

Shopping as Therapy: A Study of Feminist Buying Behaviour in terms of Emotions and Self-pleasing while Shopping.

Dr. Seema Singh

Associate Professor,
IMSAR,
M.D. University, Rohtak
dahiyaseema@hotmail.com

Deepa Ahuja

Research Scholar,
IMSAR,
M.D. University, Rohtak
deepa.ahuja06@gmail.com

Prince

Research Scholar,
IMSAR,
M.D. University, Rohtak
princechitkara96@gmail.com

Abstract

Shopping to alleviate negative moods, to please self and to compensate your emotions- works as a therapy to make you feel better. The greatest and most precious things in the world cannot be seen and perhaps even touched but can feel only are “Emotions” and we need to compensate those emotions in the way of self-pleasing. The objective of the paper is to gain an insight into the emotional self-perspective of female consumer while shopping and how they treat shopping for self-pleasing. This paper also identifies and categorizes the factors of Self-pleasing affecting female consumer behavior. The data of 200 respondents (females) was collected with the help of structured questionnaire (from the metro and non-metro city) and analyzed with the help of descriptive statistics and ANOVA. So, this paper is investigating the feminist buying behavior in terms of emotions and self-pleasing while shopping.

Keywords: Shopping, Emotions, Self-Pleasing, Buying behavior

Introduction

When you go for shopping to please yourself and make you feel better, shopping acts as a therapy for you. You shop not because you need to buy but you need to make oneself happy or just to improve your mood, that kind of shopping is usually termed as shopping therapy and more often retail therapy (Kacen, 1998). There are a number of different hedonic motivations in which people take shopping as an adventure, as a gratification to self, to socialize and pleasing oneself. While consumer consider shopping as therapy, his/her shopping trips are considered as a compensatory resource (Woodruffe-Burton, 1998; Yurchisin et al., 2008) and most compensatory consumers are females (Woodruffe, 1997). People self-perspective make themselves feel psychosocial deficiencies like a lonely feeling, lack of self-esteem, lack of self-confidence or boredom and they go for shopping to compensate for these kind of perceived deficiencies. This approach is known as compensatory consumption while treating shopping as a therapy. In contrast, Shopping as a therapy can also act as a mood regulatory device (Luomala, 2002). People are in a poor mood and go shopping to lift their spirits or locate good energy. Both methodologies have been used to study therapeutic

purchasing behaviour, but there is an absence of specified constructs related to self-pleasing perspectives of specially women so the study is being conducted under seven constructs like self- understanding, self-esteem, self-realization, self -image, self-control, self-confidence and self-defense.

Emotional shopping is basically shopping for products or services, to please self, to make one feel better, and is often associated with something that can charge you up. Emotional shopping is not gender based but found in both whether a girl or boy, men or women of any age. The common myth about a woman is known for that is “lust for shopping”, “loving to do it”, “cannot live without shopping” and many other statements that echo around our ears. While in the case of men myths are not available but it does not mean they do not do emotional shopping.

At sometimes a female feel low, they just find something to eat or they buy something for self. Men do not behave in the same manner as Women do. Both Men and women are having same emotion but differ in their decision making. Women express their emotions more than men. While in stress or being in weak emotional state men tend to behave angrily, women generally tend to talk to people, find ways to please her by engaging in compensatory consumption led by emotions that may come up with emotional shopping too. The way to please the self by making self-treat, self-amusements, by engaging in mood repair activities and in order to repair a bad mood, the activity performed is shopping which is led by emotions i.e., emotional shopping.

Women are considered as more frequent buyer rather than men .Men actually are considered as the “wallet bearers” i.e., they are payment providers most of the time The money spent by men is more, while women buy for following fashion trends (Kuruvilla et.al., 2009).When it's comes to financial independence women make their pleasure to shop pretty moderate (Nava, 1995). This has been studied and concluded in the context of female consumer from western countries but had an effect in the context of Indian women too, due to unlimited transformation. So, here study of women as emotional buyers can be taken as an opportunity. One of the Study, conducted by Martha Bartlett has highlighted that female as

target customer can provide more returns just because of better loyalty, judgement and influence among their peers. Additionally, women's purchasing behavior often leads to a more significant multiplier effect through word-of-mouth recommendations.

