

## UNDERSTANDING THE MALL SHOPPING BEHAVIOR OF PAKISTANI HYBRID CONSUMER

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**Abstract:** Shopping in the mall is much different compared to the traditional retail format. The development of shopping malls is a significant social and global phenomenon that has unearthed a novel facet for customer satisfaction and their consequent or relative buying behavior. Consumers can show another type of behavior at other places. In some situations, consumers' behavior primarily needs to study as they are unpredictable in shopping malls. Malls bring functional and experiential benefits to them and affect their shopping behavior. This study mainly focuses on determining such consumers' mall shopping behavior. The correlation and Regression test was used to analyze such behavioral patterns. The results show a more significant discrepancy as hybrid consumers' behavior is inconsistent. The influence of mall attributes such as layout, services, variety of stores, and entertainment facilities must be considered while planning to affect consumers' buying behavior. The mall shopping behavior of rural city shoppers should not be generalized to shoppers in metropolitan cities.

**Design/methodology/approach** –This is a descriptive study, and the objective of this study is to understand the mall shopping behavior of Pakistani hybrid consumers. In this study, a mall intercept survey was used to collect data from the shopping experience of male and female consumers at shopping malls. When data are extensive and the time frame is shorter, data collection through a questionnaire is considered the best option.

**Keywords;** Hybrid consumer/ behavior, consumption pattern/ trends, polarization, omnivorous

## Introduction

Many researchers acknowledge that consumption is not all about fulfilling someone's need anymore. It is associated with our identities, perception, social relations, and image because now consumption is different. It's not just giving money and receiving products/services now. Despite very advanced tools and tactics, Gabriel and Lang (2006) state that it is difficult to anticipate a customer since they are contradictory and unpredictable in today's society. The person's income and many other demographics are not true predictors of a consumer's consumption behavior (Underhill, 1999; Silverstein & Butman, 2006).

On the other hand, the rapid growth of the discount chains and at the same time the democratization of luxury goods make the situation more unpredictable (Nueno & Quelch, 1998; Eggert, 1999; Danziger, 2005; Silverstein & Fiske, 2005; Silverstein & Butman, 2006; Saksa, 2007; Demos, 2007; Gambel 2007; Hafren, 2008). It also becomes challenging for many advertisers and marketing people to understand specific consumer behavior and shopping patterns. Sometimes they find a consumer bargaining and looking for the prices, and their concerns are heavily on the discount items, but at the same time, the same consumer is found in the upper range restaurant. Researchers called these the "hybrids" in consumers' buying behaviour. So it is an important dimension that needs to be studied. There is tremendous growth in big stores and organized formats in Pakistan like Hyperstar, Chase up, and Metro as an international brand entrance. Many private companies invest considerable amount in designing and creating big stores that provide a shopping experience and access to many global brands. Malls provide a shopping experience to their customers and many value-added services. It influences consumers' buying habits, and the definition of consumer consumption has shifted. According to (Gershman, 1998) big stores are attractive places where social interaction and entertainment occur. The charm for many people is comfort, value-added services, and entertainment. Many recent studies have shown a significant shift in purchasing patterns among consumers (KPMG, 2009; Dwivedi, 2010).

Malls in metropolitan cities promise to provide an outstanding shopping experience and recreation in the area. Many malls attract consumers through various products, services, ambience, and amusement facilities (Robertson, 1995). Mall shopping behavior has become fashionable in urban cities where users can fulfill their diverse behavioral needs (Ahmed et al., 2007). People's various lifestyles and spending habits are promoted by shopping malls, which signify more than just the stores (Gottdiener, 1995; Zia, 2021). Mall activities are at their peak, and there is an increase in mall activity where people have limited exposure to global brands. Therefore, behavioral changes and attitudes are essential factors that need to be studied. This study provides insight into the behavior of Pakistani hybrid consumers. The main focus of this paper is to understand the hybrid consumer's perception of the mall attributes and its impact on the Age and gender of the respondents. As a result, it is supposed that by giving attention to these attributes, mall managers can influence a new type of consumer with different age groups in the urban cities of Pakistan.

Now companies are targeting their customers from the chunk of a middle-income group like they never did before. As the standard of living has increased, the purchasing power of consumers has

increased manifolds (Bawa, 2019). Some industry experts said that luxury is like a reserve for rich people; it is an experience everyone needs and believes they deserve (Pamela N. Danziger, 2005). According to (Danziger, 2005), every customer is part of the luxury market. In 2000, luxury spending increased four times in the U.S. The same was the trend in Europe and Japan, where during their 20's, almost 94.3% of women had at least one Louis Vuitton item (Arnould et al. 2004, Gumbel 2007) because the reason businesses in the middle market are losing ground and may feel trapped (Silverstein, 2006; Zhao, 2021). According to Cendrowski, 2008, being in the middle is not a good place, and you get beaten everywhere.

