Exploring Consumers Footwear's Brand Preference and Its Antecedents between Age Groups and Gender: In Case of dire Dawa administration

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Abstract

The research was aimed to explore the pattern of brand preference towards domestic and foreign footwear products and its antecedents taking age and gender as a case among Dire Dawa administration residences. A mixed approach with 319 usable samples were collected from respondents randomly and relevant data on purchase preference; normative influences, emotional values, brand consciousness and perceived quality were gathered presented and analyzed using both inferential and descriptive statistical techniques. The finding revealed that the emotional value of the brand and normative influences are the most and least significant antecedents respectively for brand preference also as age increase the preference toward local brad are increased where as the emotional value of the brand significantly affect male youths and females as a whole.

Keywords: Brand preference; normative influence; emotional values; and perceived quality; brand consciousness

1.0. Introduction

As the world is turning into a global village, new products from abroad are finding their way into the country, the trend of consumption by native people is changing becoming more prone to buying foreign and international brands than the local ones since the of advance in communications and information systems technology have shrunk distance and homogenized the values, fashion preferences and attitudes of the world's population. It has now been observed that consumers buy foreign brands more frequently than the local ones and feel proud in purchasing imported goods (Han, C.M., 1988). As result it is significant to understand the consumers' perception of foreign brands to local brands because studying consumer perceptions towards foreign and local brands and factors that affect their brand preference have substantial implications in marketing (Wong & Smith, 2002). Also it is vital time for marketers to connect brand preference with demographic group, because as the demographic especially age and gender varies, so does their consumption for different size style and brand of products (Babin, B.J., et al., 2004).Moreover, as age increase, aside from its direct buying power, it influence others preferences too (Wong & Smith, 2002). In order to reach the all age category of market, one of the most essential aspects for marketers is to know what customers prefer and understand factors that influence purchase preferences and purchasing decisions based there profile. Thus, it is interesting to study consumer brand preference and its antecedence taking age and gender as baseline since no previous published study existed and there is need from marketer to clarify the market illusion of consumers' preference and factor affecting their preference between foreign and local brand in Dire Dawa footwear product market.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

As the world is turning into a global village, new products from abroad are finding their way into the country, the trend of consumption by native people is slowly changing (Samiee S., 1994). According to Samiee S, (1994), native or local customers are becoming more prone to buy international brands than the local ones since the influence by the western world is becoming stronger. Studies show that consumers of developing countries prefer foreign brands, especially from the west, for reasons of perceived quality and social status (Han, C.M., 1988: Zeithmal, 1988) and it has now been observed consumers buy foreign brands more frequently than the local ones and feel proud in purchasing imported goods (Iyer, G. & Kalita, J.K. 1997).Also according to Wong and smith,(2002) ,consumer perceptions towards foreign and local brands affect brand preference and have substantial implications in marketing (Wong & Smith, 2002). Furthermore, study by Bake-well, C. & Mitchell, V. W., (2006) portrayed, demographic variable such as age and gender has significantly affect brand preferences. Moreover, as age increase, aside from its direct buying power, it influence others preferences too (Wong & Smith, 2002) consequently knowing what customers prefer and understand factors that influence purchase preferences and purchasing decisions "what they buy" and "why they buy it" is vital for marketers though no study still existed in Dire Dawa on brand preference and it antecedence of footwear products. Therefore, this study explore Consumers brand preference and its antecedence for local and foreign footwear's and the difference among age groups and gender; and further expected to answer the following research question

➢ Which footwear brand i.e. foreign or local is preferred in Dire Dawa?

➢ Which factors determine the preference of foot wear whether it is foreign or local brand?

➢ What are the key and most significant determinants that influence residents' footwear buying decision?

