

## **An empirical analysis of adolescent shopping motivation and shopping enjoyment**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The present study examines adolescent shopping motivations, and the impact these motivations have on adolescent shopping enjoyment. Two distinct forms of shopping motivation, experiential and product-oriented, were assessed, and the impact of each on adolescent shopping enjoyment was analyzed. Data was collected from two distinct groups of adolescents. One sample included 338 junior high school students, ranging in age from 11 to 15 years old. A second sample included 263 high school students, ranging in age from 14 to 18 years old. Mean comparison and regression results surprisingly indicate that a) both samples are more motivated by product-driven purposes when they shop at stores, and b) product-oriented shopping motivations positively and significantly impact shopping enjoyment for both samples. The low levels of experiential shopping motivations exhibited by both samples are unexpected. Possible explanations for the relationships exhibited and managerial implications are discussed.

Key Words: Shopping Motivation, Shopping Enjoyment, Adolescents

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## INTRODUCTION

There is no question that the purchasing habits and preferences of United States teenagers have changed dramatically over the past century. As technology rapidly advances, and as the products available for teenage consumption change, teenagers develop consumption behaviors based on a variety of factors. While this adaptation might seem benign in terms of its impact in the United States marketplace, one factor associated with teenagers is causing marketing researchers to pay greater attention to this consumption group. That factor is the ever-increasing purchasing power of teenagers (Muratore, 2016).

As of 2016, there are nearly 27 million teenagers in the United States. More importantly for marketing research efforts, these teenagers combine to earn \$91 billion annually. The average annual income of a person 12-14 years old in the United States is nearly \$2,800. For United States teenagers between the ages of 15-17, average annual income is approximately \$5,000 (<http://www.statisticbrain.com/teenage-consumer-spending-statistics/>). Although these dollar figures might seem benign, the impact of this income takes on meaningful significance when one considers that on average, every 15-17 year old in the United States has almost \$5,000 to spend annually.

The magnitude of this teenage consumption power has earned this consumer group greater research attention from marketing researchers. Understanding the consumption motivations, marketplace perceptions, and purchasing behaviors of teenagers is now critical for organizations seeking to reap the benefits of teenager spending globally (Gil, Kwon, Good, & Johnson, 2012; Rodhain & Aurier, 2016; Wong, Osman, Jamaluddin, & Yin-Fah, 2012). A review of the research focused on the consumer socialization of adolescents conducted over the last half of the twentieth century is provided by John (1999). John (1999) finds that certain areas of adolescent consumer socialization have been empirically examined, with effort focused on understanding adolescent marketing knowledge, specific adolescent consumption attitudes, adolescent consumer decision-making strategies, and the influences of adolescent consumption decisions. However, the most glaring deficiencies in adolescent consumer socialization research appear to be in understanding the factors that influence the purchasing habits and perceptions of adolescent consumers. John (1999) writes,

Perhaps the most noticeable gap in this literature is a basic understanding of what decision strategies children possess at different ages. A substantial contribution could be made by exploring when children acquire different types of compensatory and non-compensatory strategies and how these strategies emerge over time. Existing research provides some clues, but empirical data are particularly limited for younger children. Also important would be research exploring the goals children of different ages have for consumer decision making. To date, research has proceeded as if children shared the same decision-making goals as adults, such as buying the best product or making a good decision with the least cognitive effort. It may well be that young children have quite different goals in mind, such as choosing a novel product, being surprised, or having fun. This may, in fact, provide a richer explanation for some of the findings regarding age differences in decision-making skills and behavior. Evidence regarding children's goals as consumers would provide much needed insight into the decision-making process as children grow older. (pp. 204-205)

The aforementioned review acknowledges that the goals and motivations of adult consumers have been examined in a variety of contexts. However, research focused on understanding the motivations behind adolescent consumption decisions is rather scarce. Little is known about the motivating factors of adolescents, and how these motivational forces impact adolescent consumption perceptions. Therefore, the present study seeks to assess specific shopping motivations of teenage consumers, and the impact of these perceptions on the shopping enjoyment of teenage consumers.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Shopping motivations have been a legitimate focus of marketing research for decades (Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994). One of the first typologies for shopping motivation was developed by Westbrook and Black (1985) who suggested that consumers are potentially motivated by three distinct shopping motives: product-oriented, experiential, and a combination of product-oriented and experiential motives. Product-oriented shopping is considered a utilitarian shopping motivation. Individuals experiencing product-oriented motivations often are purchasing to satisfy a need, purchasing for economic or financial reasons, or searching for the most efficient or convenient shopping experience (Dawson, Bloch, & Ridgway, 1990). A product-oriented shopper often has a stated goal or purpose for a specific shopping excursion. These shoppers resemble the objectively motivated shopper identified by Moschis (1978).

