

EMOTIONAL MOTIVATORS AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IN THE CLOTHING INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

Regarding the widely spread view on the significance of emotions that affect consumer behaviour in general, this manuscript explores the influence of emotional motivators on the purchasing process in the textile industry. The aim of this study was to identify the emotions that have the strongest effect on consumers when purchasing clothing products. The empirical research was conducted from January to March 2022 on a sample of 225 respondents in the Republic of Serbia. The participants answered questions about the positive and negative emotions that occurred during the purchasing process in the textile industry. The survey indicated that the majority of respondents recognise the importance of emotions in their buying behaviour related to clothing. The most dominant emotions affecting their decisions were positive emotions, with trust and joy identified as the most important. On the other hand, fear was the strongest negative emotion recognised in the survey. The research also indicated a significant difference in emotional motivators affecting male and female respondents.

Keywords: clothing industry, consumer behaviour, consumer motivation, emotions, purchasing behaviour.

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INTRODUCTION

Regarding the widely spread view on the significance of emotions that affect consumer behaviour, this manuscript explores the influence of emotional motivators on the purchasing process in the clothing industry. The starting point of this research was the problem of the lack of literature and studies dealing with emotions that influence consumers when deciding on clothing products. While most studies on the emotional aspects of consumer behaviour in the textile industry have analysed the emotional meanings of specific textiles or colours, or fashion emotional branding, this paper provides insight into the effects of positive and negative emotions on the purchasing process in the industry.

The empirical research was conducted from January to March 2022 on a sample of 225 respondents (51.3% male, 48.2% female) in the Republic of Serbia. The aim was to identify the most important emotions that motivate consumers when purchasing clothing products, as well as to analyse gender differences in emotions. The questionnaire included fifteen positive and negative emotions that were, according to the literature review, recognised as the most common in consumer behaviour within the fashion and textile industry. Although the study was conducted only in the clothing industry, the survey can also be applied in all segments of the textile industry or in other industries.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

According to the literature review, the first steps in exploring emotions affecting consumer behaviour were made in the 1970s. Oxenfeldt [1] stated that customers develop feelings toward certain stores which affect their perceptions. Another significant contribution to scientific research on emotions was made by Russell and Mehrabian [2], who introduced the PAD model representing emotions in three fundamental dimensions: valence (positive/pleasurable or negative/unpleasurable), arousal (engaged or not engaged), and dominance (the degree of control that a person has over their affective states). The model was later used in different studies on emotions that affect consumer behaviour [3][4]. Furthermore, Plutchik [5] identified “primary” emotions, which included joy, trust, fear, surprise, sadness, disgust, anger, and anticipation. In addition, the classification made by Smith and Ellsworth [6] presented cognitive appraisals associated with fifteen common specific emotions in six dimensions such as pleasantness, certainty, self-responsibility, anticipated effort, attention, and situational control. Their scale of emotions was also used in the exploration of consumer behaviour [7]. In addition, Martin, O’Neill, Hubbard & Palmer [8] indicated the influence of emotions on customer satisfaction. Magids, Zorfas & Leemon [9] recognised hundreds of “emotional motivators” that drive consumer behaviour (e.g., a desire to feel a sense of belonging, to succeed in life, enjoy a sense of well-being, protect the environment, or feel secure). Furthermore, Zorfas & Leemon [10] concluded that the most effective way to maximise customer value is to move beyond customer satisfaction and connect with customers at an emotional level. Solomon [11] pointed out the importance of affect in consumer behaviour, which he described as the experience of emotionally laden states, ranging from moods to emotions.

This research is based on classifications that include positive and negative emotions. Izard [12] identified ten emotion components (interest, joy, surprise, sadness, anger, disgust, contempt, fear, shame, and guilt) that have strongly influenced the theory of consumer behaviour. However, the dominance of negative emotions was evident in this approach. Nowadays, when analysing the impact of emotions on consumer behaviour, researchers have been more focused on positive emotions and their effects on advertising, marketing decisions, branding, etc. Moreover, they have particularly emphasised positive emotions such as happiness, pride, hope, affiliation, peacefulness, and love [13]. On the other hand, the most common negative emotions that affect consumers are anger, disgust, envy, guilt, embarrassment, sadness, and anxiety [11][12][13].

