscious, recreational/hedonistic, price conscious/value for money, impulsive/careless, confused by overchoice, and habitual/brand loyal consumers.

Karande and Ganesh (2000) analysed consumer-shopping behaviour in factory outlet settings and identified recreational, serious, and time conscious/deal prone shoppers as characteristics of factory outlet consumers. They found that price/value merchandise, recreation, and time saving/deal seeking are among the major reasons for motivating consumers to shop at factory outlets. LaBay and Comm (1991) classified factory outlet consumers as either light or heavy users. In the study of manufacturer outlets, Morganosky (1995) distinguished between patrons and non-patrons who may be likely or unlikely to shop at factory outlets. Using Sproles and Kendall's typology, Morganosky found that patrons had perceived branded merchandise as representing a more higher quality than non-patrons did. In addition, Morganosky also found that patrons are not brand loyal consumers contradicting LaBay and Comm's finding that consumers who shop at factory outlets are more brand loyal and brand aware.

In the most recent study, Reynolds *et al.* (2002) classified factory outlet shoppers into subgroups (basic, apathetic, destination, enthusiasts, serious, and brand seekers). Although there are no standardised scales to identify a single set of consumer decision-making styles with regard to their future shopping intentions, the existing research relies on separate theoretical concepts that are useful for creating typologies for factory outlet consumers. In the current study, the work of Sproles and Kendall (1986) is of particular interest in classifying decision-making styles of factory outlet consumers.

Consumer Shopping Behaviour and Future Shopping Intentions

Although previous research had focused on the shopping behaviour of consumers in the context of store choice and attributes (Burns & Warren 1995; Tang, Bell & Ho, 2001; Davies, Goode, Moutinho & Ognonna, 2001), consumers' future shopping intentions have received little attention in retail industry literature (Eroglu, 1991). Shopping behaviour could be described as the extent to which consumers shopped at a shopping centre, measured by the frequency of trips and the typical amount of money spent per shopping trip (Shim & Eastlick, 1998).

In the consumer shopping behaviour studies, several factors have been shown to affect the shopping intentions decision. Among these factors are trip description (e.g. "this was a planned shopping trip"), location, merchandise quality, customer service, pricing policy, and store atmosphere (Kahn & Schmittlein, 1989; Baker, Levy & Grewal, 1992; Swinyard, 1993; Eppli 1994; Evans, Christiansen, & Gill, 1996). Due to longer travel hours, high number of stores, and the variety of merchandise offered at factory outlets, Karande and Ganesh (2000) stated that shoppers spend an average of more than two hours at factory outlets in comparison to an hour at traditional malls. Measuring these shopping behaviour factors may assist retail managers in predicting future shopping intentions at store outlets.

Based on previous research, we are interested in examining the link between consumer decision-making styles, shopping behaviour, and future shopping intentions in the factory outlet setting. A number of distinguishing features of eight consumer decision-making styles are used to explain the characteristics of factory outlet consumers. Our hypotheses are developed based on the review of relevant literature. The first eight of our hypotheses relate to different types of consumer decision-making styles and the last hypothesis relates to consumer shopping behaviour.

Sproles and Kendall (1986) defined perfectionist/high quality conscious consumers as those who shop carefully and systematically for the best product quality. They make product comparisons and look for the best choice to obtain a perfect decision and optimum satisfaction. Perfectionist/high quality conscious consumers are satisfied only if they have gone through an extensive decision-making process with regard to an evaluative standard that reflects their desires and values (Walsh *et al*., 2001). We beleive that these consumers feel that well-known designer brands will provide them with products of superior quality and workmanship. Factory outlets, however, do not promise superior product quality because the inventory is always changing. Since factory outlets offer branded merchandise at discount prices on overstocked and closeout items with flawed packaging (LaBay & Comm, 1991), we expect factory outlets to be an unsuitable place for perfectionist/high quality conscious consumers to shop. More specifically:

H1: The characteristics of perfectionist/high quality consciousness will be negatively related to future shopping intentions towards factory outlets.

