

Theory of Reasoned Action

Purchase Intention of Young Consumers

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The approximately 60 million members of Generation Y are a major force in the consumer marketplace and represent a significant behavioral shift. To develop the broad, multifaceted advertising strategy necessary to reach them, more information is needed to characterize their purchase intentions. This study determines whether the theory of reasoned action can be used as a prediction tool in examining the purchase intention of a selected consumer group and product, Generation Y consumers and fashion merchandise made of emu leather. Respondents' attitudes significantly influenced their purchase intention: The more favorable the respondent's attitude, the higher the purchase intention. Subjective norm and other external variables had no influence on this group's purchase intention. The results partially support the theory of reasoned action as a prediction tool in examining purchase intention of a consumer product. This information is important to the emu leather industry, which may want to target Generation Y consumers.

Keywords: *theory of reasoned behavior; purchase intention; young consumers*

The buying power of the baby boomer generation has been a driving force in the U.S. economy, but this group is aging. Although it is still a dominant market segment with about 78 million members, there is another, even larger segment that spends a significant amount on consumer goods. This group, called Generation Y or Millennials, is a major force in the marketplace. It is estimated that there are 286 million people in the United States (Wolburg & Pokrywczynski, 2001). At 60 million people, Generation Y is more than three times the size of Generation X and constitutes the largest market since the baby boomers (Levy & Weitz, 2001). There

are more than 100 million young consumers between the ages of 10 and 34. Of these, 40 million are teenagers, many with large

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disposable incomes, and 60 million are between the ages of 20 and 34 and have families, own homes, and earn good incomes (Lewis, 2002). There are more than 40 million consumers in the 15- to 24-year-old age group who have purchasing power exceeding \$350 billion, with total spending in the youth market approaching \$550 billion ("U.S. Youth Market," 2003).

Many recognized companies have substantial budgets to advertise to this group. "Children born after 1980 have been subjected to as many as 20,000 commercial messages a year for a decade and a half" (Syrett & Lammiman, 2004, p. 62). Consumerism and brand awareness are central features of this generation's lives (Syrett & Lammiman, 2004). This market, one of the most important and sought after, represents large potential as well as considerable challenges (Bush, Martin, & Bush, 2004). The youth market has been characterized as one of the most coveted segments because of its "1) spending power, 2) ability to be trendsetters, 3) receptivity to new products, and 4) tremendous potential for becoming lifetime customers" (Bush et al., 2004, p. 109). Other researchers have found that Generation Y is individualistic, anticorporate, and resistant to advertising efforts (Bush et al., 2004; Wolburg & Pokrywczynski, 2001). Traditional marketing does not work with this group of consumers (Morton, 2002).

Members of Generation Y have come of age in a society of technological change and one that is consumer oriented. They routinely multitask and may be watching television, using the Internet, and listening to music simultaneously. Because this generation represents a significant behavioral shift, a broad, multifaceted approach to advertising is necessary to effectively reach them. To develop such an advertising strategy, more information is necessary to characterize young consumers' purchase intention.

"Determining the specific factors that influence young consumers and their purchasing attitudes and patterns has become an important focus of consumer research" (Martin & Bush, 2000, p. 442).

The purpose of this study was to determine if the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) could be used as a prediction tool in examining purchase intention of a selected consumer group and product. For this study, interest focused on fashion merchandise made of emu leather and the selected group was Generation Y consumers. The research model focused on young consumers' purchase intention by determining their attitude toward purchasing a product and perceptions of social pressure to purchase or not purchase the product.

Project Background

Leather has been an important component of the textile and apparel complex, contributing billions of dollars in sales annually to the economy. Exotic leather, including American alligator and ratite (emu and ostrich), has recently become more popular in the marketplace. The ratite industry, although relatively young, is a small but important part of the exotic leather business; however, there are some problems in the development and expansion of this industry. The most significant problem is a lack of knowledge and understanding of the potential target markets in the United States. Little or no research has focused on determining potential markets. Because young consumers often have high fashion involvement, are attracted to trends, and look for unique products, they were selected for the present study. They are an important target market because they may influence parents' spending, will spend

more in the future, are trendsetters, and have major purchasing power in the marketplace (Martin & Bush, 2000).