Some experts said this would increase the gap between rich and poor (Nueno and Quelch 1998; Eggert 1999; Lampikoski 2000a; Price and Zinkhan, 2004). This gap is responded to by companies with their two-tier marketing, developed brands, and retail formats. By doing so, companies are trying to capture both ends of the market. There is this warning that the mid-range and lower-end department stores will begin to decrease in supply. (Silverstein, Fiske, 2006) Argued that this gap widens the gap between rich and poor but shows the changes in the consumption patterns of the consumers. There is an increasing extent that the very same consumer captures both ends of the market. Dubois and Duquesne (1993) state that although income could be the reason, there is a strong association between cultural change and consumption of luxury. One can say that buying luxury enables hybrid consumers to communicate their personality and value and trade down for those not directly linked to their character. Trading up for luxury is considered primarily emotional-based. Trading down can involve the sensation of being a knowledgeable shopper or finding little material difference between two costs or a reason why one can be missing. Silverstein and Butman (2006) researched the categories for trading up and down. Selling down could be linked to canned food, snacks, paper products, and trading up to personal computers, furniture, and sit-down restaurants. People buy luxury goods for what they symbolize. However, companies didn't anticipate that middle-market customers would buy both low- and high-end hybrids, just like the researcher researches.

Now that a new kind of buyer has been discovered, the object of this study must be given further attention. A hybrid consumer can be defined as, According to prior studies (Silverstein et al., 2008) on trading up and trading down that are separately studied, a person who selectively chooses budget (Trade down) and premium brands (Trade up) while neglecting the market's medium options for more than one product/service category. While learning about Pakistani mall shopping habits offers a chance to trade up and down simultaneously.

Moreover, (Katrodia, 2018; Mirza, 2021) identified the characteristics of the millennial generation, which is considered a significant segment. Other researchers focused on men and women who may find the mall more appealing due to its spacious, clean, and active layouts, including meeting areas, parking lots, and parking lots. In terms of the Pakistani customers, this is a crucial distinction as it seems that the hybrid consumer has not been treated this way in other academic studies. The scenario mentioned above paves the way for the new Age of consumption patterns and the new consumer type. Middle-income consumers are the real bargaining hunters who infrequently go for luxury items. This phenomenon is quite interesting in the Pakistani market. Factors including the social and economic drivers, especially excessive wealth, change the household structure with a growing number of households; this may cause an increase in luxury commodity demand.

## Literature review

If companies fail to provide their customer services better than the others, they will lose share, and a consumer will find a way to trade down to the cheapest product in that category. On the other hand, consumers will bend their spending and reach for luxury in a few types they are interested in the most. We can say that consumer buying behavior is now at two ends: trading up and trading down. To be in the middle is nothing now. Middle-income consumers are trading down to many product categories and, at the other end, trading up for luxury and premium while considering the middle level. The attitudes, behavior, and values of these middle-income consumers are the paramount concern for this paper.

### Aesthetics

(Belk, 1975) argued that shopping malls' physical and social atmosphere is the most critical factor contributing to consumers' shopping behavior. The author further highlights the following elements: location, aroma, light encased décor, physical layout, and other shoppers in a mall which can affect the consumer's buying behaviors. The environment over there combines touching - psychological or emotional, and cognitive fundamentals (Jackson and Konell, 1993; Babin and Attaway, 2000; Beyard et al., 2001; De Nisco and Napolitano, 2006; Ooi and Sim, 2007; Ghee and Ahmad, 2010), and environmental factors like the design of the store, colour, music, and cleanliness of the mall (Donovan and Rossiter, 1982, Donovan et al., 1994).

### Escape

Human nature entails the occasional need for recreational activities when routine work becomes too draining. The weekend provides an edge to many people to get rid of the hectic regular work or job. Some experts see the shopper look for a reprieve from the daily routine and move towards the mall premises. Shopping malls provide nods that affect consumers' moods (Bittner, 1992; Michon et al., 2008; Ghee and Ahmad, 2010). There are many reasons to visit organized shopping malls, including an outing with family because it also provides many families entertainment at a low cost (Ahmed et al., 2007). Various reasons attract consumers to malls- some can find impersonal spaces that help them mingle in a rush (Bowlby, 1987; Chaplin and Holding, 1998; Dennis et al., 2001). By doing so, the consumers can interact with other people in the mall and attain a nice view to see others shopping. According to Bloch and Richins (1983), consumers find freedom from restriction, dream fulfillment, and escapism while shopping. Malls provide an escape to consumers and thus enhance the hedonic aspect of shopping.

