THE IMPACT OF E-COMMERCE ON THE MERCHANDISING OF WOMEN'S CLOTHING IN TRADITIONAL SHOPPING CENTERS/MALLS

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Overview

An online survey was used to assess the behavior of women who purchased women's clothing on the Internet and in malls and the behavior of those women who only purchased women's clothing in malls. Six hundred eighty women responded to the survey that measured a variety of behaviors including their experience with shopping for women's clothing, perceived risk of shopping for women's clothing, what was important in making a decision concerning women's clothing, time pressures of shopping, perception of mall composition variables and general demographics. The results seem to indicate that as women become more experienced with shopping for clothing on the Internet, they seem to shop more on this venue. In addition, perceived risk of shopping on the Internet seems to be higher for those women who have never shopped the venue. This is more evident in the risk areas of quality, fit, brand selection, immediate satisfaction, durability and

after sale customer service. Women who only shopped for women's clothing in malls generally seem to find the attributes of brand, look, style, fit, ease of shopping, order-processing speed and return policy very important in the purchase of women's clothing. Price seems to be the most important attribute for those women who shop for clothing on the Internet. The results also seem to indicate that time pressure limits shopping in both venues. Generally, women are less than enthusiastic about the ambience, design, layout, variety offered (stores, food, entertainment) and excitement of their shopping malls. Finally, overall demographic profiles of women who shop for women's clothing on the Internet seem to be similar to those who do not.

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■ Introduction

The Internet has been described as the most transforming invention in human history, at the very least in the 20th century, because it has the capacity to change everything—the way we work, learn, play and the way we shop. Opinions vary concerning the degree of impact the Internet will have on conventional bricks-and-mortar retailers. Many believe e-commerce will forever change the basis of competitive advantage in retailing and will affect all retailers and all types of products. Thus, the Internet will bring about the demise of bricks-and-mortar retailers. Others believe the Internet is not as much of an issue for bricks-and-mortar retailers as it is for direct mail retailers. They believe that people who currently enjoy shopping face-to-face will not find the new Internet medium particularly attractive. Regardless of the view taken, e-commerce will change the face of retailing thoroughly and permanently and it will be a significant factor in the future of retailing. This fact is forcing traditional retailers to rethink their businesses. Those who fail to consider how the Internet will alter their businesses are bound to become its victims.

Experts indicate that the total economic impact of e-commerce sales and Internet-influenced revenue (i.e., customer information search on the Internet, which is a factor in many sales) is going to be astounding. In fact, it is believed that Internet-influenced revenue will comprise a significant segment of the U.S. economy. U.S. e-commerce revenues are projected to grow to between $580 and $970 billion by 2002. Sally Gordon of Moody's Investors Services notes that if U.S. retailers lose only seven percent of their sales to the Internet, their profitability can decline as much as 50% (Fulmer, 1999). What factors are enabling the inroads

e-tailers are making onto the playing field of traditional bricks-and-mortar retailers? Christensen and Tedlow (2000) address this issue by suggesting that e-tailers deliver remarkably well on three of the key missions of the retailer—product, price and place. They note that bricks-and-mortars cannot compete with e-tailers when it comes to selection, margin flexibility and location; however, traditional retailers win hands down when it comes to delivering physical products at the right time.

How are traditional shopping centers/malls reacting to the Internet threat? Reactions vary. Fulmer (1999) notes that some developers believe Internet sites will never supplant malls and shopping centers, even in urban areas, because people have so few places in which to gather. Real estate investment trusts (REITs) feel they have a strong enough tenant mix that they will not be affected by the growing competition from the Internet (Calbreath, 1999). And, some optimistic developers even suggest that growth in e-commerce might increase the number of retailers looking for space in the physical world as more and more e-tailers become click-and-mortars (Fulmer, 1999). So, are shopping centers/malls doing anything to gain an Internet presence? Currently, some have developed sites that permit mall merchants to carry out transactions over the Internet. Other shopping centers/malls merely use their Internet sites as a billboard—posting mall information, store directory, calendar of events, etc. And finally, there are those shopping centers/malls that have no Internet presence.