Theoretical Framework

The theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) is based on the premise that individuals are rational and make systematic use of information available to them. The model in this study was based on that of a previous study (Xu, 2000) and designed to explain relationships between attitude and behavior by using the variables of beliefs, attitudes, behavioral intentions, and behavior.

The theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) extended the theory of reasoned action by including perceived behavioral control as a determinant of both behavioral intention and behavior. Inclusion of perceived behavioral control added significantly to the prediction of intention and behavior, especially for circumstances in which there were constraints on action. The theory of reasoned action can adequately predict behaviors that are relatively straightforward, that is, under volitional control (Armitage & Conner, 2001). We believe that an intention to purchase an item is volitional and very few constraints exist. Therefore, we feel that using the theory of reasoned action will result in a valid prediction of purchase intention.

According to the theory of reasoned action, one's behavioral intention (BI) is based on two determinants: attitude toward the behavior (A_b) and perception of social pressures to perform or not perform the behavior, referred to as the subjective norm (SN). Attitude toward the behavior (A_b) is a function of beliefs (b_i) that performing the behavior has certain attributes and the evaluation of those beliefs (e_i). Shim, Morris, and Morgan (1989) noted that in marketing-related

studies centered on specific purchase and use situations, " A_b could be interpreted as attitude toward purchasing and using a given brand or product class....The b_i may be viewed as the person's estimate of whether or not the product under consideration ... will possess a desired attribute" (p. 9). The SN is a function of an individual's beliefs that specific individuals or groups think that the individual should or should not perform the behavior (NB_j) and the individual's motivation to comply with those referents (MC_j). The model can be represented by the following formula:

$$B \sim BI = w_1(A_b) + w_2(SN) \\ \text{where } A_b = \sum b_i e_i \text{ and } SN = \sum NB_j MC_j$$

Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) also indicated that other external variables such as demographics, traditional attitudes toward targets, and personality traits might have some influence on behavioral intention, which could provide a better understanding of the behavior in question. Other researchers have suggested that additional external variables such as past behavior, past experiences, or involvement could be included in the model to help predict behavior (Bagozzi, Wong, Abe, & Bergami, 2000; Bunce & Birdi, 1998; Shim et al., 1989).

Recently, the concept of involvement has been recognized by researchers for the important role it plays in explaining consumer behavior, including attitude formation, consumer satisfaction, and brand loyalty (Foxall, Goldsmith, & Brown, 1998; O'Cass, 2000). Zaichkowsky (1985) defined involvement as "a person's perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values, and interests" (p. 342). She agreed with other researchers who maintained that different involvement levels may lead to different consumer responses.

Because the product of interest was fashion related, a measure of fashion involvement

was also included as one of the external variables. Shim et al. (1989) included a measure of fashion involvement as an external variable in a study of consumer attitudes toward domestic and imported clothing. Their findings indicated that attitude toward performing a behavior was strongly influenced by level of involvement and recommended that involvement be included as an external variable in future studies using the Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) model. The Fashion Involvement Index (FII) developed by Tigert, Ring, and King (1976) was used to measure involvement. The FII has been successfully used in multiple studies as a valid and reliable measure of fashion involvement (Fairhurst, Good, & Gentry, 1989; Jin & Koh, 1999). Tigert et al. described the instrument "as a summary or cumulative statement of at least five dimensions of fashion adoption-related behavior" (p. 51). The level of fashion involvement, whether strong or weak, can influence a consumer's choices in the marketplace for all types of products and services, and it has a direct influence on choices of fashion products.

Mass media were also added because consumers sometimes need more information regarding products and suggestions to help make purchase decisions. With the huge array of products in the marketplace, necessary information may come from mass media sources.

To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the varied factors that may influence consumers' purchase intention, the classic beliefs-attitude-behavior intention model used for this study was extended to include variables external to the theory. Among the variables added were personality traits (self-confidence and public self-consciousness, which are components of self-concept), fashion involvement, and media usage.