### Flow

Shopping malls are a colossal infrastructure, and due to their vast spread, a consumer may be involved in exploring the mall for hours on end. Mall size also absorbs the number of consumers, and a consumer may find out fascination in the mall while shopping. Many shopping malls also focus on the value-added services that Lui (1997) defines as flow- losing the logic of time at spare time facilities. According to Bloch et al. (1994), a mall is where the consumer may contact many of their known friends, and social activities can occur, and there is a chance that a consumer may lose track of time.

### Exploration

The shopping mall is where consumers may find many product ranges and explore different products or services in a specific product category. Wakefield and Baker (1998) suggest that this could generate a positive effect and excitement by examining the product range. A customer may

choose the mall due to the vast selection of products; prices are different for the same product, financially economical, and shopping experience are all factors in this decision (Lindquist, 1973; Messinger and Narasimhan, 1997). The product range available in the stores can make consumers examine effects better in fewer periods at one place.

### **Role enactment**

Tauber (1972) stated that a person might be different at different times; the consumer may perform activities from learning behavior. It could be traditionally expected or accepted as part of a particular societal role, like being a mother, housewife, father, husband, or student. A consumer may find these activities to internalize behavior as required. Shopping patterns may involve the consumer's role in society and obligations to perform for their own family as a father or mother. As a father, a consumer may visit the mall to fulfill the need and enact social roles. Bloch et al. (1994) classified consumers according to their mall shopping behaviors and social functions. Every single consumer visits the mall for different reasons. The functional consumer visits the shopping malls to perform their responsibilities as part of some social element (Wakefield and Baker, 1998).

### **The social**

Social and physical factors have a greater influence on a customer's cognitive and touching process, which cause the change in the consumption behavior (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974; Gardner, 1985; Bellizzi and Hite, 1987; Hui and Bateson, 1991; Bittner, 1992; Donovan et al., 1994; Bone and Ellen, 1999). Managers in the store- who analyzed the shopping behavior suggested that mall ambience is the prominent factor in attracting many customers to the store (Phillips and Sternthal, 1977; Laroche et al., 2005; Michon et al., 2008) and had a more significant impact on customer's consumption pattern (Baker et al., 1994).

### **Convenience**

Many researchers suggest that convenience significantly impacts shopping mall selection (Bearden, 1977; Kirkup and Rafiq, 1994; Severin et al., 2001). Due to the wide product range in the mall, a consumer may bypass the perceived cost (time to travel, personal efforts) linked with their shopping behavior (Pan and Zinkhan, 2006). Shopping malls are primarily open and provide their consumers easy access to a broad product range in the same marketplace (Bellenger et al., 1977; Miceli et al., 1998; McDonald, 1999; Berry et al., 2002).

Most shopping malls attract the young segment of the population (Barak, 1998; Myers and Lumbers, 2008), and different age groups show different consumer behaviors (Moschis, 2003). The older consumer consumes extra consumption while the younger segment has other retail arrangements (Myers and Lumbers, 2006, 2008). The young segment would be more inclined towards entertainment, while the older community would focus on leisure and convenience (Myers and Lumbers, 2008). Therefore, the following hypothesis is developed.

### **Trading Down**

There is a change in consumers' attitudes towards trading down for products and services. People are almost certainly no more negatively stereotyped as "Kanjoos"—a person who is always looking to save their money and don't spend even on the basic necessity of life. Interestingly, many consumers feel proud to be savvy shoppers and consider trading down a virtue (Silverstein & Butman 2006). The same changes in attitude are reflected in the forecast for discount channel sales growth, which was merely 36% in Europe in 2010 (Planet Retail 2007).

## Trade-Up

There could be many reasons for someone to shop premiums and may involve specific categories. Personal growth or well-being may be construed as relating to an individual's well-being or sense of development. A consumer may also influence their social life by trading up, especially on those items that enable them to connect to their social circle; this could be affiliation. It is also possible that anyone can purchase such clothing items to gain social status, for example. Previous researches show the motives for trading up. The first one is the need to care for oneself, a wish for the personal life someone's thought about, for their socialization and experience seeking (Roche, Silverstien and Charpilo, 2008).