Experiential shopping motivation has been described as a hedonic approach to shopping, with consumption experiences focused on pleasure or enjoyment (Bellenger & Korgaonkar, 1980). Experientially-motivated shoppers may undertake shopping excursions without a stated need to make a purchase. Additionally, they may simply seek to enjoy the amusement of the shopping venue's ambiance and atmosphere. Experientially-motivated shoppers are much more socially-driven than those motivated by product-oriented factors (Dawson et al., 1990).

Although the combination of product-oriented motivation and experiential motivation was seen in the original typology, most recent research in the area of shopping motivation has often excluded the original combination of experiential and product-oriented motivations as developed by the Westbrook and Black (1985). Previous empirical studies have found evidence that consumers will most often exhibit either product-oriented motivation or experiential motivation, but not both (Baker & Wakefield, 2012; Bloch, Ridgway, & Dawson, 1994).

Shopping enjoyment has been examined in a variety of consumption research studies, and has been included as a predictor (Hart, Farrell, Stachow, Reed, & Cadogan, 2007; Konus, Verhoef, & Neslin, 2008), as an outcome influenced by adolescent shopping perceptions (Beatty, Givan, Franke, & Reynolds, 2015; Martin, 2013), and as a moderator of other consumption-related variables (Dawson et al., 1990). Most critical in the empirical analysis of shopping enjoyment is the understanding that this variable is justifiably an important positive contributor to the overall shopping experience of consumers (Hill, Beatty, & Walsh, 2013).

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

As established previously, limited research attention has been given to adolescent consumer socialization. This issue makes it difficult to define specific research hypotheses for this specific group of consumers. Therefore, the present study will utilize recent research related

to shopping motivations and adolescent consumption behaviors to develop research questions to be analyzed in the present study.

Bloch, Sherrell, and Ridgway (1986) initiated early research on shopping motivations, examining consumers motivated by both hedonic motives and information motives, and found that the recreationally-driven hedonic motivations led to more significant information search than the utilitarian information-driven motivations. Focusing on a much more specific target market, a study of teenage female consumers indicated that mall visits were significantly socially-driven with the freedom of being in the mall serving as a major component of the pleasure associated with the experience (Haytko & Baker, 2004).

More recently, research has examined hedonic and product-oriented motivations for purchasing in a variety of settings. Although the sample focused on adult consumers, a study conducted by Baker and Wakefield (2012) indicated that high frequency shoppers were more likely to be socially-motivated consumers, while low frequency shoppers were more likely motivated by utilitarian or product-specific reasons. A separate study found that both utilitarian and hedonic shopping motivations play important parts in the development of perceptions of the overall shopping experience in a mall (Gilboa & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2013). Yim, Yoo, Sauer, and Seo (2014) found that adults motivated by pleasure-driven shopping were more likely to purchase impulsively, and to stay longer in stores. These factors held true even when the adults in the study were making utilitarian purchases in a superstore. In an international setting, Ayadi and Cao (2016) found that store atmospherics can have a positive impact in the hedonic-related shopping attitudes of pre-teenage consumers.

Most closely related to the research conducted in the present study, Hill et al. (2013) examined adolescent consumers and their shopping motivations in an online setting. This study examined adolescents ages twelve to fifteen through both quantitative and qualitative measures. Interesting results from this study showed that the majority of teens surveyed possessed low shopping enjoyment, and that those teens utilizing online shopping the least exhibited the highest level of shopping enjoyment. The results also indicate that younger teens are less socially motivated to purchase. Although this study focuses solely on the online purchasing perceptions and behaviors of adolescents, the results suggest that shopping motivations and shopping enjoyment are important factors in understanding adolescent shopping decision-making.

While all of these recent studies examining either shopping motivations or adolescent consumers provide insight into both areas of interest, none of these studies specifically examine the role that shopping motivation plays in the shopping enjoyment of adolescent consumers. Therefore, answers to the following two research questions will hopefully add to the current body of information in adolescent consumer socialization by identifying the predominant shopping motivation seen in adolescent consumers, and how these motivations impact adolescent shopping enjoyment.

Research Question 1: Are adolescent shopping trips more experientially motivated or product-oriented motivated?

Research Question 2: Which shopping motivation (experiential or product-oriented) has a greater impact on adolescent shopping enjoyment?