Walsh *et al.* (2001) referred to brand conscious/price equals quality consumers as those who like to buy more expensive products and well-known designer brands. Jamal and Goode (2001) defined brand consciousness as the degree to which a consumer is oriented towards buying well-known branded merchandise. Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal (1991) found that price and brand name influenced how shoppers evaluate the quality of products and aspire to maintain the latest styles of branded merchandise. These consumers believe that the best-selling brand name products will satisfy their needs. Due to the wide selection of branded merchandise at value prices, Walsh et al. (2001) suggested that factory outlets could fulfill the needs and demands of brand conscious/price equals quality consumers. Therefore, we hypothesise that:

H2: The characteristics of brand consciousness/price equals quality is positively related to future shopping intentions towards factory outlets.

Sproles and Kendall (1986) defined novelty/fashion conscious consumers as those who are likely to experience excitement and pleasure from seeking out the latest fashions and styles. Before making shopping trips, they often read fashion brochures and magazines to be well-informed about the latest trends in the fashion industry (Siu, Wang, Chang & Hiu, 2001). Younger people in this market segment are more likely to associate themselves with foreign trends, taking pride in following celebrity fashions (Walsh *et al.,* 2001). Novelty/fashion conscious consumers also gain their satisfaction by obtaining the latest merchandise designs and shopping for different brands in various stores (Sproles & Kendall, 1986). We maintain that unique styles and the latest fashions are the major attributes that affect novelty/fashion conscious consumers in their intention to shop for particular products at specific stores. Although factory outlets offer more product variety, the items are not up-to-date fashions compared with those offered at upscale department stores. Therefore, we predict that:

H3: The characteristic of novelty/fashion consciousness is negatively related to future shopping intentions towards factory outlets.

Sproles and Kendall (1986) referred to recreational/hedonistic shopping consciousness consumers as those who view shopping as a pleasant and fun activity. Recreational shoppers have also been identified as acquisition-oriented consumers who are likely to shop for enjoyment (Williams, Slama & Rogers, 1985; Karande & Ganesh, 2000). They are more likely to spend their time at shopping centres gathering information for internal satisfaction (Roy, 1994). Recreational/hedonistic shopping consciousness consumers browse malls frequently and visit many stores on their numerous shopping trips. They get joy out of shopping (Roy, 1994; Bloch & Richins, 1983) and do not consider it a waste of time (Sproles & Kendall, 1986; Karande & Ganesh, 2000). Pleasure is an important attribute that influences recreational/hedonistic shopping conscious consumers to shop at factory outlets (LaBay & Comm, 1991; Walsh *et al.*, 2001). Moreover, factory outlets are attractive for recreational consumers because they offer a huge selection of stores to browse through and they provide other basic recreational places to spend their time (Morganosky, 1995). We predict that:

H4: The characteristic of recreational/hedonistic shopping consciousness is positively related to future shopping intentions towards factory outlets.

Price consciousness/value for money consumers often make decisions based on sale price dimensions (Sproles & Kendall, 1986) and seem aware of product prices (Roy, 1994). Kalwani, Yim, Rinne and Sugita (1990) stated that consumers have appropriate reference prices in their minds, which they use to compare with the shelf prices of specific products that they intend to buy. Zeithaml (1988) suggested that value is the ratio or trade off between quality and price. Following Zeithaml, we suggest that price consciousness/value for money consumers evaluate a product's utility based on their perception of what is received (value) and what is given (money/price). Previous studies have agreed that these consumers demonstrate low price-seeking behaviour by making price comparisons in relation to the values obtained (Lichtenstein, Ridgway & Netemeyer, 1993; Alford & Biswas, 2002). We propose that:

H5: The characteristic of price conscious/value for money is positively related to future shopping intentions towards factory outlets.

Sproles and Kendall (1986) described impulsive/careless consumers as those who do not plan their shopping and appear to be unconcerned about how much they spend. Rook and Fisher (1995) found that impulsive consumers have a tendency to buy "spontaneously, unreflectively, immediately, and kinetically." Driven by the desire to shop and spend money, impulsive/careless consumers shop for products without having a definite purchase in mind (Rook & Fisher, 1995). We would expect that factory outlets, which sell numerous categories of branded merchandise at discount prices, stimulate the impulsive nature of these types of consumers. To explore this issue, we propose that:

H6: The characteristic of impulsiveness/carelessness is positively related to future shopping intentions towards factory outlets.