So, this research is taking Women as a consumer of emotional shopping and self-pleasing. Literature review has been done to know the emotional aspects and self-concept of women as consumer while buying goods and services and to gain insight of emotional shopping. This study also tries to identify the factors affecting women consumer behavior while doing emotional shopping. Respondents from the two areas are selected to know the different mindsets and to analyze the opinion in emotional shopping behavior between the women of metro city (Delhi & Gurugram) and a non-metro city (Rohtak).

Emotions, Moods and Self- Pleasing

Moods, according to Denzin (1984), are emotional states of mind that transcend specific situational experiences. The self-concept of consumer refers to his or her current perceived state or self –image. APA Dictionary of psychology, states Self-understanding as the ability to know oneself, to understand one's own actions. Consumer self-confidence encourages them to spend money on themselves. (Loibl et.al. 2009). Women self- esteem also is a part of her self-perspectives. People who are under emotional distress as a result of feelings of inadequacy have poor self-control and engage in impulse purchases. (2002, Gifford) and usually do emotional shopping or consider shopping as therapy. Self-image means the sum total of feelings for self through which an individual can define himself/herself (Resermborg ,1979) and reacts towards his/her environment (Vernette ,2003).There could be impulsive or obsessive buying behaviour among the Indian consumer. Self-regulation theory states that people consciously strive to regulate their own impulsive behaviour, feelings, emotions and actions in order to control their negative behavioural outcomes.(Baumeister, Muraven, & Tice, 2000) and for this they set self-standards. A few cosmetics and outer wear brands are using the appeal for self-love , and using the phrases like “Treat yourself” Moreover thankful gesture to self , self- greeting and

treating ,rewarding oneself and motivating self, and compensating herself or himself appeals are rarer, despite their stated applicability to consumers. The notion of worthiness also justify many self-pleasing, self-rewarding, self- treating, and self- gifting routes and experiences, Deservedness appeals should be used generally like L'Oréal'shad employed "You're worth it"

Review of Literature

Personality traits and impulsive purchasing both directly and indirectly connected through the mediation effect of a good mood (Ahmad, 2019) Pleasant mood totally mediates the association between impulsive purchasing behaviors and shopping enjoyment, it only partially mediates the relationship between fashion interests, self-esteem, hedonism, impulsive buying inclination. (Singh,2017) explored the factors like responsiveness, powerfulness, obsessivity and need-attention that has an influence on women's consumption patterns. Emotions function as decision-making antecedents. Emotional effects may both hinder and enhance consumer decision-making. (Achar, 2016). Self-esteem has a negative indirect effect on impulse buying. A person with low self-esteem tends to regain self-esteem through the acquisition of material goods for compensatory purchases. (Bandyopadhyay, 2016). Emotional elements contribute to increased consumer brand loyalty although the magnitude of the influence differs. Hwang and Kandampully, 2012) Self-concept connection boosts brand love and emotional attachment. Sometimes, feeling of depression and sadness bring about unnecessary, unplanned purchases conducive needless shopping and indulgences for self. However, majority of the unplanned spending is the outcome of a purposeful attempt to improve mood. Atalay et.al. (2011) this purposeful attempt may alleviate a low mood by delivering a self-treat does not result in unpleasant guilt emotions later on. Self-gifts means gifting to one. Heath et.al. (2011)states that Marketers may successfully differentiate their advertising appeals by enforcing and reminding the perspective consumers about the hedonic choices like pleasure, stress alleviation, and engagement that self-treating and gifting experiences. Kim and Hong (2011) Self-concept discrepancy is largely associated with poor