Much of the research reviewed for this study focused only on the central variables

of attitude toward the behavior and subjective norm, although some included external variables. However, many of the studies that investigated the influence of external variables used *t* tests or analysis of variance to determine influence but did not include the external variables in the model (Elliott, Jobber, & Sharp, 1995; Shim et al., 1989). From a statistical standpoint, one-at-a-time tests like a *t* test may not be as valid when the central variables have an effect on the dependent variables. Considering the relative influence of each factor in an environment with all possible factors in the model may be more statistically valid. This approach of considering external variables together with the central variables in the full model has been used successfully by other researchers (Cummings & Corney, 1987; Liedtke, 1983; Lowe & Frey, 1983; Slotten, 1993). Because of particular interest in several of the external variables, we included both central and external variables in the full model to predict purchase intention of the product of interest (Figure 1).

On the basis of the model, the following hypotheses were developed:

Hypothesis 1: Attitude toward the behavior (purchase) will influence consumer purchase intention.

Hypothesis 2: Perception of subjective norm will influence consumer purchase intention.

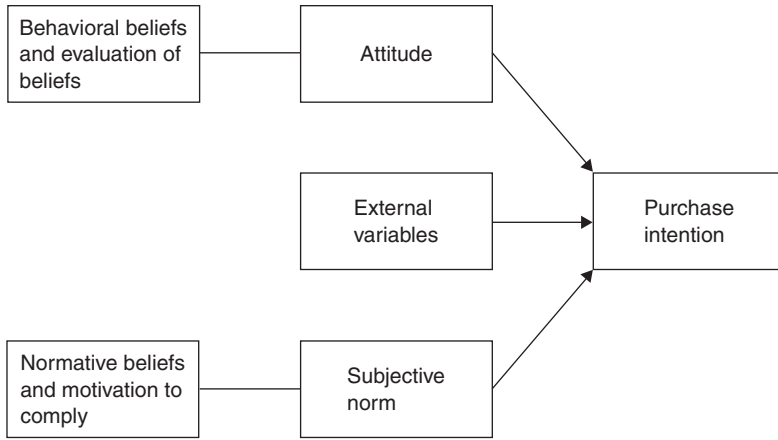
Hypothesis 3: The following external variables will influence consumer purchase intention: (a) fashion involvement, (b) personality traits, and (c) media usage.

Method

Measures

Behavior intention. Behavior intention (BI) refers to the consumer's intention to

Figure 1
Variables Hypothesized to Influence Purchase Intention



purchase an apparel item made of emu leather and was measured by the following item, “I would like to buy an emu leather product if it fits my clothing needs,” rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). A 7-point scale was recommended by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980).

Attitude toward the behavior. Attitude toward the behavior (A_b) was a function of the strength of beliefs about owning and using the product (b_i) and evaluations of those beliefs (e_i). Beliefs were determined using an index developed by Shim et al. (1989) and adapted by Nowlin (1999) and Xu (2000). Using a 7-point scale, an eight-item index assessed respondents’ beliefs about attributes of owning and using emu leather products with items concerning product characteristics, ease of care, attractiveness, fashion, and uniqueness. A companion eight-item index was used to evaluate the importance of these beliefs by asking respondents to indicate the importance of each attribute on the 7-point scale.

The overall attitude score was computed as the sum of the products of the score of b_i and the score of e_i for all attributes:

$$A_b = \sum b_i e_i$$

Subjective norm. The subjective norm (SN) was defined as consumers’ perceptions of social pressures by others regarding the purchase of the product of interest. The subjective norm is a function of normative belief (NB_j) reflecting consumers’ perceptions of what a specific referent j thinks about whether the consumer should or should not purchase the product and motivation to comply with referent j (MC_j). Referents identified to measure consumers’ normative beliefs included significant other, friend, colleague, social status, and media. Participants were asked to indicate on a 7-point scale their opinions of the likelihood that a specific referent would think they should or should not purchase an emu leather product. Consumer motivation to comply with the referents was also measured on a 7-point scale. The overall subjective