Sproles and Kendall (1986) defined confused by overchoice consumers as those who experience information overload from too many stores, brands, and products to choose from. While making purchase decisions, consumers are often unable to evaluate the available alternatives in great depth. Additionally, the bewildering range of options and alternatives make it difficult for them to establish the top criterion and feel certain about what they should buy (Sproles & Kendall, 1986). We assume that information overload is a key attribute that confuses consumers about what they really need. Insights from the limited empirical research suggested that consumer confusion is likely to become more of an issue that retailers need to understand and respond to (Siu *et al.*, 2001; Walsh *et al.*, 2001). Given that factory outlets offer a wide assortment of products and brand categories at numerous price ranges (Hathaway & Hughes, 1996; Karande & Ganesh, 2000), we suggest that:

H7: The characteristic of confused by overchoice is negatively related to future shopping intentions towards factory outlets.

Hafstrom, Chae and Chung (1992) defined habitual/brand loyal consumers as those who are likely to have favorite brands, stores, and product categories. Brand loyalty is a consumer's conscious or unconscious decision, expressed through their habit of purchasing the same brand repeatedly (LaBay & Comm, 1991; Sproles & Kendall, 1986). According to Chaudhuri (1999), brand loyalty evolves when a consumer prefers to buy a single brand name in a product class. Moreover, habitual/brand loyal consumers regularly visit particular stores with the perception that the same retailers are consistently able to meet their needs. Prior research suggested that brands with high market share tend to have high levels of habitual buying in their consumer markets (Chaudhuri, 1999). By offering a variety of branded merchandise featuring high quality, value, and trustworthiness, factory outlets can cater to these types of consumers. Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

H8: The characteristic of habitual/brand loyalty is positively related to future shopping intentions towards factory outlets.

Our last hypothesis moves from the focus on decision-making styles to specific shopping behaviour that influences future shopping intentions. Overall customer satisfaction, the number of shopping trips, and the amount of money spent are among the significant factors that influence consumer shopping behaviour (Davies *et al.,* 2001). Kahn and Schmittlein (1989) stated that consumers usually conduct two kinds of shopping trips, major trips or fill-in trips. We suggest that shopping at factory outlets might be planned (major trip, e.g. "this was a planned shopping trip") or unplanned (fill-in trip, e.g. "I stopped to shop on my way to another destination"). Those who plan their trips may spend more time and money at factory outlets (Roy, 1994). Those who do not have a specific shopping plan in mind might purchase some merchandise under the influence of promotions and advertising circulars. In addition, driving distance may influence consumers to spend more time shopping at factory outlets compared to traditional retail outlets (Karande & Ganesh, 2000). We suggest that shopping behaviour will vary, depending on whether the consumer has high or low intentions to shop at the factory outlet in the future.

H9: There is a difference between high intention and low intention to shop on the following variables: a) type of shopping trip; b) number of stores visited; c) number of stores purchased from; d) shopping time; e) money spent; and f) distance traveled from home.

METHODOLOGY

Sampling and Data Collection

In an attempt to increase our understanding of consumer decision-making styles, shopping behaviour, and future shopping intentions at factory outlets, data were collected via a mall intercept protocol. We used a convenience sample of voluntary outlet mall shoppers as our respondents. We collected data from three different outlet centres that had agreed to the mall intercept data collection procedure. A self-administered written survey was used to collect data at three different selected factory outlet centres in the Midwestern states. We used a convenience sample of voluntary outlet mall shoppers as our respondents.

Instrument and Measurement

A self-report questionnaire was developed based on past research in order to collect information to test the hypotheses. The questionnaire contained 60 items that included measurements of consumer decision-making styles, shopping behaviour, outlet attributes (to describe the data collection sites), and future shopping intentions (Appendix A). The current study uses Sproles and Kendall's (1986) 39-item consumer styles inventory (CSI) to measure consumer decision-making styles as a basis for market segmentation and consumer characterisation. Respondents indicated their level of agreement on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5).

Preliminary Analysis

Sproles and Kendall (1986) reported coefficient alpha of the CSI subscales ranging from .41 to .76. Due to the low reliability on four of the scales, which are in between .48 to .53, we reworded several items that seemed problematic and pilot-tested the revised versions. The pilot test sample included 30 undergraduate and graduate students and reliabilities increased for all four of the scales. Reliability for the small pilot sample size was .55 to .72. Table 1 provides the comparison of the pilot test results and the Sproles and Kendall's results. Since the reliabilities were still not acceptable for some scales we further revised the wording for problematic items before the final data collection.