Throughout history, clothes have often been associated with emotions. Examples of ceremonies such as weddings or baptisms indicate that people have been affected by different emotions when choosing clothes and textiles for these occasions. Another scientific view on the relationship between emotions and clothes was presented in the works of [16][17] who explored the emotional meanings of textiles (cotton, flannel, lace, linen, tulle, and wool). From a marketing perspective, Venkatesh, Vivekanandan & Balaji [18] analysed multi-sensory aspects and symbolic associations of clothing, demonstrating that clothing attributes or garment features can affect positive and negative emotions. Another point of view was

provided by Moody et al. [19] in their exploratory study, which indicated the psychological profiles of fashion consumers in relation to clothing preference, mood, and emotions. An innovative approach to the textile industry was made by Kim [20] who pointed out the importance of evaluating consumer emotions in developing scented clothing using microcapsules.

Research on emotional motivators that influence consumer behaviour in the textile industry is often related to works dealing with the fashion industry and clothing branding [21][22][23]. In addition, it should be noted that emotional branding as an approach significantly differs from traditional product-oriented branding by emphasising the importance of consumers' culture and personality. The reason for emotional branding in fashion, Youn-Kyung Kim and Pauline Sullivan [22] see in the fact that it is traditionally associated with experiential, symbolic, or hedonic products. According to Pine [24], a person's choice of clothing is strongly dependent upon his or her emotional state. Furthermore [25] explored sexual stimuli related to the clothing industry on the example of women's dress. A significant study conducted among young adults indicated that people present their sexual identities and desires through their clothes and textiles [26]. Another important issue regarding emotions in the clothing industry is the context of luxury fashion. De Barnier & Roux [27] recognised fear, anger, and sadness as the most dominant negative emotions associated with luxury consumption in fashion. Similar results came from research on customer emotions in luxury retail, which indicated anger as the most influential emotion, followed by happiness, comfort, and sophistication [28].

METHODS AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

The starting point in this study was the assumption that human emotions are significant motivators in consumer behaviour. This assumption was related to the study of emotional motivators that affect the purchasing process in the clothing industry. In accordance with this, the following hypotheses were defined:

H0: Emotions have a significant impact on purchasing decisions in the clothing industry.

H01: In the purchasing process of clothing products, positive emotions have a stronger influence on consumer decisions.

H02: There is a significant difference between male and female consumers in the types of emotions that affect their buying behaviour in the clothing industry.

Data were collected from January to March 2022 on a sample of 225 respondents in the Republic of Serbia. The questionnaire consisted of questions about positive and negative emotions that are most associated with the clothing industry. Respondents used a five-point scale (0 = not important at all; 1 = of little importance; 2 = of average importance; 3 = very important; 4 = essential) when ranking the importance of specific emotions in their purchasing process. In interpreting the obtained data, the SPSS program was used, with its functions of descriptive statistics, t-test, and correlation.

The research combines a literature review and an empirical approach to explore the impact of emotional motivators on consumer behaviour in the clothing industry. The theoretical framework is based on the literature review as the most dominant descriptive method in the paper. The empirical study included a survey of 225 respondents who ranked the importance of specific positive and negative emotions in their purchasing processes of clothing products. The questionnaire was developed according to dominant studies dealing with emotions in consumer behaviour [12][13][18][27]. The survey included the following emotions: pride, sadness, anger, disgust, embarrassment, guilt, happiness, joy, hope, love, peacefulness, envy, fear, trust, and sexuality. During the statistical data processing, the following techniques and methods were implemented: descriptive statistical measures (frequencies and percentages, arithmetic means), measures of variability, and the correlation technique. Pearson correlation was applied to find the relations between the emotions included in this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The sample included 225 respondents (51.3% male, 48.2% female). Regarding the age structure, the majority of respondents (48.2%) were between 31 and 40 years old.