## METHODOLOGY

### Measures

Two distinct types of shopping motivation were assessed using measurement scales developed by Dawson et al. (1990). Experiential motivation, assessing the desire for pleasure and enjoyment while shopping, was assessed using 6 items. This scale assessed the adolescent's desire to watch other people; to enjoy crowds; to see and hear entertainment; to meet new people; to experience interesting sights, sounds, and smells; and to get out of the house. Survey participants responded to the six items using a 7-point scale ranging from "Not at all descriptive" to "Very descriptive". A higher score indicated a higher level of experiential motivation. Reliability analyses on these scale items exhibited acceptable Cronbach's alpha scores (0.85 junior high student sample; 0.84 high school student sample) (Cronbach, 1951).

Product-oriented motivation, assessing the utilitarian motivations of adolescent shoppers, was assessed using 5 items (Dawson et al., 1990). This scale assessed the adolescent's desire to find a variety of products; to find unique products or foods; to see new things; to find good prices; and to keep up with new products or goods. Survey participants responded to the five items using a 7-point scale ranging from "Not at all descriptive" to "Very descriptive". A higher score indicated a higher level of product-oriented motivation. Reliability analyses on these scale items exhibited acceptable Cronbach's alpha scores (0.81 junior high student sample; 0.83 high school student sample) (Cronbach, 1951).

Shopping enjoyment was assessed using a scale developed by Dawson et al. (1990), which was based on the previous work of Bellenger and Korgaonkar (1980), and Bloch et al. (1986). This scale contains 5 items, and responses were measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). One item required reverse coding in the scale. After completing the reverse coding, all of the items from the shopping enjoyment scale were summed, with a higher score indicating a greater enjoyment of shopping. Reliability analyses on these scale items exhibited acceptable Cronbach's alpha scores (0.81 junior high student sample, 0.81 high school student sample) (Cronbach, 1951). Each scale utilized in the present study is provided in the Appendix.

### Sample and Data Collection

The present study examined two separate and unrelated samples of adolescent consumers. Young consumers are a critical component of consumer socialization research, but research specifically focusing on this age group is rarely undertaken due to the difficulty in obtaining access to them. Consumers in their teenage years often form their first independent perceptions associated with consumption, and often are reconciling the perceptions they develop with the consumer socialization information provided by a parent. Although the purchasing habits of pre-teenage children are significantly influenced by family members, including parents, grandparents, and siblings, (Carlson, Grossbart, & Stuenkel, 1992), children in their teenage years receive increasing amounts of consumption guidance from their friends. A description of each sample is provided below.

### Sample 1

Three Junior High Schools received donations to their scholarship programs in exchange for agreeing to participate in the present research study. All three Junior High Schools were comprised of seventh and eighth grade students. A parent was required to sign a permission slip granting approval for each student who eventually participated in the survey. Additionally, the survey instrument was examined for approval by the principals at each Junior High School. Surveys were distributed by teachers to students in their classrooms. Each student in each Junior High School was given the opportunity to participate. Surveys were provided to a total of 353 junior high school students. Valid responses were returned by 338 junior high students, eliciting a very high 95.8% response rate. Students completed responses to the shopping motivation scales, the shopping enjoyment scale, and also were asked to provide responses identifying their demographic information. Complete information on the junior high school student sample is provided in Table 1 in the Appendix.

### Sample 2

Sample 2 consisted of high school students between the ages of 14 and 18. Teen buddy pairs, a specific approach used to insure comfort between the interviewer and his or her subjects, was used to accumulate data in this sample. Buddy pairs involve a process whereby an acquaintance interviews a separate acquaintance. Studies have shown that teenagers often feel greater levels of comfort when being interviewed or asked questions by their peers (Zollo, 1995). Senior level marketing students were trained to conduct interviews for the present study, and instructed to find individuals between 14 and 18 years of age to interview. Surveys were provided to a total of 298 high school students. Valid responses were returned by 263 high students, eliciting an 88.3% response rate. Students completed responses to the shopping motivation scales, the shopping enjoyment scale, and also were asked to provide responses identifying their demographic information. Complete information on the high school student sample is provided in Table 1 in the Appendix.

## RESULTS

Research question #1 was assessed by examining the means of the experiential and product-oriented shopping motivations scale for both the junior high and high school samples. Research question #2 was assessed by calculating the impact of experiential and product-oriented shopping motivations on shopping enjoyment using linear regression for both samples. Details of each analysis are provided below.