Mall management has begun to seek the answers to a number of strategic questions. Will the Internet pull customers out of shopping centers/malls or will it enhance the shopping centers'/malls' ability to attract customers to their centers? Will the Internet be a direct threat or have a complementary effect? In other words, will consumers stay home and shop/buy on the Internet instead of going to the shopping center/mall or will they engage in both Internet shopping/buying and traditional shopping center/mall shopping/buying? These are important questions that need to be addressed, but correct answers to these questions can only be arrived at if bricks-and-mortars understand the consumer. As Berman and Evans (1998) aptly state,

A retailer's ability to devise and apply a sound strategy depends on how well that firm selects, identifies, and understands its customers. This entails selecting the type of target market to reach, identifying the characteristics and needs of the firm's specific target market, and understanding how consumers make decisions.

Since women account for approximately 70 to 80% of all retail sales, it is important for mall management to understand the women's segment

of the clothing market and the attributes that they deem important in shopping for women's clothing in shopping centers/malls and on the Internet (*Business Week,* 1999a). In this way, mall managers can develop appropriate strategies that lessen the potentially harmful effects of the Internet and pull customers into their centers. Thus, the purpose of this study is to study the impact of e-commerce on the merchandising of women's clothing in traditional malls/shopping centers.

■ Profiling The E-shopper

What do we know about the e-shopper? Not much, at this point in time, because the information available is limited. We do know that e-shoppers are not a homogeneous population. Early statistics showed that males were predominantly using the Internet to shop. Recent statistics indicate that women are just as likely to shop online. In fact, it is now being predicted that the number of women Internet users will surpass the number of men online in the very near future ("Internet Advertisers," 2000).

Cortese (1997) reported that the typical Internet user is between the ages of 30 and 49, has at least some college education, and an income that is $35,000 or greater. A survey conducted by *Women.com,* Harris Interactive, and Procter & Gamble reveals that the average online woman is usually married, in her thirties, with a relatively high household income ("Internet Advertisers," 2000).

The majority of women report that they shop online because it simplifies their lives and PricewaterhouseCooper noted that price does not appear to be the most critical component in decisions to shop on the Internet (*Business Wire,* 2000a). Internet shopping portal *ebates.com* reports that consumers consider online shopping ideal for buying entertainment and consumer electronics, but best for just browsing in categories such as apparel and food (*Business Wire,* 2000b). Data collected in an ongoing consumer study by full service investment bank Robertson Stephens indicated that online shoppers judge Internet sites by ease of ordering, product selection, product information, product prices, web-site navigation, on-time delivery, product representation, customer support, privacy policies and shipping (*Business Wire,* 1999b).

■ Conceptual Development

Traditional Shopping Choice Behavior

The normative decision processes that consumers use to make retail purchases are usually thought to begin with some stimulus that provokes a

need recognition that propels the consumer to purchase the product or service. Once the need is recognized and defined, a consumer will most likely seek out information, evaluate competing alternatives and attribute structures and then make the purchase. After the purchase, the customer usually reevaluates the purchase using some defined criteria—post purchase evaluation (Titus and Everett, 1995). Consumers usually search for information to identify and compare alternatives. In the traditional shopping mode, consumers might visit stores, discuss the purchase with friends, consult buying guides, talk to store employees, seek out ads or just plain visit the mall to look around. Consumer search increases/decreases due to a variety of factors including knowledge and experience, risk, time available for purchase, number of product alternatives available and the product's attributes, store alternatives available and locations and shopper characteristics. Previous research has indicated that the less shopping experience a customer has with a product/store, the more information search behavior is required (Swan 1969). Usually the greater the perceived risk associated with the product purchase, the greater the information search (Konrad, Gottschalk and Grunert, 1987; Urbany, Dickson and Wilkie, 1989). Research seems to indicate that the amount of time a consumer has available to shop will influence the consumer's selection and purchase strategies. Surveys indicate that time saving, in the form of convenience and efficiency, is the primary reason consumers use online capabilities (Edelmann, Bhola and Feiler, 1997). As time pressures increase, consumers tend to spend less time searching for information and want to purchase product immediately (Denton 1994). Product attributes differ widely in importance to consumers; however, they most likely will affect information seeking, product evaluation and purchase (Nowles and Simonson, 1996; Carpenter, Glazer and Nakamoto, 1994).