Table 1 presents the statistics of respondents' answers regarding the importance of emotions in their purchasing process of clothing products. According to the presented data, the participants recognised the importance of emotions in general ($M = 3.35$, $SD = .854$). The literature dealing with this topic indicates a significant publication by Candy [29] who implied that weights, textures, colours, and shapes of garments can evoke memories and emotions. In recent studies, the emotional aspect of the purchasing process in the clothing industry has also been related to digital marketing communications and the use of social networks and influencers [30][31]. Furthermore, the study conducted by Papadopoulou et al. [32] indicated the importance of consumers' emotions when developing sustainability awareness regarding clothing products in fast fashion.

The highest importance of emotions in our survey was registered for positive emotions, such as trust ($M = 3.3333$, $SD = .931$), joy ($M = 3.133$, $SD = .954$), and happiness ($M = 2.8400$, $SD = .973$). These findings can be compared with a study conducted by Kwon [35] who identified pleasure as one of the most dominant factors affecting the shopping of clothing. Within the negative emotions, fear ($M = 2.5956$, $SD = 1.146$) and anger ($M = 2.1467$, $SD = 1.228$) were identified as the most important. The emotions with the lowest level of importance for respondents were sadness ($M = .1920$, $SD = .4675$), disgust ($M = .2267$, $SD = .5647$), and embarrassment ($M = .3378$, $SD = .6954$). However, findings presented in a study conducted in South Africa (2018) showed the dominance of negative emotions such as disgust and sadness in purchasing clothing products. In accordance with the stated findings presented in Table 2, it can be concluded that hypotheses H0 and H01 were confirmed in this study.

Table 1. The importance of emotions in the purchasing process of clothing products

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Importance of emotions in purchasing textile products	225	3.3556	.85449	.05697
Pride	225	1.1067	1.04249	.06950
Anger	225	2.1467	1.22868	.08191
Sadness	224	.1920	.46754	.03124
Embarrassment	225	.3378	.69542	.04636
Disgust	225	.2267	.56474	.03765
Guilt	225	.6400	1.10162	.07344
Happiness	225	2.8400	.97340	.06489
Hope	225	1.9200	1.28966	.08598
Love	225	2.7244	1.00649	.06710
Fear	225	2.5956	1.14602	.07640
Peacefulness	225	2.0756	1.16442	.07763
Envy	225	1.2489	1.08575	.07238
Joy	225	3.1333	.95431	.06362
Trust	225	3.3333	.93063	.06204
Fashioning sexuality	225	2.5867	1.04489	.06966

Source: Authors' calculations in SPSS

The relations between respondents' gender and the importance of emotions in purchasing clothing products ($N = 225$) were analysed using Pearson correlation, as illustrated in Table 2. The findings indicated a positive moderate correlation ($r = .635$). Therefore, further research was oriented towards gender differences in respondents' answers.

Table 2. Correlations between gender and the importance of emotions in purchasing clothing products

		Importance of emotions in purchasing clothing products	Gender
Importance of emotions in purchasing clothing products	Pearson Correlation	1	.635**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	225	225
Gender	Pearson Correlation	.635**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	225	225

Source: Authors' calculations in SPSS

The analysis (Tables 3 and 4) indicated that female respondents assigned higher importance to emotions in their purchasing decisions for clothing products ($N = 109$, $M = 3.825$, $SD = .381$) than male participants ($N = 116$, $M = 2.905$, $SD = .922$), $p = .000 < .05$, $t = -9.66$ (Table 5). Similarly [33] stated that the sensory and emotional dimensions of the aesthetic experience affect female consumers in the decision-making process of apparel products.

Table 3. Group statistics: gender and the importance of emotions in purchasing clothing products

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Importance of emotions in purchasing clothing products	male	116	2.9052	.92293	.08569
	female	109	3.8257	.38113	.03651

Source: Authors' calculations in SPSS

Table 4. Independent samples test for the importance of emotions in purchasing clothing products and gender

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Importance of emotions in purchasing clothing products	Equal variances assumed	50.616	.000	-9.666	223	.000	-.92052	.09523	-1.10818	-.73285
	Equal variances not assumed			-9.883	155.090	.000	-.92052	.09314	-1.10451	-.73652