### Research Question #1

Research question #1 sought to determine if adolescent shopping trips are more experientially motivated or product-oriented motivated. For both the junior high sample and the high school sample, results indicate that product-oriented shopping motivations are much stronger in terms of their influence on adolescent consumers. Results from the junior high school sample of adolescent consumers shows these individuals possess a product-oriented shopping motivation mean of 4.12. Results from the high school sample of adolescent

consumers shows these individuals possess a product-oriented shopping motivation mean of 4.64. These product-oriented shopping motivations are noticeably higher than the experiential shopping motivations for both groups (experiential shopping motivation mean for junior high school students = 3.16; experiential shopping motivation mean for high school students = 3.23).

### **Research Question #2**

Research question #2 sought to determine which shopping motivation (experiential or product-oriented) has a greater impact on adolescent shopping enjoyment. To assess the strength of each type of shopping motivation on shopping enjoyment, linear regression analyses using the stepwise method were run for both samples. Tables 2 and 3 in the Appendix show the results of the regression analyses. For the junior high school sample shown in Table 2, the regression model is significant (adjusted  $r^2 = .27$ ,  $F = 36.87$ ). The construct of product-oriented shopping motivation is shown to be a significant predictor of shopping enjoyment ( $p < .001$ ), while experiential motivation is shown to not significantly predict shopping enjoyment.

For the high school sample shown in Table 3, the regression model is significant (adjusted  $r^2 = .37$ ,  $F = 64.40$ ). The construct of product-oriented shopping motivation is shown to be a significant predictor of shopping enjoyment ( $p < .001$ ), while experiential motivation is shown to not significantly predict shopping enjoyment.

### **MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

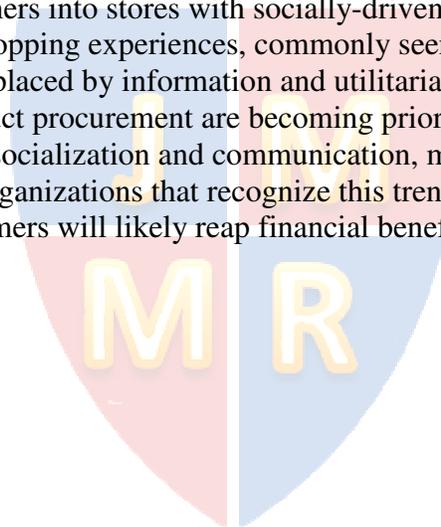
The results of the present study provide retail store managers with a number of interesting and somewhat surprising challenges. Possible explanations for these results are explored, followed by an examination of possible implications for retail stores with adolescent target markets.

Although utilitarian motivations for shopping have been identified in previous research focused on adolescents (Hill et al., 2013), the majority of evidence suggests that adolescents are more likely to be socially-motivated or hedonic shoppers (Haytko and Baker, 2004; Martin, 2009). Therefore, the significant product-directed shopping motivations exhibited by adolescents in the present study suggest certain adolescents are placing an increasing importance on the utility gained from their shopping excursions. One possible explanation for the product-oriented or utilitarian motivations observed in the present study is the composition of the sample of adolescents. Many of the adolescents assessed in the present study live at least 30 minutes from the nearest shopping mall. Although malls are not the only location adolescents are allowed to shop or consume, they often are the most likely destination for adolescent shoppers. The adolescents comprising the sample of the present study might enjoy fewer shopping outings in total due to the distance they reside from a shopping mall. This might suggest that many of the adolescent consumers examined in the present study have fewer opportunities for pleasure-driven shopping experiences, and place a greater importance on the utilitarian outcomes of each shopping excursion simply because the excursions occur less frequently as compared to adolescents who reside within a few minutes of shopping venues.

A separate explanation for the significant product-oriented shopping motivations of the adolescents in the present study include the possibility that adolescents today are more knowledgeable consumers, a result of the readily available online product reviews and information guides. Adolescents are significant consumers of online information (Hill et al.,

2013; Purcell, Rainie, Heaps, Buchanan, Friedrich, Jacklin, & Zickuhr, 2012), suggesting that their shopping could be more informed and purpose-driven. The vast amount of product information available, combined with the fact that many adolescent consumers have considerable amounts of their own money to spend (as compared to money provided to them by their parents) indicate that younger consumers are likely placing a greater importance on utilitarian purposes in their shopping experiences.