Table 1
Fashion Involvement Index

-
1. In general, would you say you buy clothing fashions
 - a. earlier in the season than most?
 - b. about the same time as most?
 - c. later in the season than most?
 2. How much information about new clothing fashions do you give to your friends?
 - a. very little
 - b. average amount
 - c. a great deal
 3. With regards to your interests in clothing fashions, would you say you are
 - a. less interested than most?
 - b. about as interested as most?
 - c. more interested than most?
 4. Compared with most others, how likely are you to be asked for advice about new clothing fashions?
 - a. less likely to be asked than most
 - b. about as likely to be asked as most
 - c. more likely to be asked than most
 5. Which one of the statements below best describes your reaction to changing fashions? (Even though there may be no statement listed that exactly describes how you feel, make the best choice you can from the answers listed.)
 - a. I read fashion news regularly and try to keep my wardrobe up-to-date with fashion trends.
 - b. I keep up-to-date on all the fashion changes although I don't always attempt to dress according to those changes.
 - c. I check to see what is currently fashionable only when I need to buy some new clothes.
 - d. I don't pay much attention to fashion trends unless a major change takes place.
 - e. I am not at all interested in fashion trends.
-

norm score was derived as the summation of the products of the score of NB_j and the score of MC_j for all the referents:

$$SN = \sum NB_j MC_j$$

Fashion involvement. The FII, developed by Tigert et al. (1976), was used to measure consumers' fashion involvement. The multi-dimensional index defines fashion involvement on the basis of the aggregate effect of multiple fashion behavioral activities and includes (a) fashion innovativeness and time of purchase, (b) fashion interpersonal communication, (c) fashion interest, (d) fashion knowledge, (e) fashion awareness, and (f) reaction to changing fashion trends. As specified in the index, each of the first four dimensions is measured by a single item on a

3-point scale. The last dimension is measured by a single item on a 5-point scale (Table 1).

Personality traits. Two aspects of personality traits were measured. Self-confidence was measured as the consumers' perception of themselves as leaders and having confidence by means of the modified six-item index developed by Wells and Tigert (1971). Each item was measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale. Public self-consciousness was measured as the degree to which a person expresses an awareness of self as a social object with an effect on others by means of the seven-item index developed by Fenigstein, Scheier, and Buss (1975), using the 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Although this scale is dated, it is still the

most widely used scale in measuring public self-consciousness. Many other recent studies (Aldert, 2005; Hoffman & Heinrichs, 2003; Rankin, Lane, Gibbons, & Gerrard, 2004) have used it successfully.

Media usage. The following items were used to evaluate the impact of media on consumer purchase intention: awareness of apparel on television, store window displays, magazines, newspapers, apparel on store mannequins, billboards, fashion shows, and purchase of apparel on the Internet. All items were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale.

Sample

The convenience sample consisted of 229 college students enrolled in a major university in the southeastern United States. Each student volunteered to take a written survey that took about 15 min to complete. Completing the questionnaire signified each respondent's agreement to voluntarily participate in the study. Some of the returned questionnaires had missing responses for some of the questions, and as a result the frequencies reported are based on valid observations only.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected by administering the survey to students enrolled in general education classes. The SPSS program was used for data analysis. Descriptive analyses were conducted to determine respondents' profile, beliefs, evaluations, perceptions, and purchase intention of the product of interest. Reliability analyses were conducted to test consistency of measurement of scales.

This study focused on the relationship between attitudes and behavioral intention, using the theory of reasoned action, which is

a belief–attitude–behavioral intention model. Although there are multiple layers of relationship in the original model, the current study focused only on the attitude–behavioral intention relationship. Some additional variables were also included in the model to test their influence on the behavioral intention. As mentioned earlier, this approach of considering additional variables together with the central variables in the full model has been used successfully by other researchers.

A general linear model (GLM) analysis was conducted to test the hypotheses for this study. Although multicollinearity may be a problem for standard multiple regression, the GLM is an extension of linear multiple regression. It differs from the standard multiple regression by allowing independent variables that are not linearly independent. Also, GLM allows unbalanced variables to be included as independent variables. Statistical analyses are consistent with the theoretical model we propose, which is a modification of the original theory of reasoned action.

