

WOMEN SHOPPING PREFERENCE IN BANGLADESH: EVIDENCE FROM WORKING AND NON-WORKING WOMEN OF DHAKA CITY

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Abstract: *Internet shopping has become a substantial phenomenon in rapidly growing world economy now-a-days. A significant number of entrepreneurs are now involving themselves on several F-commerce platforms (Facebook and commerce). During the era of covid epidemic, women from both working and non-working class intend to visit online sites for shopping to avoid social gathering and ensure proper health and hygiene factors. Moreover, there are notable emergence of supermarkets that offers superior customer services over the traditional marketplace. Nevertheless, in terms of shopping, few customers embrace bargaining while others are focusing on fixed price shop. This paper is aimed to demonstrate the behavioral differences between working and non-working women in case of shopping preference. The research design of this study was descriptive. Purposive sampling method has been used in collecting primary and secondary data. A structured questionnaire using five point Likert scale were used over the 100 respondents in Dhaka city. Statistical package for the social science (SPSS) 25.0 version software was used in data analysis. The result revealed that, working women prefer supermarket and brand shop. On the other hand, online shopping is becoming popular option as a time and energy saving opportunity. Therefore, it is recommended that business planners should focus the potential women customers, know their preference and attract them accordingly which may expand the horizon of business and marketplace.*

Keywords: Internet shopping, Covid epidemic, fixed price mall, super shop, online shopping, behavioral differences, brand shop.

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1. Introduction

Consumers of this generation get an enormous range of product and service choice in case of buying. They are making their selection on the basis of their perceptions of quality, service, and value. Companies in order to survive in the competitive environment and satisfying their target markets properly are needed to know consumer preferences. According to the source of United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Population Division- current female population of Bangladesh is 49.4% which is near to half percentage. Hence these women cannot be any small segment any more. Women have made important gains in the formal labor market in the past

twenty years, mainly due to increased participation in the garment sector and an NGO-led microcredit revolution that targets women [1]. Bangladeshi women are making steady progress toward empowerment through a gradual increase in female participation in the workforce, especially in the ready-made garment manufacturing sector. The expanding microfinance arena has also been providing a growing number of women the opportunity to undertake productive small-scale business ventures that also provide informal employment to unemployed women in rural areas [2]. Women employed population had increased from 7.9 million in 1999 to 16.2 million in 2010 while men employed population increased from 31.1 million to 37.9 million in the same period [3]. Women's current high levels of participation in the labor force have focused attention on changing life-styles and consumption patterns [4]. The economic argument draws on the fact that women tend to reinvest their income in improved nutrition, health and education for household members, thus increasing living standards and reducing "non-income poverty" in the long term [5]. But globally, women's participation in the Labor Force is disrupted due to Covid-19 outbreak [6]. Consumer Spending in Bangladesh increased to 20886.72 BDT Billion in 2020 from 19293.841 BDT Billion in 2019. In the long term the Bangladesh consumer spending is projected to trend around 23464.00 BDT Billion in 2022 according to the econometric models [7]. But now during the pandemic consumer spending has fallen promptly, even for households that have not experienced a fall in income. Decline in earnings has a direct effect for spending changes. Supply restrictions, demand changes and increased uncertainty are the three further effects on households [8]. Direct income support to women, support for women owned and led businesses, support for women workers, support for informal works, reconciliation of paid and unpaid work are the five steps that governments and businesses can take to alleviate the damaging economic impacts of COVID-19 on women [9].

2. Statement of the problem

By the passage of time the ratio of working women is increasing. So, undoubtedly women can be an important market segment which has been ignored from the very early time. Globally growing female consumer is altering the way that some businesses can develop, target, position, make and market the program. Even, working women and non-working women's shopping behavior may be different.

Therefore, organizations need to market to them differently. Women are not a niche market. Women are the number one business opportunity if marketers can capture their shopping preferences and what they want.

3. Significance of the study

Against this background, the proposed study will be an attempt to find out the differences of shopping preferences of working and non-working women in relation to income, taste, time, payment method, getting one stop solution, buying convenient product, going fixed price shopping mall and to know about brand loyalty between them. It is hoped that this study will be useful for marketers those are associated with doing female product business. Even some innovative idea can be introduced targeting working and non-working women shopping preference. Most companies have much to learn about selling to women.

4. Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to know the difference between working and home maker's shopping preference. The specific objectives are given below:

- To determine where do working women and home makers differ in terms of shopping habit.
- To identify the problems that women are facing while spending for shopping

5. Literature Review

Consumer shopping value is indicated in both utilitarian and hedonic terms. The consumer is portrayed, in a shopping context, as both intellectual and emotional. But not all consumer behavior is directed toward satisfying some functional, physical, or economic need [10].

In comparison to a nearby store women showed a stronger likelihood than male participants to go the extra mile to purchase a product from a store run by a single acquaintance store. On the other hand, men showed a higher likelihood to buy than women when a group of acquaintances run the farther away store [11].

Gender indicates different attitudes towards mall hygiene and entertainment features and they feel differently about their experiences at shopping malls in terms of hedonic shopping value derived from the visit [12]. Difference exists in compulsive buying tendencies of working and non-working women. Working women possess more compulsive buying tendencies than nonworking women and level of socialization could be one of the factors for the same [13].

In aggregate, women represent a growth market bigger than China and India combined — more than twice as big, in fact. But despite women's dominant buying power many companies continue to market mostly to men and fail to explore how they might meet women's need [14]. The book of Consumer Behavior: Women and Shopping by Patricia Huddleston mentioned that men and women are different in terms of processing information, attitudes toward shopping, motivations and responsibility, responses to environmental cues (e.g., personal dress), and needs in the selling encounter. Women is interested in how the gadget will make her life easier while man is keen to discover how a gadget works. A woman will want to talk with sales staff or other customer about the gadget. Man is happy just to complete the purchase transaction whereas women are keen to establish a relationship with sales staff. It has been established that women spend a lot more time doing shopping than men as women enjoy shopping a lot more than men do. [15]. Women, as consumers, are clearly not a homogenous group that behave and act in a uniform way [13].

3. Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis

$$H_0 = \mu = \mu_0$$

There is no significant difference in shopping habit of working and home maker. There is no difference in sample mean of both.

Alternate Hypothesis

$$H_1 = \mu \neq \mu_0$$

There is a significant difference in shopping habit of working and home makers. The sample means of working and homemaker are not equal

4. Methodology of the study

The study would be empirical one. Both primary and secondary data would be used in the study. Major part will be based on primary data. The Primary data will be collected through five point Likert scale structured questionnaire. This empirical research based on questionnaire survey, will be carried out on convenience sampling of working and home makers in Dhaka region in the age group of 30-60 years. Questionnaire will be designed in the light and context of the objectives of the study. A total of 100 questionnaires purposively will be floated through e-mail. 50 working women whose annual salary around 300000tk or above, who are serving different universities, corporate houses, banks, and other private organizations will be the respondent of the questionnaire. On the other hand, 50 to home maker who stay at home and devote their hundred percent time in taking care of their family and are not engaged in paid employment will be the respondent of the questionnaire. Secondary data will be collected from books, journal articles, internet sites, reports and newspapers.

5. Results and discussions

Out of 100 questionnaires, 53 were returned. Out of which 3 questionnaires were incomplete, thus were not included in analysis which reduced the sample size to 50. Out of 50, 25 were working and 25 were homemaker. In the questionnaire 4 types of variables got included. They are: 1) Doing shopping from super store or super market (like Agora, Meena Bazar, Shwapno) for grocery:

1. Preferring fixed price shop/mall for cloths and accessories.
2. Spending too much time on purchase.
3. Doing online shopping.

Table 1. Showing Shopping Preference Scores

Score Range / Implications	Score
Maximum Score	20
Minimum Score	4
Neutral	12
Neutral Mean	3.00

Source: Based on primary research data.

Table 2. Group Statistics of the variables (Superstore, Fixed price mall, Convenience products, Time spend, Online shopping)

	Occupation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Doing shopping in a super store (Agora/Mina Bazar etc.) for grocery item.	Service Holder	25	3.88	1.054	.211
	Home maker	25	2.88	.971	.194
Going to fixed price shopping store/ mall (for apparels/accessories etc)(items except grocery)	Service Holder	25	3.52	1.046	.209
	Home maker	25	2.84	1.028	.206
Spending too much time on purchase	Service Holder	25	2.36	1.186	.237
	Home maker	25	3.08	1.222	.244
Doing shopping through Online (Facebook platform)	Service Holder	25	2.68	1.108	.222
	Home maker	25	2.08	.759	.152

Source: Based on primary research data.