> ➢ What are the least significant determinants that influence residents' footwear buying decision?
> ➢ Do the preference of residents' and factors affecting their purchase vary across profile i.e. age and gender of respondents?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study is to explore factor affecting consumer footwear brand preference taking age and gender as a base line so as to identify determinants in decision making process particularly it expected to

> ➢ Identify key determinants that influence Dire Dawa city dwellers to buy (local or foreign) footwear products
> ➢ explain the most significant determinant that influence footwear buying decision
> ➢ explain the relationship between respondents' profile and brand preference
> ➢ explain the relationship between respondents' profile and determinants of brand preference
> ➢ investigate if there is a relationship within groups of respondents
> ➢ provide suggestive strategies to local manufacturers which is helpful to their marketing operations

2.0.   Literature review

Brand is a symbolic embodiment of all the information connected to the product and service to create associations and expectations around it and can deliver product attribute, benefits, value and personality (Kotler P, 1999) so that, it can help on developing positioning platform and help on developing desired self-images to consumer. Meanwhile, Brand Preference is the penchant of the consumer for one brand in relation to other brands of the same product available in the market (Holbrook, 2001).whereas Purchase intention is the willingness of a consumer to buy a particular product (Dodd, *et al.,* 1991). Research confirmed that, it is best predictor of individual behavior, as it reflects the consumer's own expression of purchase probability, independently of other relevant factors (Young et al.*,* 2008 and Lin y Chen, 2006).

Antecedents of Brand Preference: A brand has many functions which can facilitate the choice for consumers. Kapferer, (1997) enumerate that consumers can have many reasons for buying a given brand; the reasons could be rational, emotional or self expressive or the combination of three (Uggla, 2001). Also study by Williams (2002) concluded that the criteria for brand/product choice may relate to either utilitarian criteria i.e. objective, economic, rational and functional or hedonic criteria i.e. subjective, emotional, irrational and symbolic(Baltas & Papastathopoulou, 2003 : Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I., 1975).

Emotional Value: - it is the benefit derived from the feeling or affective states i.e. enjoyment or pleasure that a product generates by experiencing something new or different (Lee et al., 2006). Having this, the distinctiveness of fashion features such as designer brand is consistently associated with emotional value expressions and plays the strongest role in the buying behavior among consumers (Sweeney and Soutar, 2001).

2.1.   Factors That Enhance Emotional Value of the Brand

There are different types of factors that enhance emotional value of the brand these are; Image and identity is the first one which is defined as consumer perceptions of a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in memory (Girma M. 2016: Kotler et. al. 1999, p 218).Uggla, (2001) explains that identity is what the company is sending out and image is the consumers' view of the brand in their minds. As of Kapferer (1999), image is on the receiver's and consumer's side and identity is on the sender's side (Girma,M.,2016); second we have Style and fashion consciousness; which define Style as visual appearance, that includes line, silhouette and details(Frings, 2005 and Duff ,1999).where as fashion consciousness is an awareness of new styles, changing fashions and attractive styling as well as the desire to buy something exciting and trendy (Sproles and Kendall (1986); on third there is status which related with brand personality that provides links to the brand's emotional and self-expressive benefits (Cadogan and Foster, 2000).

Normative and Interpersonal Influences: - personal influence plays a distinctive role in the consumers' decision process and consult each other for opinions of new products and brands and the advice of others can strongly influence the buying behavior (Schiffman LG, et. al, 2007) Influences of other categorized in to three types i.e. informational, value expressive and utilitarian influence (Bearden and Etzel, 1982; Childers and Rao, 1989; Lessig and Park, 1977 & 1978). Informational influence is "the tendency to learn about products and services by observing others or seeking information from others and it perceived as enhancing one's knowledge of the environment and ability to cope with the aspect of the environment (Childers and Rao, 1989 and Park and Lessig, 1977).Utilitarian influence is occur when an individual comply with the preferences or expectations of others to avoid punishments or achieve rewards (Bearden and Etzel, 1982) and value expressive influence concerned with an individual's motive to enhance own self concept (Park and Lessig, 1977) finally, normative influence; defined as the tendency to comply with the positive expectations of others (Bachmann, et al., 1993; Bearden et al., 1989; Grimm et al., 1999). In addition, peer influence, (Bristol and Mangleburg, 2005), interpersonal relationships, (Money et al., 1998), Perceived Quality (Yoo et al., 2000: Darden and Babin, 1994: Wakefield and Baker, 1998) and country

image (Ahmed and d'Astous, 1996 and Han, C. M., 1989) are significantly affect consumer preference between foreign and local brand and purchase decision.

