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### A Study of the Female Buying Behaviour of Handbags Shopping in South Delhi Malls, India

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#### KEYWORDS

Economic liberty, sales promotion, female buying behavior, handbag shopping.

#### A B S T R A C T

Female buying behavior has been a popular topic of research in the recent past due to the changing roles of women in the society in terms of economic liberty, psychological-behavioral changes, up rise of working women culture, increased market awareness, independent decision making and many more. This study is an initiative in the same direction concentrating on the female buying behavior for handbag shopping in selected malls in South Delhi. It has been undertaken to find the impact of age, income and marital status on their purchase behavior. Another objective of the study is to find whether sales promotion impacts handbags sale positively. The sample size constitutes 100 female shoppers, visiting the handbag stores in the malls of South Delhi. Sampling method chosen was simple random sampling. The sample is heterogeneous in nature as it includes females from different economic status, age groups and marital status. Primary data has been collected through getting the questionnaires filled in person which is further analysed statistically. The result shows that economically independent women buyers in the age group of 25-45 tend to spend more on handbag shopping. Also, married women are influenced by their spouse in the buying decision in comparison to the unmarried ones. Almost, 86% of the women preferred to buy handbags under the influence of sales promotion strategies. Hence, this study is useful for the marketers to appropriately implement the promotion mix in order to gain higher revenues.

#### Introduction

Products communicate differently to different people. The difference in value perception of a product is based on different factors in which demographical and

economic differences play a major role. Also, with cut throat competition in every industry, marketers have realized the potential of innovative promotional tools

having a significant impact on consumer behavior. Based on the demographical distinctions, specifically, age and marital status here, and the economic independence leveraged by the fairer sex, study of female buying behavior is emerging as one of the important subjects of study. Schiffman, Karak (1993) found that women joining the labour market and having more disposable income have become stronger regarding their purchasing capacity. Also, having access to market information gets them into the influence of promotional strategies used by the sellers. Since, organized retail sector is booming in India leading to the popularity of mall culture, women find it easier to have access to large variety of products under the same roof.

This shift in their behavior can also be contributed to the changing role of women in the Indian society. The gender which was not very powerful decades back in our society has come out to provide a very strong customer base due to various initiatives for women emancipation. These changes have brought women to the level of gaining economic and social liberty in decision making. This has led women emerge as a potential buyer to an equal degree, if not greater in comparison to their male counterparts.

In the recent times, Indian women do not find them restricted to shopping of conventional products for self beautification. They have become interested in exploring various options available. So, for them shopping in a mall is not simply restricted to apparels and foot wears. For them, handbag shopping has come out to be a significant part of their shopping list. In fact, carrying handbags on a regular basis has become an integral part of a metropolitan woman lifestyle, considering there is a huge increase in the number of working women. In fact, marketers nowadays offer handbags under

different brands, sizes, materials, colors and prices' realizing the level of attention women caters to the purchase of handbags shopping.

This study has been undertaken to study the female buying behavior for handbag shopping. The geographical segment chosen is South Delhi, precisely, some malls in South Delhi. There has been no known research with respect to handbag buying behavior of women in South Delhi malls. Therefore, this study is imperative in providing insights of female buying behavior for handbags shopping in order to influence turnover of this product category positively. A metropolitan woman is a significant buyer and learning about what guides her choice for handbag shopping can be very useful for the marketers selling the product.

The main objectives of this study to find out what impact age, income and marital status has on the female purchase decision of handbags. And also to find out whether promotional strategies lead to an increase in the sales of the handbags.

### **Literature review**

Mouillot(2013) conducted research on luxury Products to analyze the Curious Purchase Behavior of Gulf Women". A survey was conducted using flexible questionnaire over a sample size of 707 women. The survey took place over a 5-month period, starting in Eid 2012 and ending in January 2013. Women were tested in the Kingdom of Bahrain's main malls: Moda Mall, Seef Mall, and City Centre and it only focused on women who would walk out of a shop, holding a bag from the brand. The research showed that Gulf women essentially seek belonging to aspiration groups through the consumption of similar

products or recurrent luxury brands, most of them being of Western origin. It further showed that Gulf women switch from wearing their conventional clothing to wearing similar accessories, from premium brands, eventually ending in moving from one identity loss to another one.

Joy Kozar, Mary Lynn Damhorst, (2008) conducted research on "Older women's responses to current fashion models". The sample for this study consisted of 163 women between the ages of 60 and 80. Full-color photographs of fashion models were presented as stimuli. A questionnaire measuring participants' beliefs about the models, purchase intentions, perceived similarity with the models, and perceived fashion ability of the model's clothing was used. The Findings implied that participants perceived older looking models to be more attractive than younger models and indicated more likelihood of purchasing the clothing worn by the older models. Participants who perceived more similarity to the models also had more positive beliefs about the model's appearance and attractiveness, indicated a greater willingness to purchase the model's clothing, and perceived the model's clothing to be more fashionable.

Hirst, Omar (2007) published paper titled "Assessing Women's Apparel Shopping Behavior on the Internet". This investigation evaluated women's attitude as an overall inclination towards apparel shopping online via email questionnaire. 96 undergraduate female students studying business related courses in one of London universities' business school participated in focus groups and for the next stage, questionnaires were emailed to 1000 undergraduate female students in 3 universities in central London. Its findings suggest that women generally show positive attitudes towards shopping online for apparel. Women who shop for

apparel online are aware of some of the discouraging features of online shopping, but these features do not deter them from buying online.