A critical issue for retailers is how consumers select the place where they purchase a product. Previous research seems to indicate that consumers consider such attributes as the store's distance from their home, brands carried, service, placement of stores within the mall and the types of stores placed in the mall, aesthetics, and more. In addition, the types of stores available, the number of stores available, and the presence or absence of alternative purchase options influence the choice process (Spiggle and Sewall, 1987).

Demographic characteristics of consumers impact the methods and means they use to progress through the purchase decision process model. For example, some researchers have found that increased information search is prevalent as education and income increase. In addition, previous research indicates that information search and evaluation of product attributes decreases as consumers grow older (Capon and Burke, 1972). Additionally, ethnicity may impact shopping choice behavior. For ex-

ample, research seems to indicate that Hispanic mall window shoppers were more likely to end up buying something than their non-Hispanic counterparts (Crispell, 1997).

E-commerce Shopping Choice Behavior

The evolution of electronic commerce in the retail selling of products and services has dramatically impacted the traditional view of consumer decision choice. All the old rules and knowledge seem to be either shattered or questioned. E-commerce opens up for view and study, a whole new set of questions regarding consumer behavior in every stage of the normative consumer decision processes.

Choice is affected by different rules of engagement by the customer in both the selection of where to purchase (either traditional or online) and how to purchase (information/evaluation rules).

For now, given the limited amount of e-commerce shopping choice behavior research, the methodological focus of this research is on the adaptation of previously used methods and scales to evaluate this behavior.

■ Methodology

Sample and Data Collection

Focus group interviews were arranged by telephone screening in one rural city and two large metropolitan cities in the mid-south and southern U.S. Eight to ten women participants from each of these cities, who matched the general profile of female shoppers who would probably participate in the actual study (traditional shoppers and Web shoppers for women's clothing) were interviewed during these sessions. This questioning provided the researchers with the general nature of traditional and Internet behavior for the purchase of women's clothing and this information formed the basis of the final questionnaire development. The sampling design included six data collection venues, five malls and one banner ad on the index page of a rural/urban Internet service provider (ISP) that is the premier provider for the region. The criteria for mall inclusion were:

1. The selected malls form a mix of urban/rural; moderate to large; Web-based/non-Web-based malls.
2. The selected rural malls are within driving distance (or about 90 to 100 miles) from an urban mall.
3. The selected malls have a similar mix of stores.

4. The selected malls have a similar mix of stores that provide both Web-based information and/or e-commerce access (can actually buy merchandise from the Web sites of these stores).

The data collection instrument was developed both as a paper and pencil type and a Web-based type. The Web-based questionnaire was hosted by *Infopoll.net* and housed on a URL on their server. (a URL is an internet address.) Two methods of data collection were utilized in the overall sampling/data collection design. The first involved the use of mall intercepts in the malls using a variety of days of the week and times of intercept. Potential female respondents were approached and qualified as to whether they had Internet access and would like to participate. If they had Internet access they were asked if they would like either to answer the questions online or take home a questionnaire and mail it back. If they wanted to respond online they were given a card with the URL information. If they wanted to respond by mail, they were given the questionnaire, a postpaid return envelope and a contact business card of the participating researcher. If they did not have Internet access, they were asked to respond to the paper/pencil questionnaire and were given the mail questionnaire set to return at their leisure.

The second aspect of data collection involved a click-on banner established on the index page of the largest ISP in the southern rural study area. This click-on banner linked to the *Infopoll.net* URL for the online survey.

Incentives of prizes of 10 ($50) gift certificates (randomly selected, to the mall store of choice) were promised to those who completed the entire questionnaire in any form (paper or online). This incentive was promoted on every data collection type and rules for the drawing were either given to the potential respondent or available online.