Results

Sample Profile

Most of the sample was White (86%), female (78%), ages 17-21 (89%), and single (94%). Approximately one third were freshmen, one third sophomores, and one fourth juniors; the remainder were seniors and graduate students (Table 2).

Purchase Intentions

Participants were asked directly if they would buy an emu leather product. A sample of garment-quality emu leather was attached to each questionnaire, so respondents could actually see and touch the leather. A frequency analysis ($N = 229$) indicated that more than half (51%) of the

Table 2
Sample Profile

Variable	<i>N</i> ^a	%
Race		
White	189	85.9
African American	18	8.2
Hispanic	5	2.3
Asian	5	2.3
Other	3	1.3
<i>N</i>	220	100.0
Age		
17-21	197	89.2
22-25	20	9.0
26-30	2	0.9
Older than 30	2	0.9
<i>N</i>	221	100.0
Marital status		
Single	206	93.6
Married	5	2.3
Divorced	1	0.5
Living together	8	3.6
<i>N</i>	220	100.0
Academic status		
Freshman	70	31.6
Sophomore	73	33.0
Junior	55	24.9
Senior	15	6.8
Graduating senior	7	3.2
Graduate student	1	0.5
<i>N</i>	221	100.0
Gender		
Female	172	77.8
Male	49	22.2
<i>N</i>	221	100.0

^aThe *N*s vary because of missing data.

respondents would buy an emu leather product; 20% were not sure, and 29% would not buy an emu leather product.

Attitudes Toward the Behavior

The attitude score was composed of data collected from the belief items and evaluation of the importance of those attributes in the decision to select a leather product. The

overall attitude score was derived as the mean of the products of the scores of beliefs about specific attributes of owning and using the product and the evaluations of those attributes. As shown in Table 3, the mean attitude score was slightly higher than the neutral point, indicating that overall respondents had positive beliefs about specific attributes of owning and using the product and the evaluations of those attributes.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics

Variable	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Neutral Point
Attitude toward purchasing the product of interest	223	23.85	68.29	1.00	46.67	16.00
Subjective norm	221	11.83	7.11	1.00	36.00	16.00
Fashion involvement	218	2.32	0.63	1.88	3.43	2.20
Self-confidence	225	5.42	0.91	2.00	7.00	4.00
Self-consciousness	222	5.14	1.36	1.00	7.00	4.00

Subjective Norm

The overall subjective norm score was derived as the mean of the products of the scores reflecting the consumers' perceptions of what specific referents thought about whether one should or should not perform the behavior and the scores of motivation to comply with the referents. Table 3 shows that the mean score was somewhat below the neutral point, indicating that respondents did not feel pressure from significant people in their lives or the fashion industry to purchase the product.

External Variables

Fashion involvement. Reliability analysis resulted in a Cronbach's alpha of .61, indicating intracorrelations among the five items used to measure fashion involvement. The FII was calculated as the mean of the five items that made up the index. With a neutral point of 2.2 and a mean of 2.32, respondents were slightly fashion involved, but could not be described as highly fashion involved (Table 3).

Personality traits. Both the self-confidence scale and the self-consciousness scale resulted in a Cronbach's alpha of .60. Indices were computed for both measures of personality

traits. For self-confidence, respondents had a mean score of 5.42 with a neutral point of 4.0 (Table 3). The self-consciousness mean score was 5.14, and the neutral point was 4.0 (Table 3). In general, respondents had high levels of self-confidence and self-consciousness, which indicated that they saw themselves as confident leaders and had a good awareness of self with an understanding of the effect they have on others.