Agarwal Shilpi, Aggrawal Amit (2012) A critical analysis of impact of pricing on consumer buying behavior in apparel retail sector in Mumbai city was done based on secondary and primary research .Primary data was collected through questionnaire filled by the consumers in Mumbai city; including; Greater Mumbai , Navi Mumbai as well as Thane. Stratified random sampling method was used .583 filled in questionnaires were finalized and were put for analysis using SPSS software package on various demographic parameters; viz; Age, Gender, Qualification, family Income and area of residence through a method of cross tabulation .The study establishes the fact that socio economic factors are important while deciding on shopping for apparels, the retailers need to work on the expectations of the consumers so as to maximize their value proposition. As the study envisages that branded segment's shopping is also influenced by pricing, the retailers can comprehend the study to frame their pricing and marketing strategies as well.

Swamynathan, Mansurali, Chandrasekhar Umesh (2013) wrote a paper titled "Mall mania: A study of factors influencing consumers' preference towards shopping malls in Coimbatore city" The paper focuses on the factors influencing the consumer preference towards malls in Coimbatore .The research design is descriptive and primary data were collected using a survey questionnaire .The sample consisted of 406 respondents and the sampling method was simple random sampling. The respondents were potential general public shopping in the malls. The data was analyzed using SPSS17. Paired t-test, factor analysis,

ANOVA and frequencies tests were performed. The study gives an insight into the people's preference towards malls. Coimbatoreans are in josh with the presence of malls because the place is considered as "one stop solution" and also, a place to hang out. Mall culture attracts people to a large extent and tempts them to visit frequently. Gen Y is demanding a huge range of value-additions and malls have proven to be the single panacea to address customer expectations.

Kumar Anil, Arora Mani (2012) have presented a paper titled "A study of retail space analysis of entertainment industry" to present a survey of customer preferences of entertainment in different malls of NCR and analysis of space allocated to these malls. A survey questionnaire was designed and administered to 200 customers and 10 different malls managers.

Data was collected through e-mails and open ended face-to-face and telephonic interviews. Secondary data was collected from published articles, industry reports and internet. Data collected was collated in SPSS and analyzed. The study concluded that malls have emerged as a popular mode of entertainment. Penetration of malls for entertainment is very high and hence, can be a prospective market, since more and more of entertainment options are now included like World of wonders, Adventure Island, Fun zone for kids, Bowling Alley etc. People prefer going to different malls depending on their perception of that mall w.r.t. deriving entertainment. Also, gaming was seen as the most popular mode of entertainment.

Kakati Pathak Rinalini, Ahmed Shazeed (2014) presented a paper titled "Rural market dynamics and product penetration". This paper aimed at studying and identifying

market segments available based on rural values, attitudes and lifestyles (VALs). The study makes an attempt to develop a consumer buying behavior scale both for the Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) and durable products; and identify and access the product categories and penetration level of a few identified products in the rural areas.

The research design is both exploratory and descriptive with a sample size of 400 taken from two important districts of North-east India. The study reveals six clusters with distinctively different VALs characteristics. Pricing, availability and promotion are found to significantly affect the purchase decision of FMCG's; further with body and hair care products having the highest penetration among rural consumers. Whereas product levels and availability contribute positively in case of purchase of CDs with bicycles and mobile phones having highest penetration among durables in rural markets.

Komaladevi, Sakthivel (2014) presented a paper titled "Brand awareness and brand selection skill of women towards durable products in Erode district: empirical evidence". This study was undertaken to measure the brand awareness and brand selection skill of women towards durable products. The sample size of the study was 600 women respondents residing in Erode district and the sample respondents were selected using convenience sampling technique. Various statistical tools such as t-test for independent sample and one-way ANOVA, reliability/item analysis, Principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation, canonical correlation analysis and linear discriminant analysis were used to analyze the primary data. The results showed that relating brand awareness and brand selection skill with socio-demographic variables, it is concluded that the aged

women married to less educated are highly aware of quality and warranty but less aware of packaging design and advertisements of their brand of durable products.

Between unemployed and employed women, the brand awareness and brand selection skill is significantly higher among employed. The women who were well aware and able to select their brand of durable product based on ease of maintenance and convenience of use were likely to be employed.

Hyde Manish Anukool, Ubeja Kour Satnam, Saxena Arun, Sharma Gulnar and Sharma Ruchi (2014) presented a paper titled "Effect of promotion mix on consumer behavior in shopping malls". It aimed at studying the effect of promotion mix on consumer behavior w.r.t. age, gender and income levels. The research design was exploratory and descriptive. The sample size was 200 respondents, who were students, housewives, self-employed and working people from Indore district. The sampling was convenient sampling and questionnaires were distributed to 200 respondents but finally 180 completely filled questionnaires were received.

Tools used for data analysis were KMO and Bartlett's test, factor analysis, t-test and ANOVA. The study revealed that gender plays very important role in consumer buying behavior regarding purchasing of any product from shopping malls.

In this study, it was found that females were more prone to buy products from shopping malls, especially, when there was a promotion scheme going on. It was also

found that advertising also played a vital role in consumer behavior wrt all age groups, income levels and gender. It was identified that convenience, attitude of sales personnel, personal selling do not play any role in consumer buying behavior.

The present study is thus, useful to fill in the gaps of the previous studies. There is no known research done to study women shopping of handbags in south Delhi malls. Hence, this study aims at providing information about how age, gender and income impacts their purchase behavior plus, whether application of promotion mix tools bring a push in revenue generation from handbags sale to the sellers.

### **Research Methodology**

It is an exploratory research with a sample size of 100 female shoppers, visiting the handbag stores in the malls of South Delhi. Sampling method chosen was simple random sampling. The sample is heterogeneous in nature as it includes females from different economic status, age groups and marital status.

Questionnaires were distributed to and filled by females who were found visiting the stores of handbags in the above mentioned malls. The consumers were contacted in person. Enough time was given to them to think over the answers for the questions to have reliability of response.