Since the purpose of this study is to examine the differences in traditional and Internet shopping behavior for women's clothing, only those women who had access to the Web and who answered the survey online were included in this analysis. Although some might find this distracting, the researchers felt that this would provide a sense of realism to the study—given the respondents' access to the Internet. These women still tend to shop traditionally, even though they have Internet access. Six hundred eighty online surveys were completed by the project cut-off date and form the basis of this analysis. Some of the respondent set had access to the Internet and/or had purchased women's clothing in traditional shopping malls or on the Internet.

Instrument

A self-report questionnaire was developed based on the review of the literature and from information developed from the focus groups. Scales

and items that were previously reported in the traditional literature and reported to be valid and reliable were adapted to measuring Internet behavioral variables.

Women's clothing choice decision structure for traditional and Internet purchase of women's clothing was assessed by adapting a scale developed by Cosenza (1985). This scale, called "women's clothing decision structure," consisted of 12 decision items/attributes for purchasing women's clothing. The importance of each one of these items for the purchase of women's clothing in both the traditional mall setting and on the Internet was assessed using a five-point importance scale ranging from "very important" to "very unimportant." Ambience, layout, design and variety scales were adapted from the research of Wakefield and Baker (1998) and Wakefield and Blodgett (1996). "Excitement of local mall" is adapted from scales developed by Russell (1980) and consists of five semantic differential items measured on a seven-point scale.

Prior experience in purchasing on the Internet is measured using a nominal scale assessing prior purchase of products on the Web. Prior information search for purchasing women's clothing on the Internet was measured using a nominal scale assessing the search for information on women's clothing on the Internet.

Perceived Internet shopping risk was assessed using a set of items derived from Jacoby and Kaplan (1972), Peter and Ryan (1976) and Zikmund and Scott (1973). Twelve risks associated with purchasing women's clothing in malls and on the Internet were assessed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree."

A psychographic profiling instrument was developed from the work of Taylor (1993) and Cosenza and Taylor (2000) and consists of 10 items measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." The time-consciousness scale used in this study included items taken from this profiling instrument. General demographics were also collected used nominal measures and included ethnicity, marital status, age, education, occupation and income.

Hypotheses

Dependent Variable

Previous research has indicated that consumers evaluate products first, choose what to buy, then evaluate where they should go to purchase these products (Mowen and Minor, 1998). With this in mind, the focus of this research will be retrospective. We identify female customers who have purchased women's clothing in both venues, malls and online, and also identify female customers that have only purchased women's clothing in

the traditional mall setting. Thus, the dependent variable for the study is developed as the nominal classification of female shoppers of women's clothing by these qualifications. The dichotomy developed is: (1) Purchased Women's Clothing on the Internet (also have experience purchasing women's clothing in the mall) and (2) Have Not Purchased Women's Clothing on the Internet (also have experience purchasing women's clothing in the mall).

Previous Experience and Knowledge

In traditional shopping behavior for the purchase of products in general, previous experience with a specific product and specific venue (store/mall), have been shown to influence information seeking and purchase choice (Bettman and Park, 1980). Since this research was done in the traditional retail setting, a test of the proposition utilizing the additional e-commerce venue could be accomplished by testing the follow hypotheses:

$H1_a$: Previous product purchases on the Internet will positively affect choice of this venue for purchasing women's clothing.

$H1_b$: Previous information search about women's clothing on the Internet will positively affect choice of this venue for purchasing women's clothing.

Risk

It is assumed in the traditional shopping decision model that the higher the perceived risk (uncertainty and the possibility of negative outcomes) the more consumers must gamble in buying the product. If previously determined, perceived risk associated with shopping in the traditional mall can be managed. Additionally, the effects of risk associated with e-shopping can be leveraged by mall managers if this risk can be determined. For example, salespeople have always been regarded as an element of a risk reduction strategy (Hugstad, Taylor and Bruce 1987; Settle and Alreck, 1989). Therefore, well-trained retail salespeople will essentially help reduce a shopper's perceived risk of purchase. Peter and Tarpey (1975) implied that a consumer is motivated to minimize as much risk as possible when shopping.

H2: There are differences in risk decision structure of those who purchased women's clothing on the Internet and those who did not.

Time

The effects of time pressure on shopping are noted in the literature. Generally, as time pressures of work and family increase, there is a dramatic effect on shopping behavior (Denton, 1994).

