

Fashion Customer's Purchase Intent Research Based on Natural Observation in Store

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Abstract

Using naturally observation investigation method, 72 groups of customers who are shopping in department store have been observed and analyzed. According to the data, the relationship between shopping actions and shopping result has high correlation. 5 kinds of shopping actions show correlativity with purchase result. Finally, 'IL-IT evaluation mode' is set out to measure consumer purchase intent.

Keywords: natural observation, garment, customer, purchase intent, evaluation

1. Introduction

Since the end of the twentieth century, many scholars had studied fashion consumer's behavior. One definition of consumer behavior is "The study of individuals, groups, or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, use, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society (Michael, Lu Taihong, & Yang Xiaoyan, 2009)."

Questionnaire investigation was used as common way in this kind of research. Shopping actions are the most pivotal process in consumer behavior (Jeffrey, Eric, & Peter, 2005). Fashion consumer, as a special consumer group, pays a lot of attention to shopping experience. Consumer gains first experience of brand and product in store, and decide purchase or not (Nicole, 2000). Since 1987, Paco Underhill has begun to observe consumer's shopping behavior using naturally observation method (Liang Lanzhi, 2005). He effectively develops the form of common consumable selling through investigation. This naturally observation investigation method means observing consumers who have no awareness to be involved in this investigation, so that consumers can act naturally (Parco, 2004). It's difficult to observe consumer's purchase intent directly. So consumer's shopping actions and purchase result are observed and analyzed to discuss the shopping actions which can be used to evaluate consumer's purchase intent.

2. Fractionize Purchasing Actions

According to normal action order in department store, fashion consumer's purchasing process is divided into 12 continuous actions, which are going into the store, touching garment, seeing tag, picking out size, trying on, talking with sales, looking into mirror, decision-making, paying, resting and leaving. Meanwhile, no all actions can be seen from one customer. The actions order can be different depending on different customers.

It is found in a pre-investigation that "picking out size" action cannot be an effective factor since it has the same frequencies with "trying on" action, so it is eliminated from the purchasing action factors. The "decision-making" action and "resting" action are also deleted because they can not be judged by exactly beginning time and end time. Then 5 actions show as major action factors in the pre-investigation, which are "Touch Garment", "Look at Tag", "Talk with sales", "Try on" and "Look into mirror".

Purchase result is recorded as “Buy or not”, “Purchase amount” and “Purchase money”. In which, “Buy or not” is the most important criterion of purchase result.

3. Experimental Procedure

Shanghai Parkson Department Store and Shanghai Huijin Department Store are selected as investigation place, since the two stores are typical modern department store in Shanghai. The second floor in Shanghai Parkson and the fifth floor in Shanghai Huijin has the same target consumer, with the same brands in, such as Jack&Jones、 ESPRIT、 TonyWear、 Jockey、 G2000、 Richini etc. It provides an evidence that data from the two stores has common character and also can be compared with each other.

The Investigation lasted five months. 72 fashion consumer cases are followed and recorded, with 153 people involved. Male consumers account for 52.9%, and female consumers account for 47.1%.

The effective sample in the disquisition is defined to be that the consumers enter into the store with fashion purchase intent. 12 cases are found entering into the store with some other purpose instead of purchase intent. So they are deleted from the effective samples. There are finally 60 effective cases left. The effective sample rate is 83.3%. The detailed number and proportion of effective samples are shown in table 1.

60 effective cases in department stores are followed and recorded, including all the shopping actions and purchase results in each store. The relationship between shopping actions and purchase result is analyzed in the following text.

Table 1. The distribution of fashion consumer samples

Sample Type	Sample amount	Percentage	
Date Type	Monday	7	11.7
	Wednesday	14	23.3
	Thursday	6	10.0
	Friday	14	23.3
	Saturday	13	21.7
	Sunday	6	10.0
	Weather	Sunny	41
Cloudy		8	13.3
Cloudy with rain		6	10.0
Heavy rain		5	8.3
Time	samples basically evenly distribute from 09:30 to 21:00		
Place	Shanghai Huijin	10	16.7
	Shanghai Parkson	50	83.3

3.1 Factor Analysis of Shopping Behavior

According to the data of the investigation, total value, average and maximum values of five major action's frequency are respectively analyzed (see Table 2). Total value of five major actions reflects overall consumers' enthusiasm of shopping behavior. The average value of five major actions shows general level of consumers' actions. The maximum value of five major actions reflects the level of consumers' actions in their most interested store.

According to the frequency of five actions, they can be ranked from many to few as the following order: touching garment, seeing tag, talking with sales, looking into mirror, and trying on. This order accords with accustomed sequence of shopping actions exactly, and is in opposition to complexity sequence of those movements.