Source: Authors' calculations in SPSS

Table 5. Gender difference in negative emotions

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Anger	male	116	1.5690	1.13616	.10549
	female	109	2.7615	1.00829	.09658
Fear	male	116	2.1983	1.12845	.10477
	female	109	3.0183	1.00905	.09665

Source: Authors' calculations in SPSS

Table 6. Independent Samples Test: gender and negative emotions

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Fear	Equal variances assumed	7.664	.006	-5.733	223	.000	-.82007	.14304	-1.10196	-.53819
	Equal variances not assumed			-5.753	222.462	.000	-.82007	.14254	-1.10098	-.53916
Anger	Equal variances assumed	7.034	.009	-8.307	223	.000	-1.19250	.14355	-1.47540	-.90961
	Equal variances not assumed			-8.338	222.286	.000	-1.19250	.14302	-1.47435	-.91065

Source: Authors' calculations in SPSS

Table 7. Gender differences in positive emotions

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Trust	Male	116	3.0690	1.13998	.10584
	female	109	3.6147	.50750	.04861
Joy	Male	116	2.8448	1.15422	.10717
	female	109	3.4404	.53457	.05120
Happiness	Male	116	2.3793	1.06856	.09921
	female	109	3.3028	.46157	.04421

Source: Authors' calculations in SPSS

Table 8. Independent Samples Test: gender and positive emotions

Independent Samples Test: gender and positive emotions										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
				F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
		Lower	Upper							
Trust	Equal variances assumed	37.094	.000	-4.588	223	.000	-.54571	.11893	-.78009	-.31133
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.685	161.001	.000	-.54571	.11647	-.77573	-.31570
Joy	Equal variances assumed	34.885	.000	-4.914	223	.000	-.59554	.12120	-.83437	-.35670
	Equal variances not assumed			-5.014	164.375	.000	-.59554	.11877	-.83005	-.36103
Happiness	Equal variances assumed	57.627	.000	-8.322	223	.000	-.92344	.11097	-1.14213	-.70476
	Equal variances not assumed			-8.502	158.548	.000	-.92344	.10862	-1.13797	-.70892

Source: Authors' calculations in SPSS

Further analyses included gender differences in the most dominant emotions from the survey (Tables 5 and 6). Within the negative emotions, anger ($N = 109$, $M = 2.76$, $SD = 1.008$, $p = .009 < .05$) and fear ($N = 109$, $M = 3.018$, $SD = 1.009$, $p = .006 < .05$) were recognised as more important for female participants. In a study conducted by Plant et al. [36] it was indicated that fear is a gender-stereotyped emotion related to women, while anger is more often experienced and expressed by men. However, different findings by Kasambala et al. [34] identified disgust and sadness as dominant emotions that trigger female purchasing decisions in the clothing industry. The analysis of dominant positive emotions in the study (Tables 7 and 8) indicated significant gender differences as well. For female respondents, higher importance was registered for emotions such as trust ($N = 109$, $M = 3.6147$, $SD = .5075$, $p = .000 < .05$), joy ($N = 109$, $M = 3.4404$, $SD = .534$, $p = .000 < .05$), and happiness ($N = 109$, $M = 3.3028$, $SD = .4615$, $p = .000 < .05$). In accordance with the stated findings, it can be concluded that female consumers from the sample are more affected by both positive and negative emotions during the purchasing process of clothing products compared to male respondents. In this way, hypothesis H02 was confirmed in the study.

CONCLUSION

The findings presented in this survey, which was conducted on 225 adult participants (51.3% male, 48.2% female), indicate that emotions significantly affect consumer behaviour in the clothing industry. The study identified positive emotions such as trust and joy as the most dominant in the consumer purchasing process. Negative emotions were recognised as less important, except for the emotion of fear. However, the survey was limited to only fifteen of the most common emotions in consumer behaviour, noting that future research should consider an extended list of emotions. In addition, the study found a significant difference ($p < .05$) between male and female consumers, indicating that women assigned

higher importance to both positive and negative emotions in their purchasing decisions. The research presented in this manuscript was conducted only in the clothing industry, but the survey can be repeated in different segments of the textile industry or in other industries as well, contributing to further scientific research on emotional motivators in consumer behaviour.

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