3.0. Material and methods
3.1. Description of the study area
Dire Dawa is second capital city and populous city of Ethiopia. It located between 9°27N and 9 °49 S longitude and Between49 38 E and 42 19 W latitude with the total land size of 1288 km, of which nearly 2.27% covers the land size of the urban areas of the administration with The total estimated population 225,000 (SCA, 2013/14).

3.2. Sampling, Data Collection and Analysis
The study implemented descriptive research design together with mixed research approach (Hair et al., 2007) to triangulate data and map out the characteristics respondents brand antecedence and preference of foot wears based on demographic variables .i.e. age and gender.

The total populations for the study were Dire Dawa administration residents in the nine urban kebeles whereas age groups who become equal or above 18-years-old considered as target population of the study. On this regard, there are 130215 populations whose age groups are greater or equal to eighteen years old(CSA ,2013/14) and by taking 95% confidence interval and 20% of non response error on the total sample it become 336.

$$n = \frac{x^2 \times N \times P(1-P)}{(ME^2 \times (N-1)) + x^2 \times P(1-P)} \text{ (Krejcie \& Morgan 1970, pp. 607-610).}$$

$$336 = \left(\frac{3.84^2 \times 130,215 \times .05(1 - .05}{(.05^2 \times (130,215 - 1)) + 3.84^2 \times .05(1 - .05)} \right) . 20\%$$

According to Hair et al., (2007), sample size 30-500 is already adequate for most of the research, in multivariate research even a samples size of 100 can give more than adequate reliability correlation coefficients. Although there were 22 five scaled items of questionnaires which intended to analysis consumer brand preference and its antecedence in Dire Dawa. Meanwhile, *3- 6 questions were* developed *for each dimension and grouped according to the constructs they were intended to measure. Finally by adopting convenience sampling, all questionnaires were collected from* January 1-15, 2016 and were analyzed using the latest version of SPSS by applying descriptive and inferential statistical techniques.

4.0. Data analysis and discussion
4.1. General Information of Respondents'
Table 4.1.Shows, 40.1%, of respondents were categorized under age groups of 18-35 and the rest 37.6% and 22.3% were grouped as age 36- 50 and >50 respectively .Particularly 41.1%, and 37.6% male respondents were taken from 18-35 and 36- 50 age groups and 39.3% and 37.6% female respondents were obtained from 18-35 and 36-50 age groups.

Table 4.1: Profile of Respondents'

Age vs. Gender of Respondents'						
	Gender					
	Male		Female		Total	
Age	Count (A)	N %	Count (B)	N %	Count (A+B)	N %
18-35	58	41.1%	70	39.3%	128	40.1%
36- 50	53	37.6%	67	37.6%	120	37.6%
>50	30	21.3%	41	23.0%	71	22.3%
Total	141	100.0%	178	100.0%	319	100.0%

Source; survey data 2016

4.2. Brand Preference and Antecedents Base on Profile of Respondents
4.2. Brand preference and its antecedence based on gender

Determinants	Gender Of Respondents	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Normative Influences	Male	141	3.0496	.47003
	Female	178	3.4663	.34643
Brand Consciousness	Male	141	3.7092	.72249
	Female	178	3.3034	.64977
Emotional Value	Male	141	3.7648	.43373
	Female	178	4.0281	.40805
Perceived Quality	Male	141	3.9362	.60164
	Female	178	3.9017	.65324
Brand Preference	Male	141	4.0473	.60760
	Female	178	3.9925	.57348

Source; survey data 2016

Table 4.2 shows normative influence for male was lower than female with mean of 3.0496 where as regarding to brand consciousness, males are highly conscious than females with mean of 3.7092 also emotional values of the product are much more considered by females than male with mean 4.02 81 however on consideration of perceived quality both male and females are scoring the highest mean with 3.9017.Meanwhile on brand preference, though there is no significant difference between gender.