Table 2. The frequency of consumer's shopping action factors

Frequency of Consumer Shopping Action in Different Stores	Amount	Min.	Max.	Average	Standard Deviation	
Average Action Frequency	Touch Garment	60	0.00	38.00	3.54	4.995
	Look at Tag	60	0.00	7.00	1.05	1.341
	Talk with sales	60	0.00	6.00	0.55	1.165
	Try on	60	0.00	8.00	0.29	1.064
	Look into mirror	60	0.00	6.00	0.30	.836
Maximum Action Frequency	Touch Garment	60	0	38	7.40	7.488
	Look at Tag	60	0	13	2.68	3.281
	Talk with sales	60	0	10	1.73	2.490
	Try on	60	0	8	0.98	1.722
	Look into mirror	60	0	6	0.98	1.600

3.2 Consumers' Shopping Result

It is known from the statistics that 30% consumers finally buy garment, of which 21.7% of consumers buy one piece of clothing, and 16.7% of consumers buy two pieces of clothing. Purchase amounts range from 128 Yuan to 1,958 Yuan. 16.7% of consumers spend less than 500 Yuan. 3.3% of consumers spend 500~1000 Yuan. 6.7% of consumers spend 1000~1500 Yuan. 3.3% of consumers spend 1500~2000 Yuan.

3.3 Correlation Analysis of Shopping Result Factor and Shopping Action Factors

Pearson Correlation Analysis is analyzed to validate the affinity between consumer's purchase result and action factors.

Table 3. Pearson Correlation Analysis among purchase result and shopping actions

Average Value of Shopping Actions in Stores		Touch Garment	Look at Tag	Talk with sales	Try-on	Look into mirror
Purchase result	Pearson correlation coefficient	.206	.474	.369	.105	.133
	2-tail-Significant	.114	.000	.004	.423	.309
Maximum Value of Shopping Actions in Stores		Touch Garment	Look at Tag	Talk with sales	Try-on	Look into mirror
Purchase result	Pearson correlation coefficient	.494	.656	.601	.496	.534
	2-tail-Significant	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

It is shown from Table 3 that the Pearson correlation coefficients between Average Values of Shopping Actions in Stores and Purchase result are not all significant, while "Look at tag" and "Talk with sales" have high correlation with Purchase result. Meanwhile, the Pearson correlation coefficient between Maximum Values of Shopping Actions in Stores and Purchase result are all significant. It is explained that Maximum Values of Shopping Actions in Stores implies consumer's purchase intent in a store, because maximum value is generally happened in the store where consumer has the strongest purchase intent.

4. Results and Discussion

Consumer's purchase result is directly affected by purchase intent. So evaluating consumer's purchase intent should be one of the important marketing measures in store. Based upon the result of Pearson Correlation Analysis between

purchase behavior and purchase, **IL-IT evaluation mode** is devised, and numerical values are offered as reference.

4.1 IL-IT evaluation Mode

Consumer's shopping actions in stores reflect the purchase intent. The five shopping actions correlative with purchase result are used to evaluate purchase intent in figure 1, which is called as IL-IT evaluation mode.

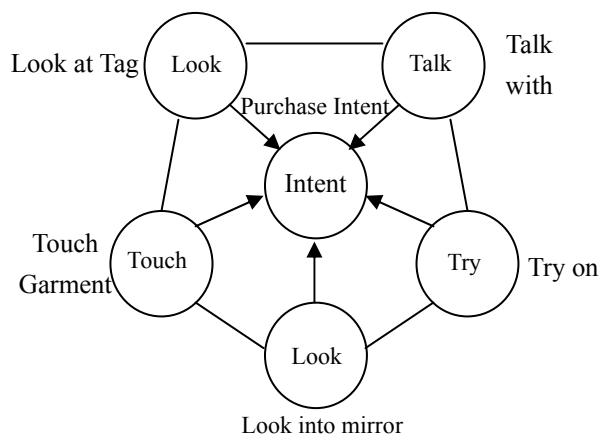


Figure 1. IL-IT evaluation mode

There are five important shopping actions around the consumer's purchase intent in figure 1, which are "Touch Garment", "Look at Tag", "Talk with sales", "Try on" and "Look into mirror".

Each shopping action can be observed in a store, more frequencies of shopping actions means more evidences of purchase intent. IL-IT evaluation mode is useful for sales in stores. But another important thing is that the sales should know how to serve customers well so that they can hold chances.

4.2 Numerical Evaluation Reference of Fashion Purchase Intent

According to the investigation, it's found that the highest customer actions' frequencies in a store are 38 times touching garment, 13 times looking at tag, 10 times talking with sales, 8 times trying on, and 6 times looking into mirror.

To make the evaluation easy doing, numerical reference standard is brought forward according to the investigation. If a consumer 13 times touching garment, 6 times looking at tag, 4 times talking with sales, 2 times trying on, and 2 times looking into mirror, that means that the consumer has so strong purchase intent that even want to buy.

5. Conclusions

Using naturally observation investigation method, consumer's repulsion can be avoided since they don't know they are involved with an investigation. The data are totally real and effective without consumer's pretend. The remarkable correlative between 5 shopping actions and purchase result is analyzed according to the investigation. IL-IT evaluation mode and numerical reference standard are brought forward. They can be used to evaluate consumer's purchase intent for sales in stores.

Statement of Novelty

Using naturally observation investigation method, 72 groups of customers who are shopping in department store have been observed and analyzed. According to the data, the relationship between shopping actions and shopping result has high correlation. 5 kinds of shopping actions show correlativity with purchase result. IL-IT evaluation mode and numerical reference standard are brought forward. They can be used to evaluate consumer's purchase intent for sales in stores.

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