The instrument for measuring shopping behaviour was developed based on past research (LaBay & Comm, 1991; Karande & Ganesh, 2000; Evans *et al.*, 1996; Talpade & Haynes 1997; Tang *et al.*, 2001;

Leszczyc & Timmermans, 2001). Shopping behaviour was measured with six different items, including trip descriptions, number of stores visited, number of stores purchased from, time taken to shop, dollars spent in shopping, and distance driven from home to the factory outlets (Appendix A). Swinyard's (1993) shopping intentions scale and Baker *et al.*'s (1992) consumer willingness to shop scales are used to measure future shopping intentions. All statements for future shopping intentions are measured using a five-point Likert scale that ranges from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). We also gathered demographic information and information about the importance of specific outlet characteristics.

Table 1
Comparison between the Original Scale Reliabilities of Sproles and Kendall (1986) and the Pilot Test.

Items	Sproles and Kendall	Pilot tested
Price conscious/value for money	.48	.62
Impulsive/careless	.48	.66
Confused by overchoice	.55	.72
Habitual/brand-loyal	.53	.54

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before proceeding with the analysis, the items comprising the independent variables were examined for reliability. We used Cronbach's alpha to calculate the reliability for consumer decision-making, shopping behaviour and future shopping intentions (Table 2). Reliability coefficients ranged from .60 to .80 and were considered to be appropriate for further analysis. The reliability analysis for the dependent variable, future shopping intentions, was acceptable at .76.

Table 2
The Descriptive Statistics and the Reliability of the Independent and Dependant Variables

Factors	Mean	Standard Deviation	Alpha
Perfectionist/High quality conscious	3.81	.599	.73
Brand conscious/Price equals quality	3.91	.731	.80
Novelty/Fashion conscious	2.98	.904	.79
Recreational/Hedonistic shopping	3.50	.814	.76
consciousness	3.96	.949	.71
Price conscious/Value for money	2.60	.700	.70
Impulsive/Careless	2.57	.740	.60

(*continued*)

Confused by overchoice	3.91	.815	.70
Habitual/Brand loyal	2.37	.859	.72
Shopping Behaviour	1.43	.664	-
a) Trips description	2.21	1.17	-
b) Stores visited	1.44	.712	-
c) Stores purchased from	2.22	1.19	-
d) Shopping hours	2.09	1.37	-
e) Money spent	3.87	1.44	-
f) Miles driven	3.74	.776	.76
Future Shopping Intentions			

Sample Characteristics

Descriptive analyses are relied upon to identify the respondents' characteristics. A sample of 346 respondents from three factory outlets completed the 60-item survey. Of all the returned questionnaires, 334 responses were usable for data analysis while 12 were discarded due to missing answers or apparent inappropriate response patterns. The detailed demographic information of the sample is presented in Table 3. In comparison to the Michigan profile of general characteristic total population for the year 2000 our sample was composed of more females (62.2%) than males (34.3%) as compared to 51% and 49% respectively. The age of respondents was fairly evenly distributed over all age groups, the largest being 21-30 years old (22.4%). This finding is consistent with Michigan population profile, where 21- 30 years are among the largest of Michigan population. A greater percentage of the sample indicated that they are married (46.5%) versus single (39.2%). Our sample's marital status information is consistent with the Michigan demographic characteristic with married couple (51.4%). The majority of respondents (48.0%) lived in a 2 or 3 member household. This household information is also consistent with the average household size, which is 2.56 and 3.10 members. 43% had a household income of more than $60,000.

Table 3
Profiles of Respondents

Variable	Percentage	Frequency
Gender		
Male	34.3	(118)
Female	62.2	(214)
Age		
20 or less	17.4	(60)
21 - 30	22.4	(77)

(*continued*)

31 - 40	19.2	(66)
41 - 50	18.9	(65)
More than 50	19.2	(66)
Marital status		
Single	39.2	(135)
Married	46.5	(160)
Divorced	8.4	(29)
Other	2.3	(8)
Household		
1	16.3	(56)
2 – 3	48.0	(165)
4 – 5	27.9	(95)
6 – 7	3.8	(13)
More than 7	0.3	(1)
Income		
$20,000 or less	10.5	(36)
$20,001 - $29,999	5.5	(19)
$30,000 - $39,999	11.6	(40)
$40,000 - $49,999	10.8	(37)
$50,000 - $59,999	12.8	(44)
$60,000 or more	43.3	(149)

Table 4
The Effects of Consumer Decision Making and Shopping Behaviour on Shopping Intentions.