$H3_a$: Tight scheduling positively affects e-commerce shopping choice.

$H3_b$: Value of time positively affects e-commerce shopping choice.

$H3_c$: Saving time (convenience) positively affects e-commerce shopping choice.

Product Attributes

Cosenza (1985) and Fowler (1999) implied that decision attribute structure importance played an important role in the choice of women's clothing. Since most often the consumer evaluates the critical attributes of product purchase before evaluating products in shopping venues, the perception of the attribute importance and the comparison of the attribute importance are critical inputs into the consumer choice. This hypothesis will ascertain the perception of women's clothing attribute importance differences of those who shopped on the Internet for women's clothing and those who did not.

H4: There are differences in the importance rating of women's clothing decision structure attributes between those women who purchased women's clothing on the Internet and those who did not (traditional shoppers only).

Mall Composition

Recent retailing literature seems to stress the importance of excitement, mall store composition (tenant variety) and physical environment as determinants of traditional shopping behavior (Wakefield and Baker, 1998). The poor perception of these factors relating to the traditional mall may indicate reasons for selecting the Internet as a shopping venue. To test these relationships, $H5_a$ through $H5_c$ will be examined.

$H5_a$: There are differences in the perception of local mall excitement between those who shop for women's clothing on the Internet and those who only shop for women's clothing in malls.

$H5_b$: There are differences in the perception of local mall ambient factors between those who shop for women's clothing on the Internet and those who only shop for women's clothing in malls.

$H5_c$: There are differences in the perception of local mall design factors between those who shop for women's clothing on the Internet and those who only shop for women's clothing in malls.

$H5_d$: There are differences in the perception of local mall layout factors between those who shop for women's clothing on the Internet and those who only shop for women's clothing in malls.

$H5_e$: There are differences in the perception of local mall tenant variety between those who shop for women's clothing on the Internet and those who only shop for women's clothing in malls.

Demographics

Previous research seems to indicate that demographic profiles of shoppers affect all aspects of the consumer decision process (Capon and Burke, 1972; Newman, Staelen and Staelen, 1972). Therefore, we will examine the following hypothesis, H6.

> H6: Are there any demographic profile differences between those women who have purchased women's clothing on the Internet and those who have not?

■ Results

Sample Characteristics

The usual estimate of survey response (out minus in divided by out) is not an adequate measure of response based upon our sample/data collection design. Overall, based upon the number of invitations handed out in the malls and the number of click-throughs and completions from the ISP banner we can estimate about a 28% usable response rate. Generally, the sample was comprised of a majority of Caucasian respondents; however, there was a good representation of other ethnicities, including 13% African-Americans. Fifty-six percent of the respondents were married, 21% were single, and the remainder were either divorced or refused to respond to this question. The majority of the respondents were between the ages of 19 and 59, while the most frequent age category was 30 to 44 years. The respondent group was well educated. All respondents had at least a high school diploma, and 37% had an undergraduate college degree or higher. Many of the respondents worked in a professional position (55%) while only 10% were students. The typical reported household income was between $25,000 and $49,999 with over 50% of the sample reporting household incomes greater than $25,000.

Instrument Characteristics

Although there are no strict rules for measuring reliability, the value which has gained the most acceptance is called "coefficient alpha"—a reliability coefficient. Cronbach-Alpha (Cronbach, 1951) and KR-20 (Kuder and Richardson, 1937) were used to assess reliability of the items used in the study instrument. The reliability scores for the items/scales ranged from .73 to .94, all within the suggested reliability range of Nunnally (1978) and Peter (1979).