4.3. Brand preference based on age category using 4 determinants

Determinants	Age category	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Normative Influences	18-35	128	4.3464	.42071
	36-45	120	4.3764	.44716
	>45	71	1.1451	.09867
	Total	319	3.2821	.45499
Brand Consciousness	18-35	128	4.9766	.49879
	36-50	120	4.9944	.07389
	>50	71	2.2488	.55981
	Total	319	3.4828	.71102
Emotional Value	18-35	128	4.8672	.43690
	36-50	120	3.6292	.44051
	>50	71	1.7934	.39688
	Total	319	3.9117	.43892
Perceived Quality	18-35	128	3.2676	.45483
	36-50	120	3.9104	.35798
	>50	71	4.3099	.44614
	Total	319	3.9169	.63021

Source; survey data 2016

Table 4.3 shows, the normative influence of age category 18-35 and 36-45 with (Mean = 4.3464) and (Mean = 4.3764) respectively are influenced by friends, relatives and colleagues. While, the influence of norm in the preference of footwear of age group greater than 45 is low. In the case of brand consciousness, age group 18-35 and 35- 45 attain the highest score (Mean = 4.3464 and 4.9944) showing they are more brand consciousness. However, those age groups greater than 45 are less conscious on brand preference. Similarly, from the dimension of emotional value, age group of 18-35 and 36-45 scores (Mean = 4.8672, and 3.6292) respectively showing brands that are new, fashionable and unique significantly affect their footwear preference. Finally on perceived quality, age group of greater 35 scores high mean, reflecting product qualities highly affect purchase decision.

Brand Preference between Local and Foreign Footwear
4.4. Level of agreement on preferring foreign footwear brands

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	9	6	6
	Disagree	19	13.15	19.15
	Neutral	42	2.8	21.95
	Agree	138	43.26	65.21
	Strongly Agree	111	34.79	100
	Total		319	100

Source, survey data 2016

Table4.4. shows, of 319 respondents 78.9% respondents prefer foreign footwear than domestic one and the rest 19.15% of respondent's prefer domestic footwear brands than foreign.

4.5. Independent T-Test of Male and Female in Their foreign vs. local Brand Preference

		N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	T	P
Brand Preference	Male		3.9925	.60760	.05477	.825	.972
	Female		4.0473	.57348			

Source, survey data 2016

Table 4.5show, brand preference between male and female is no significant in choosing local vs. foreign brands (mean difference = .05477 and t = .825, P > 0.05).

Table 4.6. Independent sample t-test of male and female in each determinant

Determinant	N		Mean	SD	Mean Difference	T	P
Normative Influence	Male	141	3.0496	.47003	-.41665	-8.801	.000
	Female	178	3.4663	.34643			
Brand Consciousness	Male	141	3.7092	.72249	.40585	5.272	.188
	Female	178	3.3034	.64977			
Emotional Value	Male	141	3.7648	.43373	-.26331	-5.566	.225
	Female	178	4.0281	.40805			
Perceived Quality	Male	141	3.9362	.60164	.03448	.485	.305
	Female	178	3.9017	.65324			

Sources survey data 2016

From the results of independent sample t-test on table 4.6., the normative influence between male and female respondents, there is significant mean difference between male respondents normative influence and female respondents normative influence (t=-8.801, P < 0.01) Indicating that normative influence on male respondent's footwear purchase decision is lower than normative influence on female; the difference between the two is significant. Also the results of t-test on brand consciousness between male and female respondents identified that there is no significant mean difference between male respondents brand consciousness and female respondents brand consciousness though males are bit higher than females mean score (t=5.272, P > 0.05). For emotional values, the results of independent samples t-test for male and female show (t= -5.566, P > 0.05). Showing females are much concerned with emotional value. Finally, for perceived quality, the independent samples t-testis (t=.485, P > 0.05) reflected that there is no significant mean difference between gender.