## Theoretical Framework

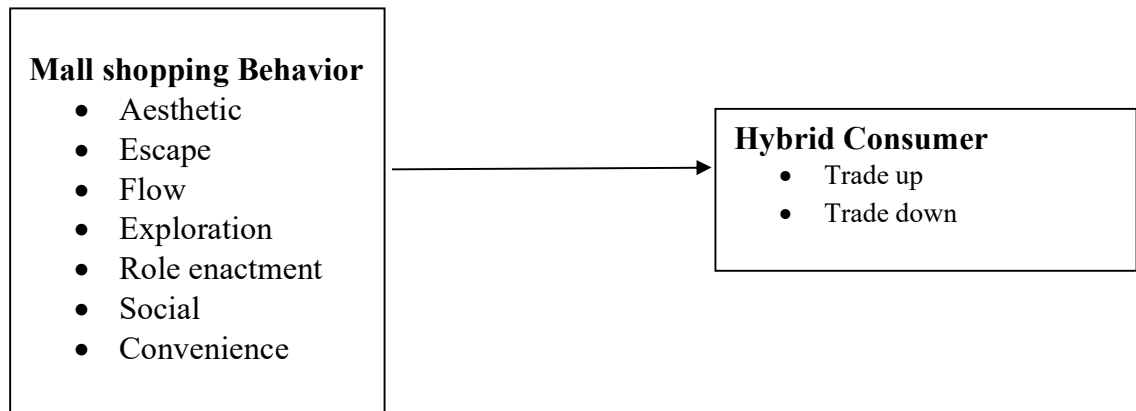


Figure 1

## Research Methodology

**H1:** The simultaneously trade-up/Trade down characteristics of the consumers in the mall shopping behavior make them hybrid

## Sample Size

A sample size of 250 people was selected to fill the instrument; out of these, only 226 respondents seem to be hybrid. The respondents included the consumers, males & females of different universities and organizations.

## Sampling techniques

The researcher has collected data through the snowball sampling technique, i.e., convenient sampling has been applied.

## Instrument Development

The instrument was developed, adapted as well as extended. There is a further need for a literature review regarding each factor/dimension for developing the questionnaire. Help was sought from practitioners, academic experts, and previous studies. Aesthetic includes four items, escape comprise six items, flow has two objects, exploration consists of 4 items, role enactment has two

items, social has three items while convenience has four articles explaining them from the study conducted by ArpitaKhare, 2011 and Bloch et al., 1994; Ahmed et al., 2007). Some items are modified according to the nature of Pakistani malls and compatibility for researching Pakistani consumer behavior patterns.

Further, these adapted items were significantly correlated with other publications' literature as the work of Tauber (1972), Baker et al., 1994; Severin et al. (2001) and Rintamaeki et al. (2006). The questionnaire has 41 items altogether and comprises nine variables. The responses were recorded on the 5-points Likert scale, where one denotes strongly agrees and five – strongly disagree.

## Analysis & Results

The first step in analyzing the data is validity and reliability testing. Face and content validity of the questionnaire was conducted. For face validity, the questionnaire was validated by the practitioner and experts in the field. An internal coherence search for products with a given variable was conducted using a reliability measure. Cronbach Alpha is a renowned test used for reliability. The Cronbach alpha value should be greater than 0.60, but 0.70(Nunnally, 1978, Nunnally, 1967). Subsequently, regression analysis was conducted. The demographic and descriptive analysis also provides insights into the study. In this study, cross-tabulation was also very helpful. SPSS was used for statistical analysis. Comprehensive results are given at the end of the study.

## Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's alpha was calculated to ensure the internal accuracy of the instrument. All of the variables were checked through internal consistency. The researcher found out that only the Flow and Role enactment was consistent as the value of Cronbach alpha should be greater than 0.50, but 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978, Nunnally, 1967). Cronbach's Alpha for trade down is 0.702, trade-up is 0.663, Aesthetic has 0.731, Escape is 0.810, Flow is 0.596, Exploration is 0.638, Role enactment is 0.577, Social has 0.675 and Convenience is 0.696. These results enabled the study to proceed safely as all the dimensions were attractively greater than the critical value.

In some cases, it goes down to 0.596, depending on the factors involved. The alpha value of all constructs is more significant than 0.70 except for Flow and Role enactment, that is, 0.596 and 0.577, respectively. One reason for such low reliability could be the smaller number of items included in the research. These results can be seen in table 1.