self-esteem and low emotional state. There is an affirmative relationship between low self-esteem and garment closeness to self. A low emotional state, such as a bad mood, is more often associated to compensatory consumption of clothing. Yurchisin et. al. (2006) Emotions usually guide, enhance, and provide meaning to life. They determine the value of life for people. Therefore Emotions influence consumer spending. Consoli (2009). According to Cacioppo, et.al. (2001) Emotions play a significant role in consumer's decision making and marketers have made variety of attempts to target and influence consumers' emotions. Emotions are universally conveyed in every language. Garg, et.al. (2007).Compensatory consumption is combined with addictive consumption and self-gift giving. Ekman, (1994) an appealing setting for shopping would be associated to a leisure environment if shopping could be identified as a leisure activity for self. As per Jansen-Verbeke, (1987) the presence of outdoor cafés, shop display windows, and street lights were rated highly positively, whereas the nonappearance of landscaping and plants, comfortable sitting spaces, and absence of background music were rated very negatively. Art items put throughout the retail area drew little attention. There was no discernible difference between male and female visitors.

Objectives of the Study

- To understand the emotional phases of women as consumer while buying goods and services.
- To know the Self-concept for women as consumer while shopping to gain insight of emotional shopping.
- To identify the factors affecting women consumer behavior while doing emotional shopping.
- To analyze the opinion in emotional shopping behavior between the women of metro city (Delhi& Gurugram) and a non-metrocity (Rohtak).
- To analyze the significant difference in emotional shopping behavior across demographic variables.

Research Methodology

The present study is using descriptive cum exploratory research design that is focused with describing numerous features such as Respondent's age, income, life style, and the role of emotions in buying goods and services and to

Variables	Statements	Delhi & Gurugram	Rohtak
Self - Confidence	I shop because it refreshes and motivates me.	74	77
	I shop to keep up with fashion and that brings positivity in life.	73	84
	I shop to feel like I am in my own universe.	82	62
	I shop because I take much pride in spending money on me	66	73
Self - realization	I shop as a weapon to express anger or revenge.	83	74
	I shop as a way to project an image of wealth or power.	72	84
	I shop as an avoidance tactic.	62	84
Self -Defense	I shop when there are sales and discounts.	84	74
	I shop for family functions, celebrations or festivals.	77	76
	I shop to compensate for feeling loved.	76	87
Self -Control	I believe that shopping is a temporary phenomenon.	68	75
	I shop because I believe that my decisions are rational not emotional.	87	88
	I must try to control my impulse shopping behavior.	65	76
Self-Image	I shop because outward appearance matter for me.	76	87

As shown in table-1 seven variables including twenty-two statements are taken to know the impact of emotions and self-pleasing perspectives while considering shopping as a therapy. The statements show the role of emotions and self-pleasing before-while-after purchasing of goods and services.

There's a difference of opinion and behavior of the women belonging to the metro city and non-metro city.

As per the table no 1 -

In Self-understand construct, the women from non-metro cities understand the need for shopping and more inclined to shop when they actually need it as compared to metro cities. However, shopping is considered more as a therapy by women in metro cities, they shop to get rid of their frustration or to lighten themselves. The reason could be attributed to number of factors; the more stressful life of metro cities can be one of them. In the Self-esteem construct, the self-esteem is one of the self-pleasing factors and in this case the women from metro cities find themselves more prone to shopping to derive pleasure or pamper one while women from non-metro cities are more inclined towards self-esteem drive by treating themselves as a source of advice to their friends. In the Self-Confidence construct, Women from metro cities want to remain in their own universe while they shop, means that they find themselves much confident when they shop to please

themselves. While women from non-metro cities are self-confident in spending money on them as a matter of pride. In the Self-Realization construct, Women from metro cities spend time on shopping to express their anger or revenge, while women from non-metro cities indulge themselves in shopping to avoid some other matters of their routine life. They also have a self-realization feeling that to project an image of wealth or power they shop quite often. In the Self-Defense construct, With regard to shopping, one more emotion for self-pleasing is self-defense, under this construct we find that females from non-metro cities self-defend themselves for inclination towards shopping as therapy by considering sales and discount as a weapon. In the Self-Image construct, Females from metro cities want to project a self-image in their social circle as they need to maintain their social status but for the women from non-metro cities outward appearance matters for themselves, they shop to feel better for themselves by improving their own outward appearance. In the Self-Control construct, Women from both the cities think that although they do shop to improve their mood or to please themselves temporarily, they consider themselves as impulse shopper not as emotional shopper and also consider rational perspectives while shopping.

