



BRAND PREFERENCES OF FOOTWEAR PRODUCTS: IN CASE OF SECONDARY STUDENTS IN ADDIS ABABA

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Abstract: *The research paper aims to investigate the pattern of brand preference towards domestic and foreign footwear products and its antecedents among Addis Ababa city secondary school students. Preference is identified from foreign and domestic footwear brands and the selected variables of purchase preference. Samples are taken from Addis Ababa city secondary schools through multistage technique. Sample respondents are taken from Nifas-Silk sub city schools. Based on the analysis, Addis Ababa secondary school students prefer foreign brands because of the given brand preference factors. The analysis revealed that all determinants of brand preference affect purchase decision of footwear. There is a difference in students' footwear preference and major determinants in terms of their profile. Domestic footwear manufacturers have to concentrate on the provision of footwear products that have high emotional value, high quality and those brands that understand the normative influences.*

Keywords: Brand Preference, Footwear, Foreign & Local branding, secondary students

I. 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. They are becoming more prone to buying foreign and international brands than the local ones since the influence by the western world is getting stronger day by day.

Consumers are now more aware of other cultures, lifestyles and brands due to international travel and satellite television. It has now been observed that consumers buy foreign brands more frequently than the local ones. They feel proud in purchasing imported goods which has increased the power of global brands. Perhaps more than any other age group, teens value apparel, footwear and fashion (Koester and May, 1985).

Recent technologies have provided the global teen with enhanced opportunities to interact with international footwear brands. The global teenagers'

affinity for apparel and footwear related products is likely a driving force behind the rapidly expanding global apparel, footwear, accessories and luxury goods market. This global market is defined as men's, women's and infants' clothing, shoes, jewelry, watches and leather goods. Due to the size and characteristics of the market, college students are one of the most important markets for many companies (Wong & Smith, 2002).

According to Addis Ababa education bureau statistics at 2011, there were around 120,000 secondary students in Addis Ababa city on 2011. Assume how much these students became an effective market for industries. They may make a purchase of footwear at least once in a year. Not only their purchase, they can influence other around their environment. As the number of students increase so does their consumption. Moreover, aside from its direct buying power, the college market influences others (Wong & Smith, 2002). In order to reach the college and high school

student market, one of the most essential aspects for marketers is to know what customers prefer and understand factors that influence students' purchase preferences and purchasing decisions. Thus, it is interesting to study the connection within "what they buy" and "why they buy it".

At the same time, it is increasingly significant to understand the consumers' preference and perception of global brands to local brands. The global teenager hypothesis suggests that recent communication technologies such as the Internet, satellite television have homogenized the values, fashion preferences and attitudes of the world's teenagers. According to the "global teenager" viewpoint, international communication have similar global teen preferences and attitudes and have brought a convergence of global teen values, such as independence, self-expression, openness to new ideas and cultures, flexibility, mobility, and enjoyment of life (Meredith and Schewe, 2002).

Due to the size and characteristics of the market, high school students are of the most important markets for many companies (Wong & Smith, 2002). Ethiopia is the second-most populous (82.5 million) nation in Africa. This is a huge market for local footwear producers and also foreign footwear retailers. From this population, youngsters incorporate more. Even if this segment is attractive, there is no published research and study conducted on students' footwear brand preference and antecedents for that preference.

II. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are to:

- identify key determinants that influence to buy footwear products

- identify the brand preference between local and foreign footwear
- identify the brand preference of footwear based on gender
- identify the brand preference of footwear based on students' school type

III. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The globalization of markets has created complex and intertwined sourcing and marketing strategies. Ethiopian has a population of more than 82 million. This huge population is an attractive market for local and foreign companies. Identifying the preferences of youngsters' specially secondary school students is useful for both local and foreign footwear manufacturers and retailers. The identification of determinants of students to prefer footwear brands assist to develop effective strategies for local as well as foreign firms. The result is also helpful for domestic footwear firms to reflect in their marketing strategies and compete effectively in the aggressive and cutthroat competition that exist in the footwear industry. The findings also serve as a guide for foreign footwear firms who have limited knowledge on students shoe preference.