Variation between Respondents Profile and Preference Determinants
Table 4.7. ANOVA between age group in each determinant

		$\sum^2$	Df.	Mean Sq.	F	Sig.
Normative Influences	Between Groups	2.151	2	1.075	5.337	.005
Within Groups		63.679	316	.202		
Total		65.830	318			
Brand Consciousness	Between Groups	53.192	2	26.596	78.125	.000
Within Groups		107.574	316	.340		
Total		160.766	318			
Emotional Value	Between Groups	2.903	2	1.451	7.858	.000
Within Groups		58.360	316	.185		
Total		61.263	318			
Perceived Quality	Between Groups	70.843	2	35.422	201.84	.000
Within Groups		55.456	316	.175		
Total		126.299	318			
Brand Preference	Between Groups	37.786	2	18.893	82.521	.000
Within Groups		72.347	316	.229		
Total		110.133	318			

Source, survey data 2016

The one-way ANOVA in table 4.7 shows the test whether the groups' mean are the same is represented by the F-ratio. For brand preference the value of F-ratio is 82.521 and the significant value (.000). Therefore, there is significant difference between three age groups; for normative influence the value of F-ratio is 5.337 and the significant value is .05 which is exactly equal to the desired significant level in statistical term. Hence, there is significant mean difference between age group on their normative influence; for brand consciousness, F-ratio =78.125 the significant value is .000 which is less than 0.01. Thus, the mean difference between age groups on their brand consciousness is significant; the emotional value of F-ratio is 7.858 (p < 0.01). So, there is significant mean difference between age group on their emotional value. Finally For perceived quality, the result shows that (F-201.841, p < 0.01) and the mean difference between three ages groups respondents is significant indicating perceived quality as a preference factor are not the same.

4.8. Statistics That Indicate the Significant Factor That Affect Brand Preference

	Factor of Brand Loyalty	Rank	Mean	St. d.
1	**Normative influence**			
	Feeling belongingness by buying brands as friends		3.2476	.74698
	Feeling belongingness by buying and using the same brands others purchase		2.6991	.81863
	Buying footwear brands when friends like that		4.0408	.74915
	If others see me using a product, I buy the brand that they expect me to buy		2.7868	.99291
	Preferring brands that have good impression on others		4.2163	.91128
	If I want to be like someone, I try to buy same brands that they buy		2.7022	.89848
	Average mean	4th	**3.2821**	**0.8529**
2	**Brand consciousness**			
	Prefer and buy well-known footwear brands		3.6520	.91524
	Try to stick to certain footwear brands		3.1160	1.13922
	Pay more attention to the brand name		3.6803	1.06308
	Average mean	3rd	**3.4827**	**1.03918**
3	**Emotional value**			
	Considering footwear brands that make me feel good		4.3793	.73780
	Intention to prefer footwear brands that make me feel comfortable		4.1599	.74574
	Deciding to buy brands that bring satisfaction by latest fashion & style		3.9906	.80285
	Considering the novelty features while choosing between footwear brands		3.7837	.89386
	Preferring footwear brand which increase my status and esteem		3.7837	.89386
	Choosing footwear brands that satisfy my fashion conscious need		3.5643	1.1360
	Average mean	1st	**3.9435**	**0.86836**
4	**Perceived quality**			
	Considering the reliability of brand when buying footwear brands		3.8527	.83190
	Preferring footwear brands that have high quality		4.0376	.87873
	Considering the durability of the brand at the time of purchase decision		3.9718	1.0999
	Preferring brands that have the ability to satisfy stated or implied needs		3.8056	**.**60903
	Average mean	2nd	**3.9169**	**0.8549**