Analyses and Discussion of Hypotheses

Previous Experience and Knowledge

Hypotheses $H1_a$ and $H1_b$ were tested using contingency analysis. The results of the analyses are shown in Table 1. An examination of the table results seems to indicate the following:

1. Prior purchase of products on the Internet other than women's clothing does seem to indicate a likelihood of also buying women's clothing on the Internet, since almost all of those women in the sample who purchased women's clothing online also had prior Internet purchase experience.
2. The likelihood of repurchasing women's clothing online once you have initially purchased it is very high, given that the 140 women

TABLE 1. PRIOR EXPERIENCE AND INFORMATION SEEKING AND THE PROBABILITY OF FUTURE PURCHASES OF WOMEN'S CLOTHING ON THE INTERNET (n = 680)

	Purchased Women's Clothing on the Internet and in the Mall	Never Purchased Women's Clothing on the Internet but did so in a Mall
Prior Purchase of Products on the Internet	140[a]	212
No prior Purchase of Products on the Internet	4	324

$\chi^2 = 151.18$, df = 1, Significant at $p < 0.000$.
[a] On a scale of 1–7, low to high. In the future, how would you rate the chance of returning to the Internet to purchase Women's Clothing? Score was (5.89).

	Purchased Women's Clothing on the Internet and in the Mall	Never Purchased Women's Clothing on the Internet but did so in a Mall
Prior Information Seeking About Women's Clothing on the Internet	136	272[b]
No Prior Information Seeking About Women's Clothing on the Internet	8	264

$\chi^2 = 98.86$, df = 1, Significant at $p < 0.000$.
[b] On a scale of 1–7, low to high. In the future, how would you rate the chance of returning to the Internet to purchase Women's Clothing? Score was (5.20).

who had prior purchase experience and purchased women's clothing on the Internet indicated that there was a high chance (5.89 out of 7) of repeat shopping/purchasing behavior for women's clothing on the Internet.

3. Prior information seeking about women's clothing on the Internet does not guarantee using the Internet at some time for the purchase of women's clothing on the Internet but the chances are high that prior information-seeking respondents felt their chances were very good (5.2 out of 7) that they would shop for women's clothing on the Internet in the future.

Risk

Hypothesis 2 was tested using MANOVA with step down F analysis. The risk scale used in this analysis consisted of 12 items (alpha = 0.74) that are depicted in Table 2 along with the results of the analysis.

From the results in Table 2 it seems that all of the risk items are significantly different across the dependent grouping variable. However, the risk structure that explains most of the differences between the women purchasers and non-purchasers of women's clothing on the Internet (ordered by strength of separability in Table 2) are the risk beliefs that women's clothing purchased on the Internet would probably be of poor quality (i.e., women who purchased women's clothing on the Internet strongly disagreed that these clothing items would be of poor quality). In addition, they also believed strongly that the items would fit properly, be broad in brand assortment, be durable and the e-tailer/Internet site would offer good customer service.

There is a bad news, good news discussion related to risk beliefs for purchase of women's clothing on the Internet based upon the results of this survey. The bad news is that as women get more experience with purchasing on the Internet the risks of shopping for women's clothing generally even out—no advantage. The good news for the mall manager/store manager is that the knowledge of this level playing field will enable innovative offensive strategies to be developed to create mall advantages. From the mall perspective, besides better environmental shopping enrichments, they could create alliances with stores that have a Web presence to provide lease incentives for stores developing specialized brand offerings, special service amenities and other custom shopping features available only by mall shopping.

Time

Hypothesis 3 was tested using independent t analysis across the Shopped the Internet for Women's Clothing/Not Shopped the Internet for Women's Clothing groups. Results of this analysis appear in Table 3. Apparently, both groups could be profiled as generally time-conscious in their

TABLE 2. SHOPPING RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PURCHASE OF WOMEN'S CLOTHING[1,2]

Item (5-Point Scale) SA–SD	Ratings of Women Who Purchased Women's Clothing On The Internet (n = 144) MEAN	Ratings of Women Who Did Not Purchase Women's Clothing On The Internet (n = 536) MEAN	F-[4] STATISTIC
Fit poorly	3.54	2.95	69.0[b]
Be durable	2.43	2.67	15.4[c]
Be of poor quality	3.91	3.37	73.2[a]
Be difficult to exchange	2.91	2.46	23.0
Be a poor value	3.83	3.36	59.0
Be higher in price than the mall	3.43	2.93	28.0
Not provide me with immediate gratification	3.11	2.80	13.0[d]
Not offer the brand selection that I like to purchase	3.66	3.08	45.8[c]
Be a good buy	2.69	2.79[3]	2.0
Be the same as if I purchased the item from the mall	2.80	2.90	1.7
Not offer good after-the-sale customer service	3.11	2.92	7.3[1]
Not provide personal shopping service	3.09	2.83	9.1

[1]All significant at a $p < 0.05$, except item [3] significant at $p < 0.10$.
[2]Wilks Lamda = 0.839, $p < 0.000$.
[4]Ordering of importance of variables used in the step down procedure (a–f).

shopping behavior. It does not appear that there are any differences in the perceptions of time between the groups.