Differences in Emotional Shopping Behaviour across Age, Income and Occupation of the Consumer and Mode of Shopping

H1: There are no significant differences in emotional shopping behavior across age of the consumer.

H2: There are no significant differences in emotional shopping behavior across income of the consumer.

H3: There are no significant differences in emotional shopping behavior across occupation of the consumer.

H4: There are no significant differences in emotional shopping behavior across mode of shopping used.

One-way ANOVA results are used to test the hypothesis and to check the significant differences in emotional shopping behavior over metro and non-metro cities women across-age, income and occupation of the consumer and mode of shopping.

1) Differences in Emotional Shopping Behaviour across Age:

a) Metro city (Delhi & Gurugram)

ANOVA					
Emotional shopping behavior					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	375.055	3	125.018	.772	.512
Within Groups	19262.620	119	161.871		
Total	19637.675	122			

There are no significant differences in Emotional shopping behavior between different age groups seen in the Metro city. The values seen in the above table are: $F(3,119)=.772$, $p=.512$. ($p>0.5$). So, the null hypothesis is accepted.

b) Non-metro city (Rohtak)

ANOVA					
Emotional shopping behavior					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1819.592	3	606.531	3.258	.024
Within Groups	21035.861	113	186.158		
Total	22855.453	116			

There are significant differences in Emotional shopping behavior between different age groups seen in the Non-metro city. The values seen in the above table are: $F(3,113)=3.528$, $p=.024$. ($p<0.5$). So, the null hypothesis is rejected.

2) Differences in Emotional Shopping Behaviour across Income:

a) Metro city (Delhi & Gurugram)

ANOVA					
Emotional shopping behavior					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	194.832	2	97.416	.601	.550
Within Groups	19442.842	120	162.024		
Total	19637.675	122			

There are no significant differences in Emotional shopping behavior between different Income groups seen in the Metro city. The values seen in the above table are: $F(2,120)=.601$, $p=.550$. ($p>0.5$). So, the null hypothesis is accepted.

b)Non-metro city (Rohtak)

ANOVA					
Emotional shopping behavior					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1963.854	2	981.927	5.358	.006
Within Groups	20891.599	114	183.260		
Total	22855.453	116			

There are significant differences in Emotional shopping behavior between different Income groups seen in the Metro city. The values seen in the above table are: $F(2, 114) = 5.538, p = .006. (p < 0.5)$. So, the null hypothesis is rejected.

3) Differences in Emotional Shopping Behaviour across Occupation:**a)Metro city (Delhi & Gurugram)**

ANOVA					
Emotional shopping behavior					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	342.902	3	114.301	.705	.551
Within Groups	19294.773	119	162.141		
Total	19637.675	122			

There are no significant differences in Emotional shopping behavior between different Occupations seen in the Metro city. The values seen in the above table are: $F(3, 119) = .705, p = .551. (p > 0.5)$. So, the null hypothesis is accepted.

b)Non-metro city (Rohtak)

ANOVA					
Emotional shopping behavior					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1202.198	3	400.733	2.091	.105
Within Groups	21653.255	113	191.622		
Total	22855.453	116			

There are no significant differences in Emotional shopping behavior between different Occupations seen in the Metro city. The values seen in the above table are: $F(3, 113) = 2.091, p = .105. (p > 0.5)$. So, the null hypothesis is accepted.

4) Differences In Emotional Shopping Behaviour Across Mode Of Shopping:**a)Metro city (Delhi & Gurugram)**

ANOVA					
Emotional shopping behavior					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1088.321	2	544.161	3.520	.033
Within Groups	18549.353	120	154.578		
Total	19637.675	122			

There are significant differences in Emotional shopping behavior between different modes of shopping seen in the Metro city. The values seen in the above table are: $F(2, 120) = 3.520, p = .033. (p < 0.5)$. So, the null hypothesis is rejected.

b)Non-metro city (Rohtak)

ANOVA					
Emotional shopping behavior					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	258.496	2	129.248	.652	.523
Within Groups	22596.957	114	198.219		
Total	22855.453	116			