Source, survey data 2016

Table 4.7 explains 4 factors that affect brand referencing having this; emotional value score the highest mean (3.94), perceived quality of the brand is the second determinant of purchase decision by scoring 3.91 mean value. Brand consciousness and normative influence are ranked at the 3rd and 4th step by accounting 3.48 and 3.28 mean values respectively.

4.8 Relationship of Antecedents and Brand Preference

Determinants	Brand preference	
	Pearson correlation	**Sig (2-tailed)**
Normative Influence	.201**	.000
Brand Consciousness	.589	.000
Emotional Value	.765**	.000
Perceived Quality	.708	.000

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

Source, survey data 2016

Table 4.8. Illustrates the relationship between each determinants & brand preference, the results indicate that there are significant correlations between normative influence and brand preference ($r = 0.201$, $p < 0.01$) as well as between emotional value and brand preference ($r = 0.765$, $p < 0.05$). Similarly There were significant correlations between brand consciousness and brand preference ($r = .589$, $p < 0.01$) as well as between perceived quality and brand preference ($r = .708$, $p < 0.01$). The purchase of foreign footwear brands has relation with the brand consciousness and perceived quality of the product.
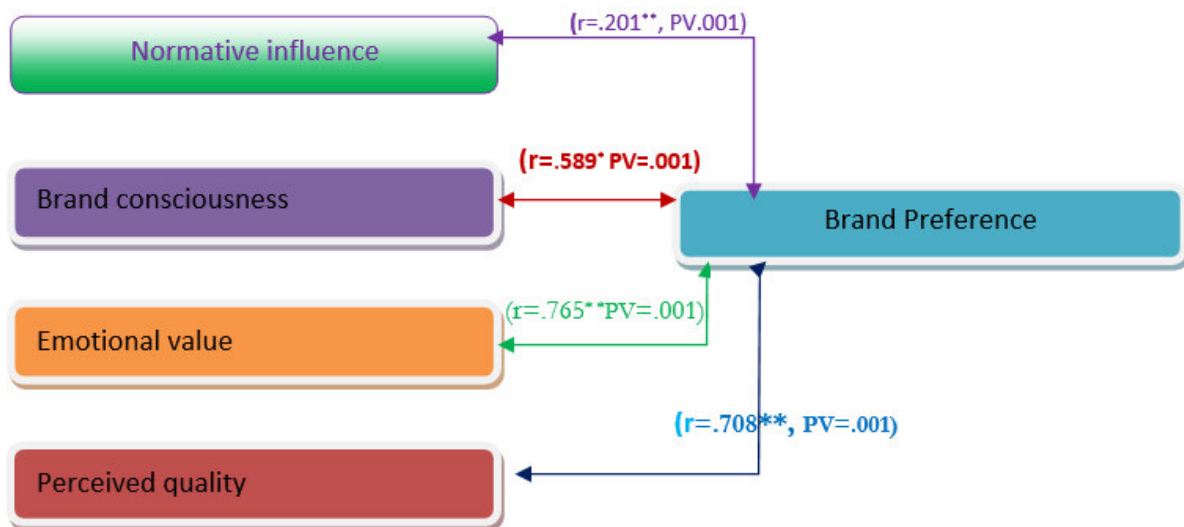
Figure 4.1. Relationship of Antecedents and Brand Preference