Details regarding economic and behavioral characteristics of the consumers, consumers' awareness, buying behavior and preferences for buying handbags from the specific malls were taken as part of the survey.

**Data analysis and Interpretation**

Sample size: 100 female respondents

**Demographic details in terms of age**

Age group (in years)	Frequencies	Percentage(%)
Below 25	26	26
25-35	36	36
35-45	21	21
45-55	9	9
Above 55	8	8

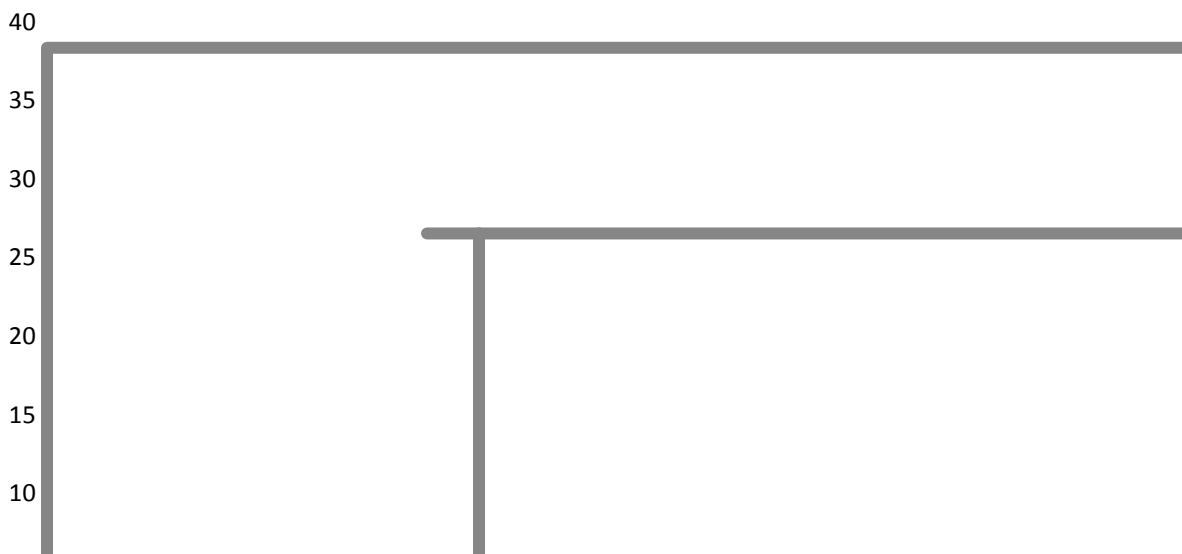
**Marital status**

Status	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
Married	65	65
Unmarried	35	35

**Income details**

Income (in Rs per month)	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
Less than 20,000	36	36
20,000-30,000	37	37
30,000-40,000	12	12
40,000-50,000	10	10
Above 50,000	5	5

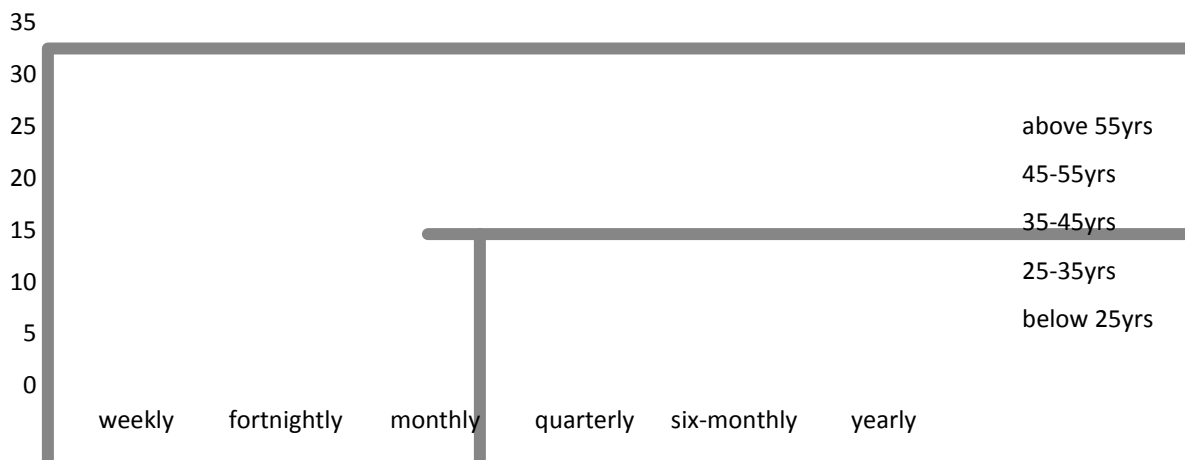
**Relationship between demographic and economic data in the present study:**



**Frequency of visit to the mall for shopping**

The survey conducted showed that maximum number of female shoppers, that is, 30% of total female respondents paid quarterly visits to the malls for shopping whereas only 7% of the female respondents visited the malls on weekly basis for shopping. 13% of the respondents witnessed visiting the malls fortnightly, 21% monthly, 17% six-monthly and 12% yearly for

shopping. Women in the age group of 25-35 years showed the highest frequency in visiting the malls. Out of the total number of females visiting the malls on weekly basis, 71.42% belonged to the age group of 25-35 years and remaining belonged to 35-45 years age group. On the other hand, females belonging to the age group above 55 years showed lowest frequency in their mall visits, with none visiting the malls on weekly or fortnightly basis.