There are no significant differences in Emotional shopping behavior between different modes of shopping seen in the Metro city. The values seen in the above table are: $F(2, 114) = .652, p = .523$. ($p > 0.5$). So, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Conclusion

The shopping is considered as a therapy by women in metro cities as well as in non-metro cities, besides this we also conclude that demographics have an impact on emotional and self-pleasing perspectives and acts as a factor for women when they shop emotionally and consider shopping as therapy to improve their mood or to please them. Women from metro cities and non-metro cities both consider shopping as therapy but there is difference in their ultimate behaviour that depends on their age, income, occupation and mode of shopping. So, our study is of prime importance for the retail market strategy formulation, as these results could help them in framing their strategy for different target groups. As per the study results it is being concluded that in metro city there is no significant difference in women behaviour over age, income and occupation from metro cities (Delhi and Gurugram) in considering shopping as therapy, while there is a significant difference in women behaviour over age, income and occupation in considering shopping as therapy from non-metro city (Rohtak). When the things come to mode of shopping, the women from metro cities show significant difference over different mode of shopping, while the women from non-metro cities show no significant difference over different mode of shopping while doing emotional shopping (while they consider shopping as therapy).

Suggestions

As marketers, mastering the art of connecting and to building relation with customer involve more than just depicting the reasons to buy. It's about stimulating their emotions to create a compelling urge to purchase. The

marketer should capitalize on sales and profit by resonating emotionally. For instance Loreal's "you worth it" slogan has spoken for personal desires. Effective Advertising should entails on incorporating emotions in advertising appeals. They need to enhance their personal desires for self-gratification, self-treating, self-gifting and the innate need for self-pleasing. This way marketers and advertisers can devise strategies to enhance such feeling of self-rewarding and pleasing to foster a sense of self satisfaction among women. Marketers must focus on prioritizing emotional needs and wants over mere utility, in order to prompt the person to purchase based on deserving rather than just liking. This approach grants a competitive edge in the market.

Employing emotions and self-pleasing perspectives in communication strategies facilitates a deeper connection among brands and consumers. Moreover addressing feelings of boredom, self-indulgence, self-image, and self-awareness through salespeople can cultivates brand loyalty among the consumer. It would be worth to carefully handling the self traits of women of metro and non-metro cities as concluded in the study can lead to a competitive edge. Moreover, women should also understand one's own perspectives and should plan their purchases carefully, as it is not bad to treat yourself and please yourself, when you actually deserve it and not to regret later for over spending.

References

- Achar, C., So, J., Agrawal, N., & Duhachek, A. (2016). What we feel and why we buy: the influence of emotions on consumer decision-making. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 10, 166-170.