This table shows the descriptive statistics of variables. It shows the mean score of working women and home makers. Here, the highest mean score is 3.88 for working women which is above the neutral mean score of 3 and that of homemakers is 2.88 which is below the neutral score. This implies that the women who are employed intend to go to super store for grocery items more than those who are not employed. Shoppers are influenced predominantly by store location and travel distance [16]. Working women in Urban area's avail this super store shopping experience only. They may prefer it as supermarket or super shop exists in proximity from office to home. Home makers like preferring local vendors for their small grocery shopping as they come to the next door of their home but if their grocery basket size is large, they choose local bazar.

In case of selecting fixed price shopping mall for buying apparels and accessories mean of working women score higher than half of the home makers who avoid fixed price shopping mall. Home makers may be found to be very price sensible and seek to spend their budget judiciously.

But for purchasing anything mean score reflects that home maker spend more time than working women the reason maybe they don't want to exceed their budget, or they may like to evaluate alternatives.

For purchase through online none of the score has crossed the average mean score. The reason might be they can't rely on online shopping, or they have a perception that price is higher, product may not be authentic in online. A big view is that only the urban people like upper class people of Dhaka city or Chattogram prefer facebook shopping or online shopping but people of other places and different social classes are less likely to use this platform. 65,2% rural people are non-internet user and 65.8% are women who do not use internet [Report from the Bangladesh national ICT household survey 2018-2019] The mean of non-working women for online shopping is very low. Few reasons may be most of the home makers rely on their life partners for their essential shopping and majority of them have no mobile banking access or very nominal number of debit and credit card users. The gender gap of using internet is 55.6% that is a woman is less likely to use internet than a man [Report from the Bangladesh national ICT household survey 2018-2019]. Moreover, Fresh initiative like F-commerce-based Company needs to put effort to stand up. It requires entrepreneurs who are hardworking, have research knowledge, capability to promptly adjust with change, dedicate their time and effort to pay their dues [17]. But by 2023 the e-commerce industry is forecasted to hit \$3 billion [Dhaka tribune].

Table 3. Sample Test of the Variables (Superstore, fixed price mall, convenience products, time spend, online shopping)

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Super store	Equal variances assumed	.087	.769	3.714	48	.001	1.051	.283	.482	1.620
	Equal variances not assumed			3.725	47.993	.001	1.051	.282	.484	1.619
Fixed price mall	Equal variances assumed	.031	.860	2.896	48	.006	.827	.286	.253	1.401
	Equal variances not assumed			2.900	47.905	.006	.827	.285	.254	1.400
Too much time on purchase	Equal variances assumed	.450	.506	-2.044	48	.046	-.699	.342	-1.386	-.011
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.058	47.667	.045	-.699	.340	-1.381	-.016
Online shopping	Equal variances assumed	3.812	.057	3.170	48	.003	.885	.279	.324	1.446
	Equal variances not assumed			3.217	44.333	.002	.885	.275	.331	1.439

Source: Based on primary research data.

Table 3 shows independent sample t-statistics for the study conducted at 95% confidence interval. From first part of the table, we can identify that the Sig 2-tailed value is less than 0.05. for every variable. Thus, it proves that there is a statistically significant difference between the two aspects. The t-test at 95% confidence interval rejects the null hypothesis, which proves that there is a significant difference in shopping habit of working and home maker. Rejecting the null hypothesis makes the alternate hypothesis true.

Conclusion

The findings of this study will be useful to marketers who extend the coverage of their products to women segment. Marketers can arrange promotional offers for the homemakers to attract them towards fixed price malls. As working women dislike spending more time on a purchase companies can arrange fast service for them and develop its strategy for creating brand loyalty. Business stakeholders, policy makers can inspire women for using online platform for shopping like developed countries Today’s consumers are more educated consumers. Today’s women are relaying on their independency. If their actual needs are not identified and still marketers go with traditional systems in the long run, they will be suffered. By knowing women actual need marketer will be able to shape correct strategy based on women’s buying behavior. Women will be able to take rational decision correcting their irrational behavior. Infrastructural development will take place to encourage women specially giving them a valuable platform for purchasing. Due to time constraints, the survey was done on only the small sample of women of Dhaka city. Moreover, the result may be manipulated by the Covid pandemic situation, economic structure, social class, and lifestyle of female consumers of Dhaka city. As it is the capital of the country. Further, this study can be extended by taking large sample from various regions.

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