Media usage. The influence of the media as a source of fashion information and influence on purchase intentions was measured by eight items, including television, window display, magazines, newspapers, mannequins, billboards, fashion shows, and the Internet. More than 80% of the respondents noticed clothing on television shows, and 89% noticed clothing in store window displays. Fashion magazines were also important media sources, as 83% of the respondents used them as a source of fashion information. Many (60%) respondents also used newspaper ads to provide fashion information regarding clothing. Clothing on store mannequins was noticed by 86% of the respondents, and 73% noticed clothing featured on billboard ads. Fashion shows were attended by just fewer than 20% of the participants, and almost 60% agreed that the Internet is an important media tool for

Table 4
Results of General Linear Model Analysis for Variables
Predicting Purchase Intention

Source	<i>df</i>	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	<i>F</i>
Model	6	222.30	37.05	16.38**
Error	211	477.31	2.26	
Corrected total	217	699.62		
$R^2 = .318$				

Source	<i>df</i>	Type III Sum of Squares	Mean Square	<i>F</i>
Attitude	1	90.89	90.89	40.18**
Subjective norm	1	5.18	5.18	2.29
Fashion involvement	1	0.65	0.65	.029
Self-confidence	1	5.17	5.17	2.28
Self-consciousness	1	0.35	0.35	0.15
Media	1	5.80	5.80	2.57

Note: The dependent variable was purchase intention.

* $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$.

fashion information. A summed score was used in the model.

Hypotheses Testing

An SPSS GLM analysis was used to test the hypotheses with purchase intention of emu leather products as the dependent variable and the proposed determinants of attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, and external variables of fashion involvement, personality traits, and media usage as independent variables of the regression model. The model was significant in explaining some of the variance of the dependent variable ($R^2 = .32$, $p \leq .01$) as shown in Table 4.

Hypothesis 1: Attitude toward the behavior (purchase) will influence consumer purchase intention. Respondents' attitude toward the behavior (purchasing) had a highly significant influence on purchase intention. The more favorable the respondents' attitude toward the behavior, the higher the purchase intention; therefore, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Hypothesis 2: Perception of subjective norm will influence consumer purchase intention. Subjective norm did not influence consumer purchase intention; therefore, Hypothesis 2 was not supported.

Hypothesis 3: The following external variables will influence consumer purchase intention: (a) fashion involvement, (b) personality traits, and (c) media usage. The addition of other variables to the model produced no statistically significant relationships to consumer purchase intention; therefore, Hypothesis 3 was not supported.

Discussion and Conclusions

This study was undertaken to provide more information regarding a fast-growing market segment—the young, Generation Y consumer. The theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Xu, Summers, & Belleau, 2004) was used to determine factors that influence consumer purchase intention. The products of interest in this study were made of emu

leather. Variables proposed as determinants of purchase intention included attitude toward purchasing the product, subjective norm with respect to purchasing the product, fashion involvement, personality traits (self-confidence and public self-consciousness), and media usage.

As predicted by the model, respondents' attitudes toward the behavior had the most influence on purchase intention. The more favorable the attitude, the more likely the consumer was to purchase the products. Overall, respondents had a positive attitude toward the behavior. So, perhaps, with additional promotion of the product of interest, this target group may be interested in purchasing it. The Generation Y group is technologically savvy; therefore, to sell the product of interest to this group, creating and increasing a positive attitude via Internet and other technological innovations may provide an increase in sales.

Because the product of interest was relatively unknown, showing samples of products and providing information regarding the durability and versatility of the material would help to educate consumers and perhaps result in an increase in a positive attitude and more sales. Featuring the product in fashion ads in various media would also expand consumers' knowledge and begin to create an image of a fashion product. Using television, fashion magazines, store window displays, and store mannequins would be the logical media choices for this group, as these were the media used by a large percentage of the participants.

Although the literature indicated that the subjective norm was a significant factor in the prediction of purchase intention (Rabolt & Drake, 1984-1985; Robertson, Zielinski, & Ward, 1984), the results of this study did not support that. To further explore this variable, *t* tests were conducted on groups on the basis of whether they intended to buy the

products and subjective norm. Results indicated that the subjective norm for consumers who intended to purchase the products was significantly different from that of those who did not intend to purchase the products, $t(176) = 4.3, p = .000$. Consumers who did not intend to purchase the products had a significantly lower subjective norm score.