Variables	Future Shopping Intentions	
	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Perfectionist/high quality conscious	.187**	.001
Brand conscious/price equals quality	.154**	.005
Novelty/fashion conscious	.153**	.005
Recreational/hedonistic shopping consciousness	.260**	.000
Price conscious/value for money	.296**	.000
Impulsive/Careless	-.076	.166
Confused by overchoice	.046	.405
Habitual/Brand loyal	.209**	.000
Shopping behavior	.297**	.000
a) Trips description		
b) Stores visited	.182**	.001
c) Stores purchased from	.275**	.000
d) Shopping hours	.323**	.000
e) Money spent	.233**	.000
f) Miles driven	-.083	.130

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Bivariate analysis (Pearson correlation) was undertaken to examine the relationships in the research hypotheses. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 4.

Hypothesis 1 predicted an inverse relationship between perfectionist/high quality conscious consumers and their future shopping intentions toward factory outlets and was not supported. In Table 4, the results indicated a significant, but weak positive relationship between perfectionist/high quality conscious consumers and future shopping intentions (r = .187). These consumers are likely to continue shopping at factory outlet stores. This finding, which is contrary to our hypothesis, may be due to the fact that the quality of products sold at factory outlets tends to be improving due to competition from other retail formats. Karande and Ganesh (2000) reported that factory outlets no longer sell closeout and low quality items as in the previous two decades. This finding indicates that factory outlets should no longer be stereotyped as places for low-income consumers who demand cheap prices and low quality closeout items (Morganosky, 1995).

Hypothesis 2 proposed a positive relationship between brand conscious/price equals quality and future shopping intentions. As we expected, consumers who desire branded merchandise at discount prices will continue to shop at factory outlet stores (r = .154). Our finding is consistent with LaBay and Comm's (1991) claim that heavy users of outlets are very conscious of value and price, with brand names associated with high quality. This is fairly consistent with the finding identified by Morganosky (1995) that patrons of outlets believe that the name brands and designer brands offered at outlets represent high-quality images. Reynolds *et al.* (2002) stated that over 70% of factory outlet shoppers convey an above-average desire for brand name stores and merchandise with good quality.

Hypothesis 3 proposed a negative relationship between novelty/fashion conscious consumers and future shopping intentions. However, as shown in Table 4, we found the correlation to be positive (r = .153). Evidently, consumers who like current fashion varieties and the thrill of buying something new find that outlet shopping centres are good places to shop in the future. The increase of product variety can stimulate novelty/fashion conscious consumers to seek the latest fashions, which in turn helps increase the market share of the least preferred brands. This finding suggests that to keep these customers as factory outlet patrons, managers need to maintain and/or increase the variety of stores in outlet centres. Moreover, promotional activities and price discounts can be used to attract novelty/fashion conscious consumers.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that recreational/hedonistic-shopping consciousness would be positively related to future shopping intentions and it is supported (r = .26). This finding is consistent with LaBay and Comm's (1991) and Morganosky's (1995) studies, which revealed that recreational shoppers are among the largest group of shoppers who regularly visit factory outlets. In addition, Karande and Ganesh (2000) and Reynolds *et al.* (2002) found that particularly large regional shopping centres like factory outlets draw a substantial number of customers who are also involved in non-purchase related activities, such as eating and other recreational activities available at factory outlets. Manufacturers and factory outlet retailers would benefit from further analysis regarding how this group shops and spends their leisure time at factory outlets.

Hypothesis 5 proposed that the price conscious/value for money consumer is positively related to future shopping intentions. By looking at the Table 4, Our results revealed support (r = .296). Of all eight consumer decision-making styles, this relationship yielded the highest correlation, indicating that price plays a decisive role in this type of consumer segment. The current study results are consistent with LaBay and Comm (1991) and Karande and Ganesh (2000). They found that price conscious consumers seek branded merchandise at factory outlets because they are not willing to pay full retail price. The factory outlet industry has positioned itself to provide merchandise with that same price-conscious philosophy.