Decision Attributes

Consumers evaluate and purchase decisions by utilizing a set of evaluative criteria (decision attribute structure) related to the specific product. Hypothesis 4 centers around the presumed decision attribute structure for purchasing women's clothing and how important each of these attributes is perceived in the purchase decision. Attribute importance differs widely from consumer to consumer and is affected by a variety of factors including the characteristics of the respondent, marketing influences and response opportunities (MacKenzie, 1986). Hypothesis 4_a and 4_b were

TABLE 3. DIFFERENCES IN WOMEN'S PERCEPTION OF TIME AND PURCHASE BEHAVIOR

Time Item[1,2]	Women's Clothing Purchased on the Internet n = 144 Mean	Women's Clothing Not Purchased on the Internet n = 536 Mean
I like to plan activities by the clock	2.67	2.70
I try to save time when shopping	2.22	2.28
Time is a valuable asset that must be conserved when possible	2.09	2.11

[1]5-point scale: strongly agree to strongly disagree.
[2]No significant differences.

tested using paired comparisons within the "shopped for women's cloth-ing on the Internet" group and then comparisons are made with the mean ratings of those women who did not purchase women's clothing on the Web. The results of the analysis appear in Table 4. When we compare the importance ratings of these women who purchased women's clothing online, we observe that they felt that fit, price, ease of return and ease of moving through the shopping venue were the most important attributes when shopping online for women's clothing. When comparing these rat-ings to their ratings of the same attributes when shopping traditionally we can see a general pattern emerging where all but fit are relatively more important in their decision between shopping venues. In other words, when shopping for women's clothing in general, fit, price, ease of return and ease of movement through the shopping venue are important *but* when the same person is shopping online, price, ease of movement through shopping venue and ease of return stand out in importance. When comparing the importance ratings of the general set of criteria across those who shopped both on the Internet and in mall venues, we see that in almost all cases the importance ratings of the criteria are higher/ more important to those women who only have shopped in malls.

Mall Composition

Hypotheses 5_a–5_c were tested using t analyses across women who pur-chased women's clothing on the Internet and women who did not pur-chase women's clothing on the Internet. The overall mall composition scale means for the general sample, reliability coefficients and analysis across groups appear in Table 5.

The analysis of the results of the mall composition variables seems to indicate a similar perception of the mall by both groups. In fact, the entire sample does not seem overly enthusiastic about any of the mall compo-sition variables.

TABLE 4. DIFFERENCES IN DECISION ATTRIBUTE IMPORTANCE RATINGS FOR PURCHASING WOMEN'S CLOTHING

Item (1 = Very Important— 5 = Very Unimportant)	Mean Importance Ratings of Women Who Purchased Both On The Internet and At The Mall n = 144 Rating of Traditional Shopping Attributes MEAN	Mean Importance Ratings of Women Who Purchased Both On The Internet and At The Mall n = 144 Rating of Internet Shopping Attributes MEAN	Mean Importance Ratings of Women Who Purchased Only At The Mall n = 536 Rating of Traditional Shopping Attributes MEAN
Price	1.44	1.28[1]	1.42
Label/brand	2.81	2.36[1]	2.65
Look	1.36	1.44[1]	1.23
Style	1.69	1.56[1]	1.41
Fabric	1.86	1.89	1.66
Color	1.78	1.72	1.69
Fit	1.09	1.16[1]	1.13
Ease of movement through shopping venue	2.23	1.51[1]	2.14
Immediate possession	2.14	2.06	1.98
Personal service	2.33	2.28	1.91
Order processing speed	2.08	1.69[1]	1.98
Ease of returning purchase	1.53	1.36[1]	1.49