**Most preferred place for shopping a handbag**



The data collected and analyzed represents maximum number of female buyers preferring malls over streets, shops, supermarkets, online purchase and other options. In fact, not a single woman buyer preferred a supermarket for the purchase of a handbag. Again, out of the total respondents preferring malls, a maximum of 48.21% belonged to the age-group of 25-35

years, 25% were in the age group of below 25years, and 17.86% were in 35-45 years band, 5.36% from 45-55years age and the lowest, that is, 3.57% from the age group above 55 years. Hence, female buyers from the age group of 25-35 years showed maximum inclination for malls to buy handbags and the minimum inclination was shown by female buyers above 55 years.

### **Do you buy handbags from malls?**



When asked whether the respondents actually buy handbags from the malls, 98% of them replied in affirmative and only 2% denied buying handbags from malls. This shows that majority of the females respondents investigated have a positive buying behavior approach for handbags shopping from malls.

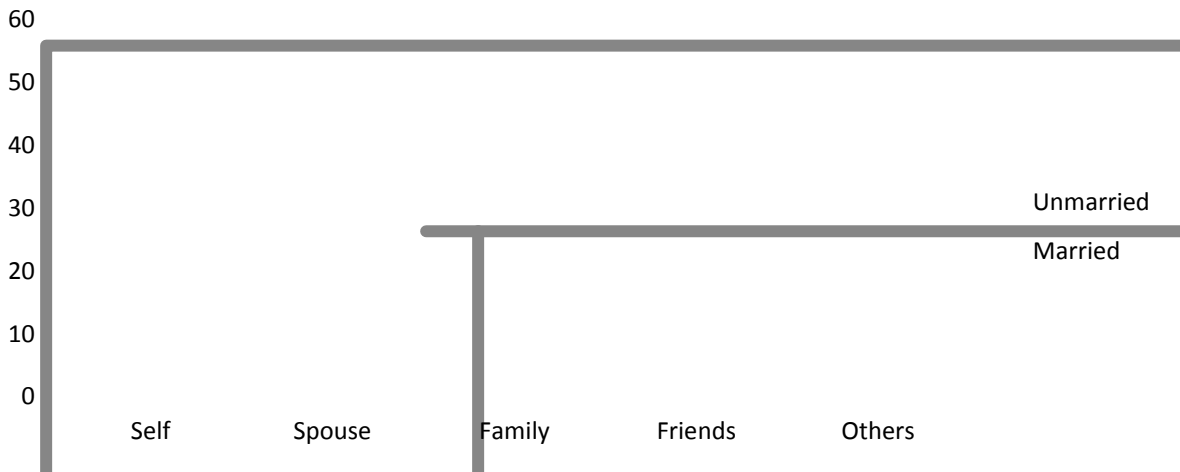
### **Economic liberty status while making a purchase decision**

According to the graphical representation, 90% of the females agreed having economic liberty while making a purchase decision and only 10% of them denied having an independent economic liberty status.





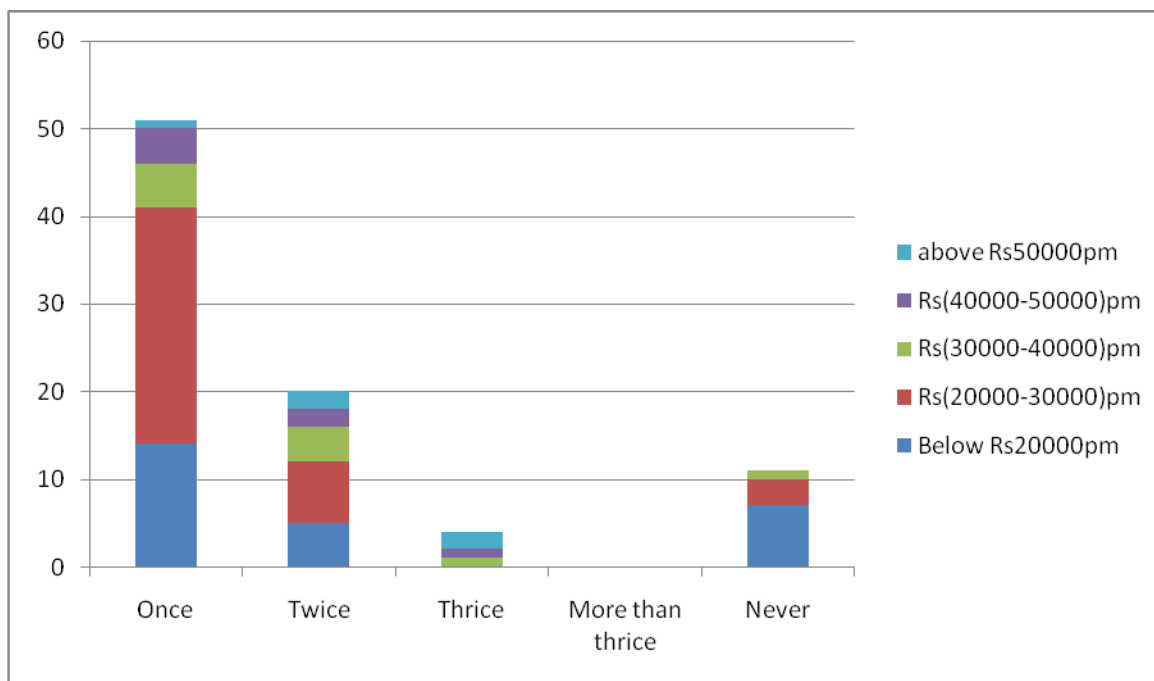
**Who influences your purchase?**



According to the survey conducted, it was found that 65% of the total number of respondents was married and the remaining 35% belong to the unmarried marital status. When asked about who influences their purchase decision, 84.62% of the total number of married females admitted getting influenced by their spouse. Only, 7.7% of the married females were found to make this

decision on self-dependent basis. Remaining number of married females either got influenced by family or friends for their purchase decision. On the other hand, 71.43% of unmarried females made their purchase decision independently under no influence and the remaining showed making this decision under the influence of family or friends.