We had proposed that impulsive/careless consumers would have a positive relation to future shopping intentions at factory outlets (Hypothesis 6). As indicated in Table 4, the hypothesis was not supported (r = -.076). Our findings contradicted LaBay and Comm (1991), who claimed that factory outlet consumers have the tendency to be impulsive buyers, especially at the point of sale and free product trials. The relationship showed a negative correlation and was not significant, possibly because of the amount of time and planning needed for traveling to factory outlets is not conducive to the impulsive nature of this shopper. If individual factory stores want to target this type of consumer, they should develop strategies to impact point of purchase displays and train sales associates to increase the average number of items sold per customer.

Hypothesis 7 proposed that confused by overchoice consumers are not significantly related to future shopping intentions at factory outlets. This hypothesis was not supported (r = .046). The insignificance of this relationship may provide an opportunity for factory outlet retailers to tap more market share from this type of consumer. Retailers should use clear signs, decorate stores that could appeal to current consumer needs, and provide training to sales assistants in organising stores logically. These practices should help alleviate confusion for consumers.

Hypothesis 8 proposed that habitual/brand loyal consumers would be positively related to future shopping intentions at factory outlets. As shown in Table 4, our hypothesis was supported ($r = .209$). Habitual/brand loyal consumers are desirable to factory outlet retailers for a number of reasons. They provide a solid base of consumers from which profitability can be built on brand growth in the outlet industry. Loyal customers are also more difficult for competitors to attract. In this context, Wells (1993) noted that it is four to six times less costly to retain old customers than to obtain new ones. To retain this type of consumer, most factory outlet stores are launching preferred member cards and giving them points on their purchases, additional discounts, and free gifts.

Hypothesis 9 predicted that there is a difference between high intention and low intention to purchase on the following variables: type of shopping trip, number of stores visited, number of stores purchased from, time spent, money spent, and miles driven to outlets. After dividing the sample into High and Low intention to shop, we ran a Chi-square analysis. Results suggest those with high future shopping intentions plan purposive shopping trips, visit more stores, make more purchases and spend more time than those with low future shopping intentions. This finding is consistent with Karande and Ganesh (2000) who reported that the ratio of consumer time spent at factory outlet malls versus traditional malls is 2:1. Factory outlets are purposely designed with stores that sell similar product categories scattered apart to increase consumer exposure, causing them to spend time shopping for products that are not on their shopping list.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

As implied by our discussion in the preceding sections, our research offers several new insights about consumers' behaviour in factory outlet malls. The present study was undertaken with the general purpose of contributing to the knowledge base concerning how individual consumers use decision-making and shopping behaviour attributes, which in turn affect their future shopping intentions. The study offers a general conceptual theoretical framework that integrates the basic tenets of attribution theory. The findings confirm the predictions made regarding the effects of brand conscious/price equals quality, recreational/hedonistic shopping consciousness, price conscious/value for money, habitual/brand loyal, and shopping behaviour variables (stores visited, stores purchased from, shopping hours and money spent) on future shopping intentions.

By directly marketing their goods to consumers, factory outlet manufacturers can meet the needs of numerous types of market segments. However, to sell their merchandise directly to consumers, manufacturers need to understand how different decision-making, store attributes, and shopping behaviour can influence future shopping intentions at factory outlets. This is because the consumer market is continuing to evolve at a rapid pace and has become increasingly diversified. Today, with more product categories available to consumers, factory outlet consumer behaviours are more complicated and new consumer market segments have emerged (Reynolds *et al*., 2002). To reduce this complication, profiling consumers by classifying their decision-making styles and shopping behaviour helps to provide more meaningful ways to identify and understand various market segments, targeting each segment with better marketing strategies.

When looking at the relevant literature (LaBay & Comm, 1991; Morganosky, 1995; Karande & Ganesh, 2000; Reynolds *et al*., 2002), there is reason to believe that consumers can be meaningfully clustered into segments given their different types of decision-making and shopping behaviour traits. For example, from the results of the current study, we suggest that market segments of perfectionist/high quality, brand conscious/price equals quality, and habitual/brand loyal consumers demand products with high quality images, durability, prestige, and superior brand name are particularly relevant for factory outlet malls. Factory outlet retailers need to study impulsive/careless and confused by overchoice consumers in more depth if they want to attract them. They should employ a number of techniques such as point-of-purchases advertisement to impact on impulsive/careless and confused by overchoice consumer decision-making and shopping behaviour. This point-of-purchase would stimulate impulsive/careless consumers whose shopping is driven by emotional, not physical needs. Managers should use new approaches in developing campaigns, implementing customer relationship management, and understanding market segments to create future shopping intentions, especially regarding these two types on consumer market segments.