<b>Table 1</b> Reliability analysis of trade down, Trade-up, Aesthetic, Escape, Flow, Exploration, Role enactment, Social and Convenience		
<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Number of items</b>	<b>Cronbach's alpha</b>
Trade Down	10	0.702
Trade Up	06	0.663

Aesthetic	04	0.731
Escape	06	0.810
Flow	02	0.596
Exploration	04	0.638
Role Enactment	02	0.577
Social	03	0.675
Convenience	04	0.696

### Demographic Analysis

The respondents chosen to have their behavior recorded were consumers who shopped in the shopping mall, even if they shopped for a single time. The sample comprises 66.8% of males and 33.2% of females. The majority of the consumer is within the range of 21-35 as the Age of 24.8% of respondents was among the 21-25 years, 26.5% were between 26-30 years, 27.4% were in the range of 31-35 years of Age, accumulating 75% of the respondent. 48.2% of the respondents are students earning, and 90% ranged from graduation-MPhil in education. Thus, as far as the income or pocket money is concerned, Rs 5000 to 15000 is the threshold

### Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive analysis of the data depicts that the mean value of Trade Down is 2.49, the mean value of trade-up is 2.47, the mean value of the Aesthetic is 2.57, and the mean value of Escape is 3.28. Simultaneously, flow, Exploration, Role enactment, social, and convenience have 3.09, 2.60, 2.49, 2.56, and 2.92, respectively.

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### Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean
Trade Down	226	2.49
Trade Up	226	2.47
Aesthetic	226	2.57
Escape	226	3.28
Flow	226	3.09
Exploration	226	2.60
Role Enactment	226	2.49
Social	226	2.56
Convenience	226	2.92
Valid N (listwise)	226	

### Correlation Analysis

This segment will investigate each dimension's relationship, conferring whether a relationship exists among them. The two-tailed correlation was used to determine the relationship of all the variables involved in the study. These results can be seen in the table below.

**Table3**

Correlation analysis of mall shopping behavior and hybrids of the consumers

		mallshopping Behavior	Hybrid Consumption
mallshoppingBehavior	Pearson Correlation	1	.282**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	226	226
HybridConsumption	Pearson Correlation	.282**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	226	226

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### Regression Analysis

The linear regression analysis technique was used to test the impact of aesthetic, escape, flow, exploration, role enactment, social, and convenience on hybrid consumer characteristics: trade up and trade down. Beta coefficient is significant if p-value <.05. Regression analysis can be seen in the table below.

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.282 <sup>a</sup>	.380	.076	.395

a. Predictors: (Constant), mallshoppingBehavior

**ANOVA<sup>b</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.034	1	3.034	19.425	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	34.983	224	.156		
	Total	38.017	225			

a. Predictors: (Constant), mallshoppingBehavior

b. Dependent Variable: HybridConsumption

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.596	.203		7.862	.000
	mallshoppingBehavior	.318	.072	.282	4.407	.000

a. Dependent Variable: HybridConsumption

From the table mentioned above, the R squared value tells the variables that explain the model. The current study shows that the value of R squared is 38%, which shows that the variables describing the model 38% also means that more variables are required to grab the hybrid consumer. Beta coefficient is significant if p-value <.05.

## Conclusion

This study's researcher found significant divergence and some new findings from the limited literature on hybrid behavior. In this study, the researcher used the work of Silverstein, Butman, and Fiske. We can say that this new type of consumer is the mild version of the hybrid consumers with different purchasing patterns. The hybrid consumer is much attentive in general where the price and purchases are concerned. At the same time, however, they make spontaneous decisions that are caused by emotional factors.

## Recommendations

More work is required when it comes to hybrid consumers. This paper just provides the ground for future studies. More in-depth work is needed to understand the hybrids in consumerism. The trading up and trading down offer an exciting starting point for the researchers. The drivers of such consumption patterns also need to study Segmentation and targeting strategies to capture such consumption patterns need time. It seems that the traditional marketing mix needs to itself. Do such questions need to be addressed regarding how companies can target hybrid consumers who seem innumerable?

## Limitations of the study

The researcher uses the work of (Silverstein, Butman, and Fiske, 2006) as the basic framework.

Many references are made from these researchers' work because there is a lack of theories competing for such behavior. The researcher found the following limitations: the sample size should be relatively extensive and limited to just two cities.

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### **Contribution**

For many companies where price-cutting is not feasible, considering the emotional aspect of the product or services is important as Pakistani consumers are primarily passionate. Companies should change customers' needs into wants by focusing on getting a competitive edge in terms of the technical and emotional aspects of the product or services. Companies are challenged to turn something from routine into an experience and a luxurious necessity to enjoy profit margins and a competitive position. However, this concept is full of controversy, and so is today's market. Companies focusing on the discount segment from the consumers need to focus just on the price. However, the middle market is hard for a company to lack uniqueness in consumers' identity formation.

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