**Frequency of handbag purchase from mall? (Yearly basis)**

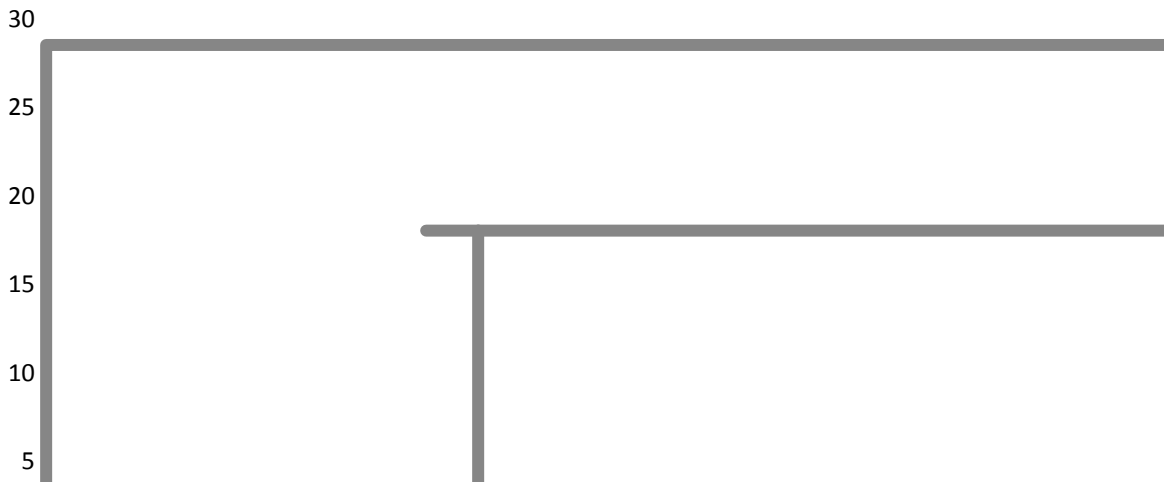


Most of the females were found to purchase handbags from malls once in a year which comes out to be 64% of the total respondents. 21% of them bought it twice and 4% bought it thrice in a year from malls. None amongst them purchased a handbag more than three times from the malls and 11% of them never bought handbags from malls. Out of the 64% who was found to bought handbags from malls once in an year, 42.29%, 21.88% , 7.82%, 6.25% and 1.56% belonged to the income status of Rs(20000-30000)per month, below Rs20000 per month, Rs (30000-40000)per month, Rs(40000-50000)per month and above Rs 50000 per month respectively . When asked about purchasing a handbag thrice from a mall, 50% of the females who agreed to this

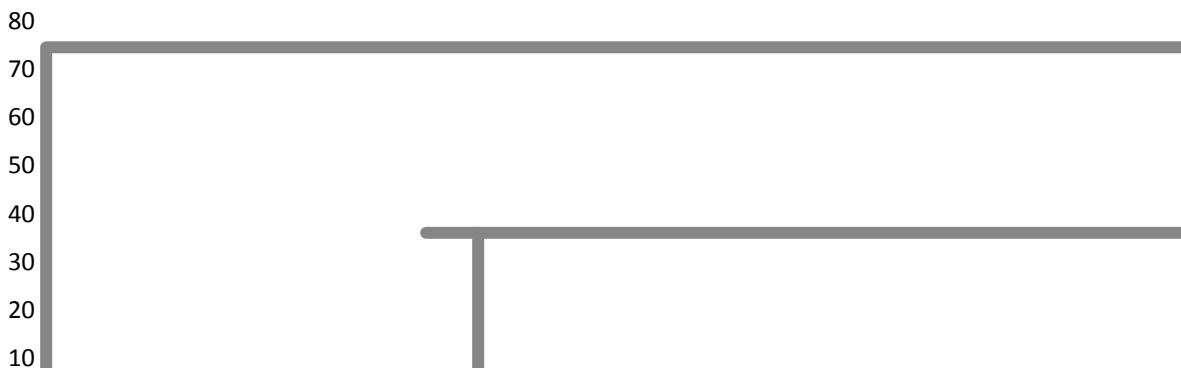
belonged to income status of more than Rs50000per month earnings , 25% belonged to Rs40000-50000 per month income bracket and the remaining 25% belonged to Rs(30000-40000)per month income group.

**The most important source of information for market awareness**

26% of the females respondents supported advertisements being the most important source of market awareness. 25% said TV is the main media for market awareness, 18% advocated newspapers being most important source of market awareness, 11% agreed for newspapers, 6% went with hoardings and only 1% considered radio being the most important tool of creating market awareness.