While other types of consumers have indicated that they have higher intentions to shop at factory outlets in the future, factory outlet retailers should effectively promote impulsive/careless and confused by overchoice consumer market segments with unique retail assortments and promotional campaigns. One way to attract this consumer market is to advertise particular brand and product categories, which may increase the factory outlets' market share. To improve factory outlet sales growth, manufacturers should aggressively advertise and promote factory outlets through effective communication channels, which include TV, radio, billboards, and newspapers (Gotlieb & Sarel, 1991). In addition, word-of-mouth and preferred customer cards also play important roles in gaining popularity among the international population who may have never before experienced this retail format. Based on the above explanation, factory outlet retailers need to build an understanding of consumer decision-making typologies while acknowledging shopping behaviour characteristics so that future research can establish whether such segments exist and are accessible, sustainable, and stable for future business growth.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

One limitation of the study is the small number of respondents; a larger sample size would establish higher validity, reliability, generalisability, and consistency. A second limitation is related to the choice of data collection settings. Only three different factory outlet malls were used so the findings are not generalisable to all factory outlet malls. The instrument and the sampling method that we used represent other limitation. By using the convenience sampling method, this non-probability design, which is not generalisable at all, and could provide some bias for the results (Sekaran, 2003). Furthermore, some dimensions of the CSI instrument still show a low reliability even after some preliminary analysis and item wording improvement (especially, confused by overchoice). Although the Sproles and Kendall (1986) scale should undergo further refinements due to low reliability, at this juncture, the improved scales used in the current study generate viable results. Furthermore, the ability to integrate the findings of this study within a theoretical context is highly desirable for both prediction and explanation purposes.

More theoretical development and methodological rigour is needed to advance our knowledge regarding future shopping intentions. This theoretical development can enhance the concept of consumer decision-making and shopping behaviour, which in turn can contribute to an understanding of certain aspects of consumers' future shopping intentions. The influence of outlet characteristics on consumer decision-making, shopping behaviour, and future shopping intentions is another potential area of investigation. Other issues of interest are the cognitive, as well as behavioural outcomes of experiencing numerous types of consumer shopping behaviours and how these affect the amount and type of information found. If these relationships are strong enough to affect the store and brand choice of some consumers, then not only retailers but also business practitioners should be interested in the findings.

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APPENDIX A

CONSUMER SHOPPING SURVEY

Please circle the appropriate response indicating the degree of your agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
Section 1 – Perfectionist/High quality conscious					
1. Getting very good quality is very important to me.	1	2	3	4	5
2. When it comes to purchasing products, I try to get the very best or perfect choice.	1	2	3	4	5
3. In general, I usually try to buy the best overall quality.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I make a special effort to choose the very best quality products.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I really don't give my purchases much thought or care. ®	1	2	3	4	5
6. My standards and expectations for products I buy are very high.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I shop quickly, buying the first product or brand I find that seems good enough. ®	1	2	3	4	5
Section 2 – Brand conscious/Price equals quality					
8. The well-known national brands are for me.	1	2	3	4	5
9. The more expensive brands are usually my choices.	1	2	3	4	5
10. The higher the price of the product, the better the quality.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Nice department and specialty stores offer me the best products.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I prefer buying the best selling brands.	1	2	3	4	5
13. The most advertised brands are usually very good choices.	1	2	3	4	5
Section 3 – Novelty/Fashion conscious					
14. I usually have one or more outfits of the very newest style.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I keep my wardrobe up-to-date with the changing fashions.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Fashionable, attractive styling is very important to me.	1	2	3	4	5
17. To get variety, I shop different stores and choose different brands. (Deleted)	1	2	3	4	5
18. It's fun to buy something new and exciting.	1	2	3	4	5
Section 4 – Recreational/Hedonistic shopping consciousness					
19. Shopping is not a pleasant activity for me. ®	1	2	3	4	5
20. Going shopping is one of the enjoyable activities of my life.	1	2	3	4	5

(*continued*)