[1]Significant. $p < 0.05$

TABLE 5. MALL COMPARISON SCALES; SCALE RELIABILITY, ITEMS, AND SAMPLE BASED SCALE MEANS; AND THE COMPARISON OF THE DIFFERENCES IN MALL COMPOSITION SCALE RATINGS

Scale[4]	Items	Reliability[3]	Sample Based Scale Mean	Women's Clothing Purchased on the Internet n = 144 Mean	Women's Clothing Not Purchased on Internet n = 536 Mean
Ambience[1]	Mall lighting Mall music type Mall temperature Mall music volume	.74	2.71	2.67	2.69
Design[1]	Mall walls and floors Attractive mall architecture Overall design interesting	.72	2.43	2.36	2.43
Layout[1]	Ease of access to preferred stores Easy to get to food areas Easy to get to restrooms Overall layout makes it easy to shop	.79	2.58	2.60	2.55
Variety[1]	Variety of food excellent Variety of stores excellent Excellent entertainment alternatives	.75	2.83	2.80	2.81
Excitement[2]	Dull–exciting Unexciting–exciting Unappealing– appealing Monotonous– sensational Boring–stimulating	.94	4.07	4.00	4.13

[1]5-point sa-sd scales. [2]7-point semantic differential scale. [3]Coefficient alpha. [4]No significant differences.

Demographics

Hypothesis 6 was tested using a modal comparison across groups and is shown in Table 6. There appears to be a similar demographic structure across both groups, married, 30–44 years of age, some college, professional with an income of $25,000–$49,999.

TABLE 6. DIFFERENCES IN SAMPLE'S MODAL[1] DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Variable[2]	Purchased Women's Clothing on the Internet n = 144	Not Purchased Women's Clothing on the Internet n = 536
Marital Status	Married	Married
Age	30–44 years	30–44 years
Education	Some college	Some college
Occupation	Professional	Professional
Income	$25–$49.9K	$25–$49.9K

[1]Represented by the most frequent appearing category.
[2]No significant differences.

■ Conclusions and Managerial Implications

Although limited by the inherent methodological and statistical errors found in most studies of this type along with the constantly changing dynamics of e-commerce and shopping center/mall venues, there are many important patterns that are inherent in the data. These patterns evoke some important managerial considerations for mall/shopping center management—especially in the area of women's clothing. One consistent pattern found throughout this study was the lukewarm perception of mall dynamics, including service, excitement, variety, design, layout and ambience. It would seem the managers must deal with this issue head on and make shopping an "experience" not an acquisition-based endeavor. Although, the "Web experience" will also change, the findings in this study seem to indicate that the mix of traditional/Web shopping will always be present and that experience based shopping on either venue will not be an end in itself.

It is also apparent from the results of this study that as women become more experienced with using the Web and more comfortable with perceived risk that most could shop on the e-venue. Perceived risk has already been challenged by some innovative e-businesses like Lands' End

who are using a "virtual model" (where women can try on a variety of merchandise from the store using a general or custom model). The obvious offense that a mall could mount to offset the "virtual model" sales device is to develop a "wallet-type" mall virtual model based upon customer specifications where women can try on a variety of merchandise from the mall. This could be accomplished through the development of mall/store alliances that leverage the power of the mall Website to enhance the overall mix of stores that do not have virtual modeling.

It is obvious that "time consciousness" affects women's shopping behavior, no matter what the venue, so "access" is a key developmental variable for the successful mall.

Finally, it appears that women are very conscious about the criteria they use to make decisions about women's clothing. As it appears from the results of this analysis, malls have the opportunity to enhance their competitive positions for women's clothing sales dollars by creating alliances with mall stores to offer "mall only" enhanced attributes, like brands, colors, etc. This alliance could represent lease incentives or other remuneration.

Obviously, the evolvement of the Internet as a shopping venue is going to increase competition for the women's clothing purchase dollar, but it is not going to be the death of traditional retailing. As long as malls/retailers are able to add value to their offerings, they will survive.

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