Generally, the result of the study help manufacturers (foreign and domestic), exporters, importers, distributors, and other channel intermediaries to pay close attention to how this affects their businesses and to use proper strategies to respond to this trend

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1 Brand

The word brand is a trademark or distinctive name identifying a product or a manufacturer. It refers a

name, term, symbol, sign or design used by a firm to differentiate its offerings from those of its competitors. The brand name is the vocalizable part of the brand and the brand mark is the non-vocalizable part (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 1999). It provides an unmistakable means of differentiating one manufacturer's output from another. A brand includes a name, logo, slogan, or design scheme associated with a product or service. A brand is a symbolic embodiment of all the information connected to the product and serves to create associations and expectations around it.

4.2 Brand Preference and Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is the willingness of a consumer to buy a particular product (Doods *et al.*). Research on predictors of purchasing behavior has confirmed that consumers usually hold prior purchase intentions before they behave (Lin y Chen, 2006). Social psychology suggests that intentions should be the best predictor of individual behavior, because purchase intentions reflect the consumer's own expression of purchase probability, independently of other relevant factors that could affect consumer behavior and decisions (Young *et al.*, 1998). Researchers have largely employed this variable as an antecedent of behavior because it simplifies the measurement of behavior, especially if we bear in mind the difficulties of observing the real purchasing process of each person (Chandon *et al.*, 2005); nevertheless, any prediction of consumer behavior based on purchase intentions is far from perfect. Several investigations have noted discrepancies between intentions and behaviors (Newberry *et al.*, 2003). Consumers in different countries give dissimilar priorities to the factors that affected their purchase intentions (Lee and Green, 1991). A more recent study by Chandon *et al.* (2005) measures consumer purchase intentions towards groceries, automobiles and laptops. Their

conclusions provide evidence to suggest that the stronger the consumer purchase intention, the greater the probability of the consumer buying the products being evaluated.

The term "Brand Preference" means the preference of the consumer for one brand of a product in relation to various other brands of the same product available in the market. The choice of the consumers is revealed by brand preference. Brand preference is the extent that respondents preferred and intended to stay with their service provider (Holbrook, 2001).

4.3 Consumer Perception of Foreign and Local Brands

Advances in communications and information systems technology have shrunk distances, thereby linking markets through flows of information across markets. During the recent years, there has been a great shift from local brands to global or foreign brands due to the display of similar needs and preferences by the consumers. As the world is shrinking in to a global marketplace, it is increasingly significant to understand the consumers' perception of foreign brands to local brands. Studying consumer preferences towards foreign and local brands and the underlying reasons behind their selection have substantial implications in marketing. There would also be several reasons for consumers' perceptions and attitudes towards the brand. Thus there is also a need to uncover the reasons for consumers' preference for global brands over local brands.

The concept called globalization has led various firms to operate on a global level which has brought changes in consumer buying behavior and his knowledge. Consumers are now more aware of other cultures, lifestyles and brands due to international travel and satellite television. It has

now been observed that consumers buy foreign brands more frequently than the local ones. They feel proud in purchasing imported goods which has increased the power of global brands. It is a general perception that consumers consider “made in...” factor while purchasing a foreign brand. Studies show that consumers of developing countries prefer foreign brands, especially from the west, for reasons not only of perceived quality but also of social status and others. Thus a brand’s country of origin serves as a “quality halo” or summary of product quality (cf. Han, 1989), and people buy such brands for status-enhancing reasons. Quality is conceptualized in terms of the “superiority” or “excellence” of a product’s performance (Zeithmal, 1988).

4.4 Footwear and Clothing Choice Criteria

Clothing choice criteria are defined as the intrinsic (inherent to the product) and extrinsic (product-related, but not part of the physical product) product attributes that associated with desired benefits or incurred costs as consumers make buying decision among clothing alternatives (Davis, 1985, Hatch and Roberts, 1985. Intrinsic

product attributes are those that cannot be changed without altering the physical characteristics of the product, while extrinsic ones are those that are exerted by manufacturers or retailers and do not form the component parts of the product. Different criteria may have varied importance in every consumer’s mind. While consumers would assign high importance on the criteria that can really reflect their underlying characteristics and experiences. Since the critical characteristics of apparel can always determine its ultimate purchase acceptance or rejection by consumers (Sproles, 1979), the criteria that consumers use in clothing purchase decisions have long been regarded as an important issue for investigation in many previous consumer behavioral studies. Researchers have identified many product attributes and criteria that are critical for fashion consumers in clothing purchase, and basically all these can be summarized under intrinsic and extrinsic categories. Eckman et al. (1990) have summarized the criteria that influence consumers’ evaluation of apparel products in 21 clothing related studies from 1971 to 1988 into 35 extrinsic and intrinsic attributes.