**Level of importance of promotion techniques while making purchase decision**



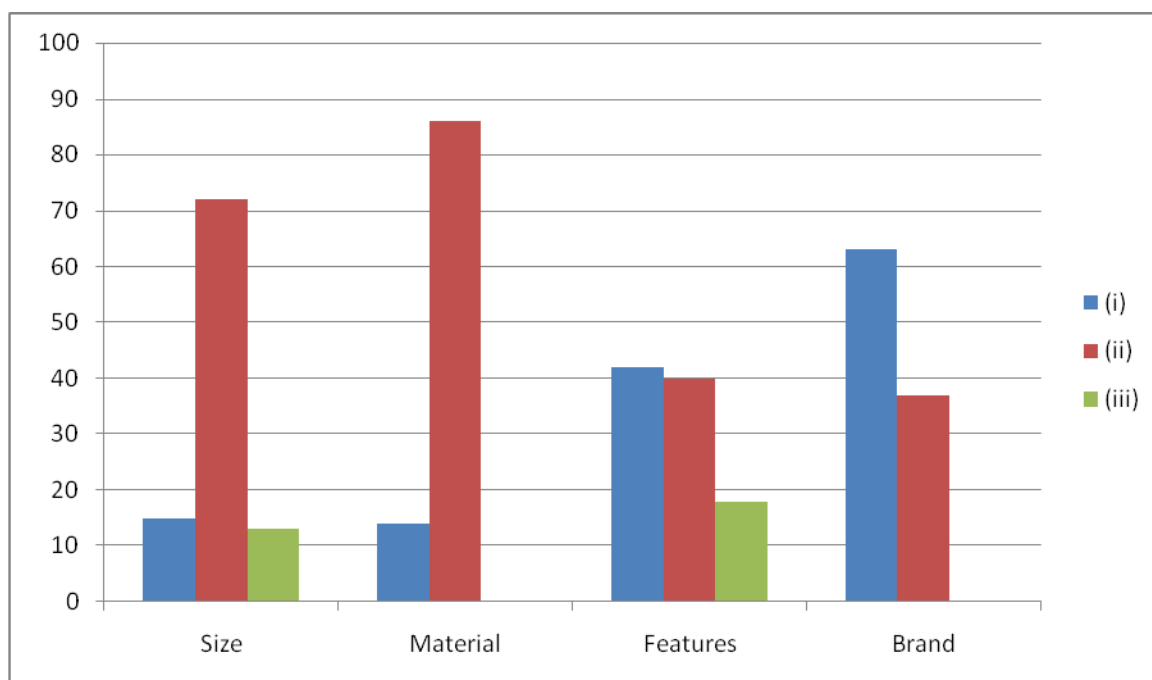
70% of the respondents found sales promotion techniques to be important for the purchase decision. 20% felt they are very

important, 8% found them to be less important and according to only 2% of the respondents, they are not important.

**Type of bags preference**

Criteria	(i)	(ii)	(iii)
SIZE	Large	Medium	Small
No. of respondents	15	72	13
MATERIAL	Leather	Non-leather	
No. of respondents	14	86	
FEATURES	Bags with pockets	Good appearance	Special features
No. of respondents	42	40	18
BRAND	Branded	Non-branded	
No. of respondents	63	37	

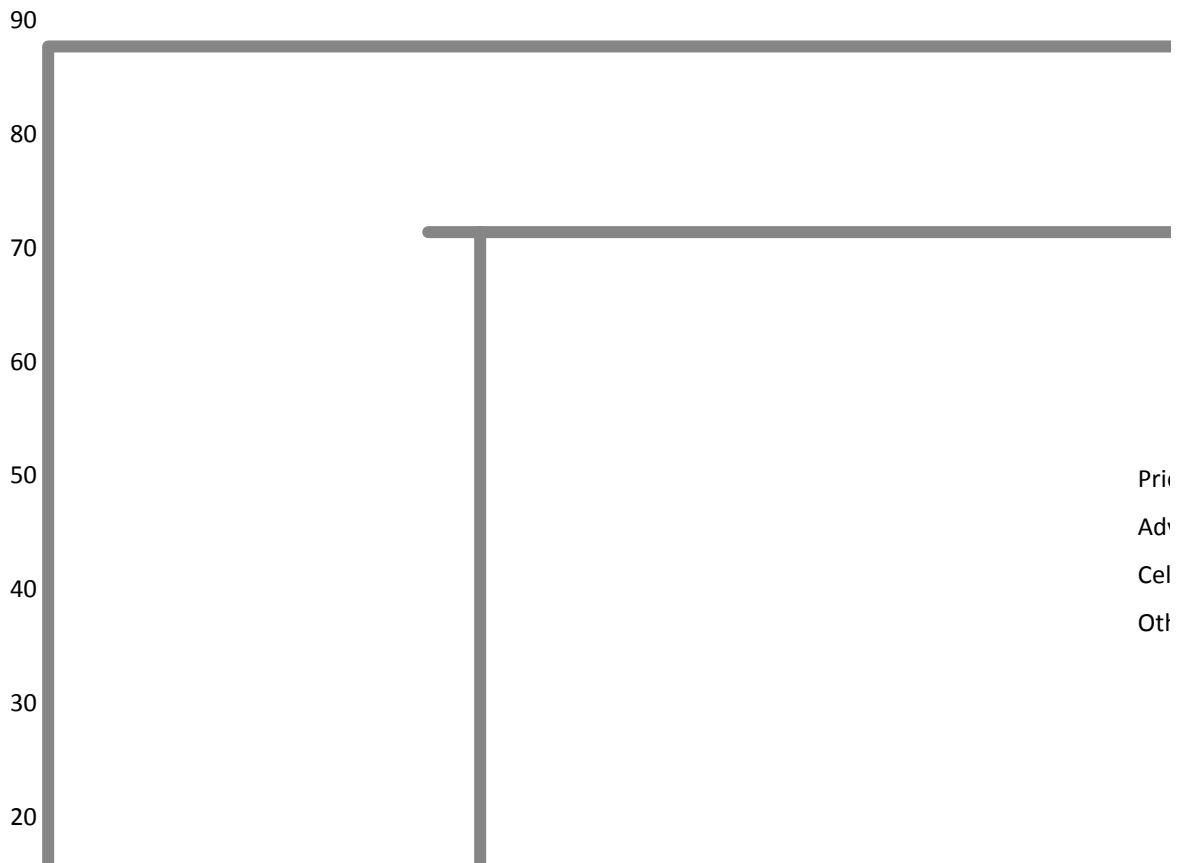
This table has been depicted graphically below:



When asked about the preference for the kind of handbags the female buyers prefer; based on size, maximum number of respondents preferred medium-sized bags. Only, 15% preferred large bags and 13% preferred small bags. The second parameter being material, 86% of the respondents were found inclined towards buying non-leather bags and remaining 14% preferred leather

bags. Considering, the preference according to features, 42% of them favoured bags with pockets, 40% went for good looks and only 18% chose bags with different or special features. Another important fact about their purchase behavior was highlighted when 63% of them found to prefer branded bags against the 37% of respondents shopping for non-branded handbags.