This finding was not consistent with the theory and was not supported by the literature. It was a bit surprising that college-age consumers felt little or no social pressure to comply with peer or other referents, as peer pressure can be intense at that age. The fact that Generation Y consumers are technologically savvy and sophisticated may explain their lack of reliance on peer referents. They have grown up in a consumer-oriented society in which consumption has become a leisure-time activity (Bush et al., 2004; Syrett & Lammiman, 2004). Results that do not agree with past studies may also have occurred because the product of interest is relatively new to the market, is not a well-known fashion item, and has received little or no promotion to consumers. For those reasons, respondents may not have felt any pressure to purchase it.

External variables had little influence on consumers' behavior decisions. Although the literature suggested that some external variables might have some influence on purchase behavior, this was not the case in the present study. The external variables included in the model—fashion involvement, personality traits (self-confidence and self-consciousness), and media usage were not significant predictors of purchase behavior in this study. Respondents were somewhat fashion involved, had positive self-confidence and self-consciousness, and were price sensitive. However, this sample may not have been large enough to detect differences.

Although some researchers (Shim et al., 1989) have indicated that fashion involvement

with a product might increase the intent to purchase, overall the respondents in this study were somewhat, but not highly, fashion involved. The product of interest is relatively new to the market, and respondents may not have made the connection between the product and fashion.

The level of fashion involvement, whether strong or weak, can influence a consumer's choices in the marketplace for all types of products. A *t*-test analysis indicated that there was a significant difference in fashion involvement between those who intended to purchase the product and those who did not. Participants who had a positive purchase intention were significantly more fashion involved than those who did not intend to purchase.

The homogeneous nature of this convenience sample may have contributed to the lack of significance for some of the external variables. However, the members of Generation Y have achieved a sense of empowerment when it comes to purchasing consumer goods ("Buying the Future," 2005). They want to feel that they are "drawing their own conclusions about products, brands, social issues" (Kharmouch, 2002, p. 1). "This is a generation that revels in self-expression" (Kharmouch, 2002, p. 3). Some research conducted in the past used the baby boomer generation, which is very different from Generation Y, and that may explain some of the differences in findings.

In summary, the results of this study partially supported the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) as a prediction tool in examining purchase intention of a consumer product. Attitude toward the behavior was the most significant predictor variable in the model. External variables did not have statistical influence on the purchase behavior in this study.

This information will be useful to industries who want to target this group with

consumer products. This group is very discerning and savvy about advertising directed to them. "Marketers who don't bother to learn the interests and obsessions of millennials, . . . are apt to run up against a brick wall of distrust and cynicism" (Syrett & Lammiman, 2004, p. 65). Because traditional marketing does not appeal to this group, it is very important that marketers obtain a clear picture of their purchase behavior. A broad, multifaceted approach, based on how consumers in this group make purchase decisions, is recommended.

Limitations

Limitations of this study may affect the ability to generalize findings. The sample was nonrandom and may not be a true representation of the selected consumer target audience. Although this may limit the study's generalizability, results obtained are valid and give some depiction of the purchase behavior of Generation Y consumers. Although the sample was nonrandom, there is no indication that this group of respondents differs significantly in their purchase behavior from other Generation Y consumers.

Implications

Generation Y is a large, fast-growing segment of the consumer audience. Because this group is very different from previous generational groups, it is important to be able to characterize it and provide some purchase behavior information to marketers who target this particular audience. Implications for marketing to Generation Y are tremendous, as there are about 60 million members of this target segment and they are a major force in the marketplace with significant buying power.

Because product characteristics are a key part of attitude toward the behavior (purchase), educating consumers regarding these characteristics could result in an increase in a more favorable attitude and a corresponding increase in purchase intention. Promoting and publicizing fashion products made from emu leather might increase the product's visibility and result in more interest by Generation Y consumers.

It is also important to target the media used by this group for promotion, such as television, fashion magazines, store window displays, and mannequins. For fashion products such as the product of interest, it is very important to educate the consumer concerning its characteristics and fashion appeal. If consumers are given information regarding characteristics such as durability, versatility, and fashion appeal, they may be more interested and form a more positive opinion regarding the product of interest. According to the model and theory, a more positive attitude will result in a higher and more positive intent to purchase the product.

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