Table 4.1 Purchase criteria for clothing and footwear products

Extrinsic Criteria	Intrinsic Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Price ✗ Brand ✗ Country of origin ✗ Store; Store image ✗ Coordination with wardrobe ✗ Salesperson’s evaluation ✗ Department in store ✗ Approval of others ✗ Warranty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Product composition ✗ Style ✗ Color / Design Fabric ✗ Appearance ✗ Fabre content 2) Product performance ✗ Care ✗ Fit / Sizing ✗ Durability ✗ Comfort Safety ✗ Colorfastness 3) Quality ✗ Construction / Workmanship ✗ Physical ✗ Fabric ✗ Sex appropriateness

Source: Eckman, M., Damhorst, M.L. and Kadolph, S.J. (1990)

V. METHODOLOGY MIX

Design method for this research is quantitative. Since the features of this study match with descriptive research and the same was carried out as an appropriate method of design. The sources of data used in this research comprised both primary and secondary data. Primary data, being the most significant, were gathered through structured questionnaires. Secondary data are collected from journals, existing reports, and statistics by government agencies and authorities.

The target populations for this study are secondary school students that are found in Addis Ababa city. For this study, regular students in all secondary schools are the unit of analysis. There are 168 secondary schools and 123,814 students in Addis Ababa city administration. These schools and students are found in 10 sub cities. Imagine how much the number is very broad and large. If the total area of interest happens to be a big one, a convenient way in which a sample can be taken is to use multi stage sampling (C. F. Kothari,). Thus, the sampling technique for this study is probability sampling particularly multistage sampling.

The mathematical equation used to determine the size is

Sample from govtal schools

$$= \text{Total no. of samples} \left(\frac{\text{Population in Nifas silk G/Pr/Pb schools}}{\text{Total number of students in Nifas silk}} \right)$$

Sample sizes in each school type which is drawn from the equation are:

- ◆ Governmental schools= 128.3036 students
- ◆ Private schools= 120.78 students
- ◆ Public schools= 70 students

The data for the research were collected through structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistic is used to describe the data collected in research studies and to accurately characterize the variables under observation within a specific sample and frequently used to summarize a study sample prior to analyzing a study’s primary hypotheses.

VI. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the footwear brand preference and its determinants. A total number of 319 questionnaires were received. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in analyzing the data collected. The responses by the students to some items of the questionnaire were compiled into tables according to the main variables being examined.

6.1 General Information of Respondents

Table 6.1 summarizes the general and specific information of respondents in number and percentage form.

Table 6.1: Profile of Respondents

	Gender of Respondents'								
	Male			Female			Total		
Respondents' School Type	Count (A)	Column N %	Row Total N % (C)	Count (B)	Column N %	Row Total N % (D)	Count (A+B)	Column N %	Row Total N % (C+D)
Governmental	58	41.1%	45.3%	70	39.3%	54.7%	128	40.1%	100.0%
Private	53	37.6%	44.2%	67	37.6%	55.8%	120	37.6%	100.0%
Public	30	21.3%	42.3%	41	23.0%	57.7%	71	22.3%	100.0%
Total	141	100.0%	44.2%	178	100.0%	55.8%	319	100.0%	100.0%

Three types of schools were taken as a sample. From the total number of respondents 40.1%, 35.6% and 22.3% were government, private and public students respectively and 44.2% and 55.8 % were male and female respectively. Particularly 41.1%, 37.6% and 21.3% male respondents were taken from government, private and public schools and 39.3%, 37.6% and 23.0% female students were obtained from government, private and public schools.