**Scale of 1-5 showing the importance giving to the following parameters for buying handbags**



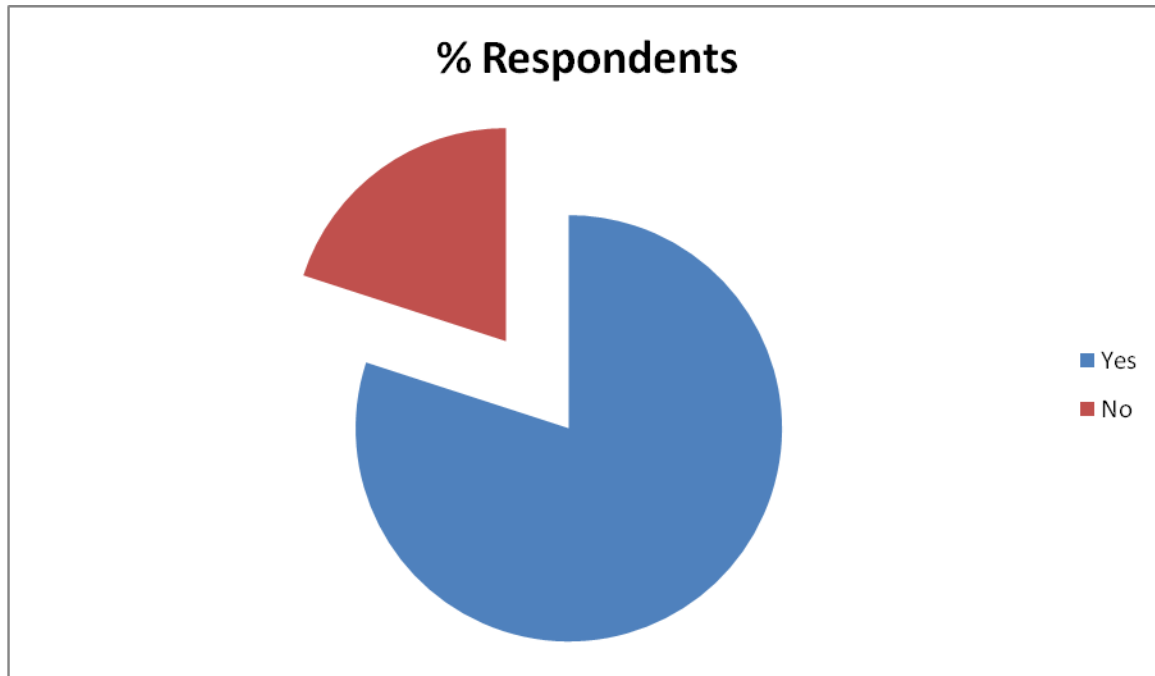
While analyzing the female buying behavior being impacted by various marketing mix elements on a scale of 1-5 in the order of their significance (1 ; lowest,5 ;highest) it was seen that 60% of the respondents gave highest importance to price and only 3% considered price to be of lowest importance. The next element being advertisements, 42% agreed that they are most important and only 4% believed advertisements to be of the

lowest importance. Then, referring to celebrity endorsements affecting buying behavior, 34% of respondents found it to be of intermediate importance and 10% said it's of lowest significance. When asked about the importance of various sales promotion strategies, 78% of the females marked it at "5" on the rating scale and 0% said it's of the lowest importance.

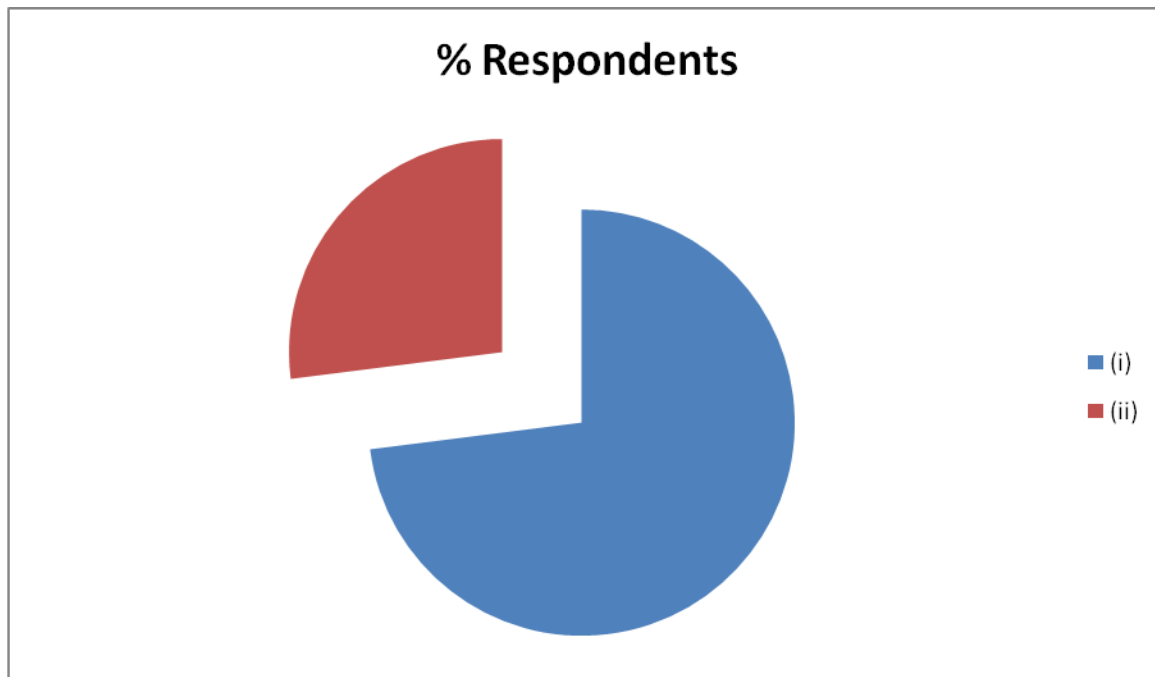
**Change in buying preference due to better promotion by competing brands**