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
21. Shopping the stores wastes my time. ®	1	2	3	4	5
22. I enjoy shopping just for the fun of it.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I make fast shopping trips. ®	1	2	3	4	5
Section 5 – Price conscious/Value for money					
24. I buy at sale prices whenever possible.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I usually choose the lowest priced products.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I usually engage in comparison-shopping in order to find the lowest price. (Deleted)	1	2	3	4	5
Section 6 – Impulsive/Careless					
27. I should plan my shopping more carefully. (Deleted)	1	2	3	4	5
28. I often make impulsive decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
29. I often make careless purchases that I wish I had not.	1	2	3	4	5
30. I take the time to shop carefully when making purchase decisions. ®	1	2	3	4	5
31. I am careful about how much I spend.	1	2	3	4	5
Section 7 – Confused by overchoice					
32. I often feel confused when choosing among many brands.	1	2	3	4	5
33. I have trouble choosing which stores to shop.	1	2	3	4	5
34. The more I learn about products; the harder it is to choose the best ones.	1	2	3	4	5
35. I often feel confused by all the information I get on different products.	1	2	3	4	5
Section 8 – Habitual/Brand loyal					
36. I have favorite brands I buy repeatedly.	1	2	3	4	5
37. Once I find a product or brand I like, I continue to buy it.	1	2	3	4	5
38. I regularly shop at the same stores. ®(Deleted)	1	2	3	4	5
39. I like to change brands regularly. ®	1	2	3	4	5
Section 9 – Future shopping intentions					
40. It is highly likely that I will shop at <u>this</u> factory outlet again.	1	2	3	4	5
41. It is highly likely that I will buy gifts at <u>this</u> factory outlet.	1	2	3	4	5
42. It is highly likely that I will recommend <u>this</u> factory outlet to my friends.	1	2	3	4	5
43. It is highly likely that I will spend more time shopping at <u>this</u> factory outlet.	1	2	3	4	5
44. It is highly likely that I will buy other items I need at <u>this</u> factory outlet.	1	2	3	4	5

When making the decision to shop at an outlet mall, how important are the following items?

Section 10 – Outlet characteristics	**Least Important**				**Most Important**
45. The shops in the outlet mall carry high quality merchandise.	1	2	3	4	5
46. The outlet mall is located within 15 minutes of my home.	1	2	3	4	5
47. It is easy to get to the outlet mall from my home.	1	2	3	4	5
48. There is a wide variety of stores from which to choose at the outlet mall.	1	2	3	4	5

Section 11 – Shopping behaviors

Please circle the appropriate response to the following questions based on your shopping trip to <u>this</u> outlet mall today,

49. Which of the following describes your trip to this factory outlet today?
   a) This was a planned shopping trip.
   b) I stopped to shop on my way to another destination.
   c) I was not planning to shop today, but stopped here since I was driving by.

50. How many stores did you visit today?
   a) less than 5 b) 5 - 10 c) 11 - 15 d) 16 - 20 e) more than 20

51. In how many stores did you make purchases today?
   a) less than 5 b) 5 - 10 c) 11 - 15 d) 16 - 20 e) more than 20

52. How long did you shop today (total number of hours)?
   a) less than 2 b) 2 - 3 c) 4 - 5 d) 6 - 7 e) more than 7

53. How much did you spend on your purchases?
   a) less than $100 b) $101-$150 c) $151 - $200
   d) $201- $250 e) more than $250

54. Miles you drove from home to this factory outlet_______ miles.
   a) 15 or less b) 16 - 25 c) 26 - 35 d) 36 - 45 e) more than 45

Please provide the following background information by circling the appropriate response:

55. Gender
   a) Male b) Female

56. Age
   a) 20 or less b) 21 - 30 c) 31 - 40 d) 41 - 50 e) More than 50

57. Marital status
   a) Single   b) Married   c) Divorced   d)other_____________

58. Number of persons in household (count yourself as 1)
   a) 1   b) 2 - 3   c) 4 - 5   d) 6 - 7   e) More than 7

59. Income level
   a) $20,000 or less
   b) $20,001 - $29,999
   c) $30,000 - $39,999
   d) $40,000 - $49,999
   e) $50,000 - $59,999
   f) $60,000 or more

60. Highest level of education achieved:
   a) Elementary school
   b) High school
   c) Trade school
   d) Some college
   e) College undergraduate degree
   f) Advanced degree (master's/doctorate)