6.2 Brand Preference between Local and Foreign Footwear

Three statements were provided to respondents to know their preference given foreign and domestic footwear brands. These variables were intention to buy foreign footwear brands frequently, plan to buy foreign footwear brands more and preferring foreign footwear brands.

Table 6.2: 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	

From these statements, around 78.9% respondents put their level of agreement to foreign footwear brands. These respondents prefer foreign footwear than domestic footwear. 19.15% of students did not put their positive agreement for the statement. This denotes that they prefer domestic footwear brands than foreign.

6.3 Footwear Brand Preference Based On Gender

Table 6.3 Independent Sample T-Test of Male and Female in Their Brand Preference

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

The results of independent samples t-test on brand preference between male and female subjects indicated that the mean for male subjects (SD=.60760) and female subjects (SD=.57348) were 4.0473 and 3.9925 respectively. The output explained that there is a significant mean difference between male subjects' brand preference and female subjects' brand preference ($t = .825$, $P > 0.05$). The preference of foreign footwear brands is higher for male students. While the level of female students foreign footwear brand preference is lower.

6.4 Footwear Brand Preference Based On Students' School Type

Table 6.4 Comparison of Means between students' school type in their brand preference

School Types	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Governmental	128	4.3620	.42045
Private	120	3.9806	.49327
Public	71	3.4554	.54697
Total	319	4.0167	.58850

Based on table 6.4, the score of governmental school students to prefer foreign footwear brands is very high (Mean = 4.3620, SD = .42045). As compared with governmental and private schools students, the preference of foreign brands on the side of public school students is low (Mean = 3.4554, SD = .54697)

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Conclusions

The measurement instruments were taken from two directions. The first one is from the consumer direction (general consumer variables) which includes the normative influences and brand consciousness of consumers. The second variable is from the manufacturer side which consists of the emotional value of the brand and the perceived quality of the product.

Given domestic and foreign footwear brands, students have more interested to foreign footwear brands. This result is related with the previous research findings. Developed and under developed countries' customers prefer foreign footwear brands because of the emotional value of the brand.

Especially, male are more interested to foreign footwear brands. Within school types, governmental school students prefer foreign footwear brands more than other school students.

The most significant factor of footwear brand preference is from the manufacturer side. Within brand specific variable, the emotional value of the brand significantly affects purchase decision. Even if all tested dimensions affect the footwear preference of Addis Ababa secondary school students, the emotional value and features of the brand affect strongly.

The footwear purchase decision of students is influenced by the emotional value of the brand. The value of the brand in terms of emotion is highly considered by students at the time of footwear purchase. Footwear brands that are stylish and fashionable significantly affect their purchase because these characteristics of the brand are directly related with emotional value of the brand. In addition to these, the newness and novelty features of the brand have a great impact on purchase decision. Those brands that provide high status and esteem force students to prefer brands. The distinctiveness of fashion features such as newness of the brand is consistently associated with emotional expressions plays the strongest role in the buying behavior among consumers (Clavo and Marrero, 2009). Moreover, a research conducted by Duff (1999) investigated the teenagers footwear shopping were becoming more fashion conscious and were demanding products with more style. So, the finding of this study is related with the previous research results.

7.2 Recommendations

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

- Footwear manufacturers have to segment the students market effectively based on different profiles and tailor products based on variables such as for girls more emotional value footwear and for boys more on quality.
- Since emotional value and quality highly influence the purchase decision of footwear, domestic footwear manufacturers have to incorporate these variables when developing marketing strategies. 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' characteristics, footwear manufacturers have to consider differences when developing marketing strategies particularly product strategy. For instance footwear targeted girls has to maximize their feelings, has to be stylish, fashion and novelty. Whereas, for boys manufacturers have to provide reliable, durable and that fulfill functional benefits.
- Retailers' and manufacturers' promotion has to concentrate on the emotion of audiences and the message should reflect the quality of the brand. The promotion of footwear manufacturers should be tailored to specific customers' demographic variables. Messages for females should focus on the audiences' emotion; messages that are related with their feeling or affective highly motivate. For boys, messages that describe the products functional benefits, which explain the long

lasting features of the product, should be launched.

- When promoting girls' footwear, manufacturers should use celebrities who possess traits related with fashion and newness.

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