When enquired whether the buying preferences change if there is better sales promotions by other brands, 80% of the respondents agreed and only 20% of them

disagreed. This shows that better promotion tools by competitors lead to massive shift in consumer shopping preferences.



**Preference from the given choices; (i) More in number, lower in price  
(ii) Less in number, higher in price**

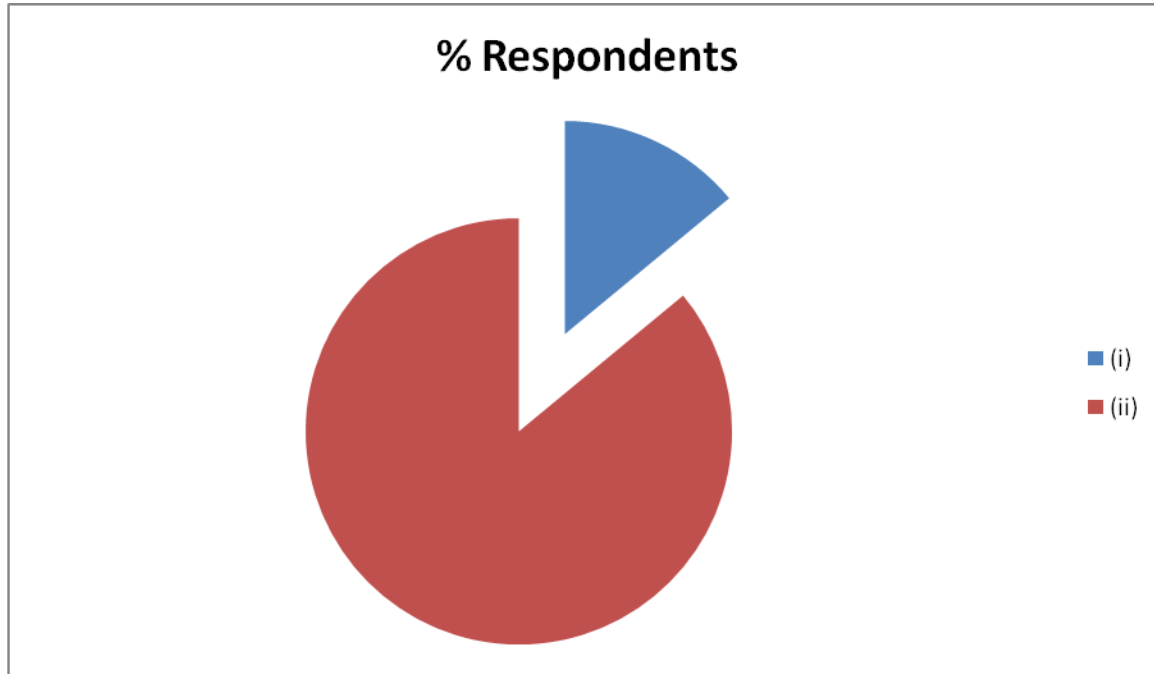


73% of the female respondents preferred to buy more number of handbags of/at lower price. On the contrary, 27% of the

respondents preferred buying less number of bags but of higher price.

**Comparative situational Preference for buying handbags in the following situations:**

- (i) As and when needed
- (ii) At sales promotion (delayed purchase)



When asked about the situation of purchase, 86% of the respondents were found to make purchases of handbags under the influence of sales promotion schemes and only, 14% of them made need-based handbag purchases.

**Findings and Conclusion**

From the responses given by the female respondents shopping in the malls, there have been the following findings with respect to the research objectives:

The highest frequency of mall visits was shown by the females in the age group of 25-45 years. Females find malls to be the most preferred place for shopping and again, the maximum number of females who showed this preference belonged to the age group of 25-45 years. The first two findings show that females in the age group from 25-

45 seem to be enthusiastic about their handbags shopping from malls.

Most of the respondents in the study found themselves economically independent and on relating their economic status with their yearly frequency of purchase, highest frequency of purchase was shown by females earning income above Rs50,000 per month and the lowest frequency shown by those earning below Rs20000 per month. This shows economic status has a directly proportional impact on the purchases made.

Also, marital status has a direct impact on purchase decision as maximum number of married females were impacted by spouse in their purchase decision and maximum of unmarried ones were all by themselves.

Also, a very high positive impact of promotional techniques was seen on female

buying behavior. Most of them were impacted by price, advertisements, celebrity endorsements, sales offers and other sales promotion tools.

In fact, most of the respondents admitted changing their purchase preferences based on better promotion by other brands and they even delay their purchase decision for the sales promotions to be offered.

Hence, it can be conclude that female buying behavior varies depending on age, income and marital status. Also, females tend to get influenced by promotion strategies of marketers while making their handbags purchase from malls.

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