The Vitality of Price Comparison and Product Display for Assortment Satisfaction: Online Footwear Purchase

Pranay Verma, Footwear Design Development Institute, Uttar Pradesh, India

ABSTRACT
The objective of this study is to examine factors that influence Indian consumer’s assortment satisfaction towards the online purchase of footwear. A questionnaire was used to collect data using stratified sampling from different online shoppers. Structural equation modeling showed a significant impact of product display and price comparison on assortment satisfaction. Arguably, this is the first article which shows a linkage between product display and price comparison on assortment satisfaction for online footwear purchases. Further, a moderation of income and gender upon the two independent variables was studied using hierarchical regression method. Gender along with gender and income interaction with price comparison moderates assortment satisfaction.

KEYWORDS
Assortment Satisfaction, Gender, Income, Price Comparison, Product Display

INTRODUCTION
A web site is considered to be a substitute for the brick and mortar stores. Studies have identified factors like gender (Andrews, Kiel, Drennan, Boyle, & Weerawardena, 2007), word of mouth (Khare, Labrecque, & Asare, 2011), cost reduction (Baba, 2015), shopping experience (Martin, Mortimer, & Andrews, 2015), trust and commitment (Mukherjee & Nath, 2007), subjective norms (Al-hawari & Mouakket, 2012), attitude (Chang & Chin, 2011), social influence(Zhang, Li, Burke, & Leykin, 2014)(Wang, 2013) leading to online purchase intention. Most of these studies have been for online (Mukherjee & Nath, 2007) grocery (Martin, Mortimer, & Andrews, 2015), apparel, ticketing (Al-hawari & Mouakket, 2012), and food retailing (Martinez-Ruiz, Ruiz-Palomino, Martinez-Canas, & Bla’quez-Resino, 2014) retailing. Very few studies have been conducted for footwear retailing.

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Footwear is expected to grow by 10% on year on year basis and touch US $23.5 billion by 2020 (BMI India Retail Report Q1 2017, 2016) and would be the best performing sector. Assortment satisfaction is one such attribute that determines purchase intention. In other studies, purchase intention of Malaysian online buyers (Rezaei, Amin, & Ismail, 2014) and Indonesian online shoppers (Nuryakin & Farida, 2016) were influenced by their satisfaction. So assortment satisfaction leads to purchase intention.

This paper researches key attributes of assortment satisfaction in the context of online footwear purchase. It has been suggested that assortment satisfaction is one such attribute that determines purchase intention. This paper investigates the factors which determine them. Prior research indicates that assortment satisfaction would happen due to product display, price comparison, information search and etc. Customers are willing to pay the price for a proper product display (Fiore, Yah, & Yoh, 2000). We argue that product display and price comparison effects assortment satisfaction.

This research also investigates if the capacity to compare prices of displayed goods enhances assortment satisfaction even though it is superfluous. This paper undertakes two important factors viz product display and price comparison. Another goal is to understand the importance placed on online store characteristics according to income and gender. Research shows that gender (Lim & Zailani, 2012; Yadav & Rangnekar, 2015) and income (Mittal, Sondhi, & Chawla, 2015; Rana, Murtaza, Noor, & Rehman, 2014) are moderators. Moderation of gender on price comparison and product display has been established through this study. Such investigations provide the first steps towards a greater understanding of the behaviours of the online footwear shopper.

The literature review reveals that online purchase of footwear is still not all encompassing. The objective of this paper is to ascertain the drivers of online purchase of footwear and establish the linkage between assortment satisfaction, price comparison and product display for online purchase. Online channel is not static and changes with time as consumers migrate from one channel to another (Madahi & Sukati, 2016), hence it is necessary to satisfy customers. This research looks if price comparison and product display are the antecedents to assortment satisfaction for online purchase of footwear. The following objectives would be addressed by this study.

1. Factors that determine assortment satisfaction during online purchase of footwear.
2. Correlation between price comparison and product display for online stores in footwear category.
3. The relationship of product display and price comparison upon assortment satisfaction in an online footwear retailing.
4. The moderation effect due to gender and income on the hypothesized relationships.

The next section is the literature review followed by the data analysis, discussions and managerial implications.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Assortment Satisfaction**

Assortment is considered as the central attribute for a store image (Golden & Zimmer, 1988) and a predictor of consumers’ choice of shopping destinations (Oppewal, Timmermans, & Louviere, 1997). Assortment can be a store differentiator which depends upon store size and customer needs (Alur & Schoormans, 2013); and a function of display (Pizzi & Scarpi, 2016). Because it is the base component of a retailer’s offer, we argue that assortment is a key main antecedent of satisfaction. Satisfaction captures the post decision evaluation of a product or experience (Oliver, 1996). Such post choice evaluations drive repeated choice and thus affect a company’s long-term profitability (Newman & Werbel, 1973). It has been found to have a significant effect on consumer behavior. Assortment has been found to moderate the relationship of visual display and decision satisfaction (Pizzi & Scarpi, 2016).
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