- Ahmad, M. B., Ali, H. F., Malik, M. S., Humayun, A. A., & Ahmad, S. (2019). Factors affecting impulsive buying behavior with mediating role of positive mood: An empirical study. *European Online Journal of Natural and Social Sciences*, 8(1), pp-17.
- Atalay, A. S., & Meloy, M. G. (2011). Retail therapy: A strategic effort to improve mood. *Psychology & Marketing*, 28(6), 638-659.
- Bandyopadhyay, N. (2016). The role of self-esteem, negative affect and normative influence in impulse buying: A study from India. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 34(4), 523-539.
- Baumeister, R. F., Muraven, M., & Tice, D. M. (2000). Ego depletion: A resource model of volition, self-regulation, and controlled processing. *Social cognition*, 18(2), 130-150.
- Cacioppo, J. T., Klein, D. J., Berntson, G. G., & Hatfield, E. (1993). The psychophysiology of emotion. *New York: Guilford*, 2nd ed., 173-191.
- Consoli, D. (2009). Emotions that influence purchase decisions and their electronic processing. *Annales Universitatis Apulensis: Series Oeconomica*, 11(2), 996.
- Denzin, N. K. (1990). On understanding emotion: The interpretive-cultural agenda. *Research agendas in the sociology of emotions*, 85-116.
- Ekman, P. (1994). Strong evidence for universals in facial expressions: a reply to Russell's mistaken critique. *Psychological Bulletin*, 115(2), 268-287.
- Gnoth, J., Zins, A. H., Lengmueller, R., & Boshoff, C. (1999). Dimensions of emotions, mood and motivational orientation with regard to experiential consumption. In *Proceedings of the 27th Emac Conference*. Humboldt University: Berlin.
- Heath, M. T., Tynan, C., & Ennew, C. T. (2011). Self-gift giving: Understanding consumers and exploring brand messages. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 17(02), 127-144.
- Hwang, J., & Kandampully, J. (2012). The role of emotional aspects in younger consumer-brand relationships. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 21(2), 98-108.
- Jansen-Verbeke, M. (1987). Women, shopping and leisure. *Leisure Studies*, 6(1), 71-86.
- Kacen, J. J. (1998). Retail therapy: Consumers' shopping cures for negative moods. *Advances in consumer research*, 25(1), 75-87.
- Kacen, J. J., & Friese, S. (1999). An exploration of mood-regulating consumer buying behavior. *European Advances in Consumer Research*, 4(1), 75-76.
- Kapoor, A., & Kulshrestha, C. (2008). The effect of perception on Indian urban female consumer buying behaviour. *Monash Business Review*, 4(1), 1-12.
- Kim, H. S., & Hong, H. (2011). Fashion leadership and hedonic shopping motivations of female consumers. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 29(4), 314-330.
- Lanier, A. R., Gay, C. W., & Davis, J. (2011). *Living in the USA*. Hachette UK.
- Larsen, R. J., & Prizmic, Z. (2004). Affect regulation. *Handbook of self-regulation: Research, theory, and applications*, 40-61.
- Lee, M. Y., Kim, Y. K., & Lee, H. J. (2013). Adventure versus gratification: emotional shopping in online auctions. *European Journal of Marketing*, 47(1/2), 49-70.
- Loibl, C., Cho, S. H., Diekmann, F., & Batte, M. T. (2009). Consumer self-confidence in searching for information. *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 43(1), 26-55.
- Luomala, H. T. (2002). An empirical analysis of the practices and therapeutic power of mood-alleviative consumption in Finland. *Psychology & Marketing*, 19(10), 813-836.
- Machleit, K. A., & Eroglu, S. A. (2000). Describing and measuring emotional response to shopping experience. *Journal of business research*, 49(2), 101-111.
- Müller, A., Claes, L., & Kyrios, M. (2021). Object attachment in buying-shopping disorder. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 39, 115-120.

- Singh, S. (2017). Indian Women and Compensatory Consumption: A Confirmatory Factor Analysis Approach. *International Journal of Engineering Technology Science and Research*, 4(9), 19-31.
- Singh, S., & Ahuja, D. Understanding Emotional Shopping: Some Reflections and Dynamics. *Haryana School of Business*, 360-366.
- Tarka, P., Kukar-Kinney, M., & Harnish, R. J. (2022). Consumers' personality and compulsive buying behavior: The role of hedonistic shopping experiences and gender in mediating-moderating relationships. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 64, 102802.
- Woodruffe, H. R. (1997). Compensatory consumption: why women go shopping when they're fed up and other stories. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 15(7), 325-334.
- Woodruffe-Burton, H. (1998). Private desires, public display: Consumption, postmodernism and fashion's "new man". *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 26, 301-310.
- Yurchisin, J., Yan, R. N., Watchravesringkan, K., & Chen, C. (2006). Why retail therapy? A preliminary investigation of the role of self-concept discrepancy, self-esteem, negative emotions, and proximity of clothing to self in the compensatory consumption of apparel products. *ACR Asia-Pacific Advances*.
- Yurchisin, J., Yan, R. N., Watchravesringkan, K., & Chen, C. (2008). Investigating the role of life status changes and negative emotions in compensatory consumption among college students. *College Student Journal*, 42(3), 860-869.
- <https://www.investopedia.com/ask/answers/09/emotional-spending.asp>
- <https://www.magnifymoney.com/blog/news/emotional-spending-what-it-is-and-how-to-overcome-it/>
- <https://www.impactbnd.com/blog/emotion-influence-buying-behavior>