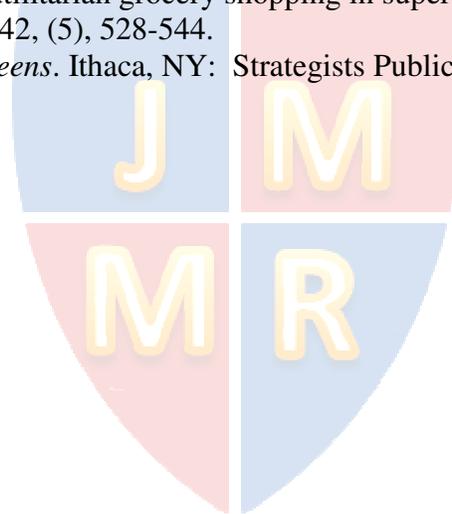
The implication of this increased focused on product-driven shopping by adolescents, and its resulting significant impact on adolescent shopping enjoyment, is fairly clear. Retail stores with at least a partial focus on adolescent target markets must provide utilitarian benefits for adolescent consumers. This can be accomplished in a number of different manners. The results of the present study indicate that product-oriented adolescents are searching for a variety of products, often available in the same location, and the opportunity to obtain the newest products on the market. Retail stores attempting to capitalize on these behaviors must be diligent in offering significant options in adolescent product categories, and providing the most recent versions of products on the market. Additionally, organizations targeting adolescent shoppers must understand that price is an important factor for this consuming group. In essence, the days of enticing adolescent consumers into stores with socially-driven tactics appear to be waning. Socially-driven adolescent shopping experiences, commonly seen at large regional shopping malls in the past, are being replaced by information and utilitarian shopping excursions where competitive pricing and product procurement are becoming priorities. Adolescents have moved to specific media options for socialization and communication, making shopping experiences less socially-driven. Retail organizations that recognize this trend and provide utilitarian-driven benefits for adolescent consumers will likely reap financial benefits from being first movers in this strategic opportunity.



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**APPENDIX****Measurement Scales****Shopping Motivation (Experiential)**

People shop or go to stores for a variety of reasons. For each item listed below, please indicate how well it describes your reasons for shopping or for making a general shopping trip.

- To watch other people
- To enjoy the crowds
- To see and hear entertainment
- To meet new people
- To experience interesting sights, sounds, and smells
- To get out of the house

(Dawson, Bloch, and Ridgway 1990; 7-point "Not at all descriptive" to "Very descriptive")

**Shopping Motivation (Product-Oriented)**

People shop or go to stores for a variety of reasons. For each item listed below, please indicate how well it describes your reasons for shopping or for making a general shopping trip.

- To find a variety of products
- To find unique products or foods
- To see new things
- To find good prices
- To keep up with new products or goods

(Dawson, Bloch, and Ridgway 1990; 7-point "Not at all descriptive" to "Very descriptive")

**Shopping Enjoyment**

- I consider shopping a big hassle. (Reverse Coded)
- When traveling, I enjoy visiting new and interesting shops.
- Shopping is generally a lot of fun for me.
- I enjoy browsing for things even if I cannot buy them yet.
- I often visit shopping malls or stores just for something to do, rather than to buy something.

(Bellenger and Korgaonkar, 1980; Bloch, Sherrell and Ridgway 1986; Dawson, Bloch, and Ridgway 1990; 5-point "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree")

**Table 1 Respondent Characteristics**

<u>Sample 1 – Junior High School Students</u>				<u>Sample 2 – High School Students</u>			
Gender	n	Grade	n	Gender	n	Grade	n
Females	188	7 <sup>th</sup>	168	Females	141	9 <sup>th</sup>	60
Males	140	8 <sup>th</sup>	158	Males	122	10 <sup>th</sup>	63
Missing	10	Missing	12			11 <sup>th</sup>	63
						12 <sup>th</sup>	77
Race	n	Age	n	Race	n	Age	n
Af-Am	51	11	4	Af-Am	44	14	14
Asian	7	12	84	Asian	4	15	46
Cauc.	238	13	178	Cauc.	195	16	64
Hisp.	11	14	54	Hisp.	12	17	76
Bi-rac.	6	15	8	Bi-rac.	3	18	63
Other	10	Missing	10	Other	5		
Missing	15						

**Table 2**  
**Junior High School Sample**  
**Regression Results – Shopping Motivations on Shopping Enjoyment**

Construct	Standardized Coefficient	t-	Significance
Experiential Motivation*	.013	0.227	.821
Product Motivation	.272	5.184	.000

(\* = Construct excluded in final model)

**Table 3**  
**High School Sample**  
**Regression Results – Shopping Motivations on Shopping Enjoyment**

Construct	Standardized Coefficient	t-	Significance
Experiential Motivation*	.045	0.776	.438
Product Motivation	.415	7.376	.000

(\* = Construct excluded in final model)