5.0.   Conclusion and recommendation

5.1.   Conclusion

The primary purpose of this study was to explore the brand preference and its antecedents taking age and gender as baseline. The study empirically examines Dire Dawa administration residents' footwear preference given foreign and domestic brands and the determinants behind their preference. The research considers two broad variables. One is from the consumers' side (normative influences and brand consciousness) and the other is from the manufacturer and provider side (emotional value and perceived quality. Totally, 4 dimensions were applied to understand factors that affect students brand preference. Having this, given domestic and foreign footwear brands, females and age group of 18-35 have more interested to foreign footwear brands which is similar with previous study done by Johansson, J.K. and Ilkka A. Ronkainen, 2004: O'Cass, A. and Lim, K., 2002. Not only this country's image are significantly affect perceived product cues which make this finding similar with Iyer, G. & Kalita, J.K., (1997) and Papadopoulos, N., et.al., 1993) .Likewise footwear purchases decision by females and males with age groups of 18- 35 who live in Dire Dawa is influenced by the style, fashion, newness and novelty features of the brand.

Those brands that provide high status and esteem force females male with age group between 18-45 to prefer brand reveling emotional expressions plays the strongest role in the buying foot wear among consumers also youths were more fashion conscious and demanding products with more style and are strongly influenced by the emotional value with no significant mean difference (.05477) between male and female respondents'. Besides, norms have less effect on male youths footwear brand preference which is also similar with the finding of Bake well, C. & Mitchell, V. W. (2004) but it affect females' preference that is related with Safrah H. & Safiek S.,(2009)finding . Although, the effect of friends, relatives and colleagues on purchase decision is lower for males and higher to females. Finally product quality and perceived appropriateness plays a significant role in influencing older and Middle Ages category and as age increase the influence of perceived quality also increase which is similar with previous finding of Wong & Smith, 2002: Babin, B.J., et al., 2004).

On relationship between purchase intention determinants and brand preference, the results indicate there are significant correlations between normative influence and brand preference ($r = 0.201$, $p < 0.01$) as well as between emotional value and brand preference ($r = 0.765$, $p < 0.05$), brand consciousness and brand preference ($r = .589$, $p < 0.01$) perceived quality and brand preference ($r = .708$, $p < 0.01$). The purchase of foreign footwear brands has relation with the brand consciousness and perceived quality of the product showed all determinant affect purchase intension though there degree of choosing either foreign or local one varies.

5.2.   Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study and conclusions made, the following possible recommendations are given Footwear manufacturers.

➢ Domestic footwear manufacturers have to incorporate emotional value and quality on their shoe because these factors highly influence the purchase of footwear. Particularly they have to provide brands that have a novelty features, stylish, fashionable, and reliable and that fulfill its functional benefits.

➢ Because factors that affect brand preference vary based on customers' personality and demographic characteristics, footwear manufacturers have to adopt their products by consideration of age group and

gender since, their feelings are varies on selection of style, fashion, novelty, reliable, durable and functional benefit and potentially affect purchase intension and decision.

➢ Retailers' and manufacturers' promotions have to concentrate on the emotion, feelings, symbolic characteristics, and perceived status (Eastman, 1999; Shim, S. & Kotsiopulos, A., 1993 and O'Shaughnessy, 1992) of audiences for youth and middle age groups. For older consumers, the message should reflect the Faber content, sizing, durability, comfort, safety and sex fit of the product. Also the promotion of footwear manufacturers should be tailored to specific customer's gender i.e. those shoe messages communicate to girls and ladies should focus on the audiences', comfort, safety, sex fit, Price, Brand, country of origin (Shim, S. & Kotsiopulos, A., 1993) (for importers); Store image, Salesperson's evaluation, and approval of others(Grewal, D., et al .1998).Messages that describe the products functional benefits, which explain the long lasting features of the product, should be launched to male though preferences are still varies across age categories.

➢ Also manufacture need to understand consumer variables such as the influence of friends, their attention to brand names, and their stickiness to certain brands so that it is possible to develop effective branding strategies that heavily influence the preference of young and middle age groups as well female customers by reflecting the novelty features, fashionably, style and newness.

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