CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The decision intention to patronize a particular store usually starts with a set of characteristics or dimensions that shoppers consider important. Consumers use these dimensions to make decisions regarding which store to prefer to buy apparel products. Several studies in the past had identified the influence of a group of dimensions separately, and investigated shoppers’ preference towards a store category, but these studies overlooked how the presence of multiple dimensions of antecedents will influence intention to patronage a particular category of apparel stores. In addition, very few studies have addressed the patronage issue across multiple store categories and that too in a changing retail market environment like India. The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of multiple antecedents and the interaction variables on intention to patronage different categories of apparel stores. With this the researcher also aims to provide some of the clarifications for inconsistencies in the observed effect of some of the antecedents on retail store patronage behaviour. A total of 513 shoppers in a large metropolitan city, Bengaluru, India, participated in the survey. This chapter provides the summary of the results, implications of the findings, and directions for future research.

6.2 SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS

The results of the study are divided into two sections. First section highlights the observation of shopping habits among the apparel retail
shoppers investigated. In the second section, results of the investigation of hypotheses are discussed.

Observations on Shopping Habits of Apparel Shoppers are detailed:

1. **Store Preferences** – Store preferences were found to be different across age groups, annual income levels, occupation and gender of the apparel shoppers.
   a. Age group less than 28 years preferred general cloth merchants and discount store / factory outlets. Age group between 29 years to 40 years preferred specialty stores, while shoppers older than 40 years age group preferred general cloth merchants.
   b. Shoppers having lower than Rs. 150,000 preferred discount stores / factory outlets, while shoppers with income levels above Rs. 150,000 preferred specialty stores.
   c. Unemployed and student groups preferred general cloth merchants, while other occupation groups – government employees, private employees, entrepreneurs, and professional practitioners – preferred specialty stores. This is consistent with the observations across income levels with unemployed and students with less disposable income might prefer general cloth merchant stores.
   d. Across gender the difference in store preference was not clear across all categories of stores though significant. Males preferred discount stores, while females preferred general cloth merchant stores. In the case of specialty stores, both male and female shoppers preferred to shop.
A possible reason could be still in India, branded female apparel stores are still evolving. While in specialty stores, both male and female apparels are available hence there is no difference in preference.

2. **Shopping Frequency** – significant differences in shopping frequency was found across age groups, income levels, occupation and marital status of the shoppers.

   a. Higher age group shoppers shop more frequently (more than once a month) compared to lower age group (once a month) shoppers. Reverse effect is seen across income levels with higher income group shoppers visiting less frequently compared to low income groups. The observation is consistent as higher income groups spend more money per shopping trip and therefore purchase more apparels per trip compared to low income groups.

   b. Frequency of shopping is low in unemployed and student groups compared to other occupation groups. Similarly shopping frequency is high among married shoppers compared to single unmarried shoppers.

3. **Length of Shopping** – significant differences in length of shopping in a particular store was observed across different age groups, income levels, occupation, gender, and marital status of the shoppers.

   a. Older age group, higher income level groups, females, and married shoppers shopped in a longer length of time compared to younger age groups, lower income level groups, males and single unmarried shoppers.
b. Similarly unemployed and student groups shopped for a shorter length of time in their preferred stores compared to other occupation shoppers.

4. **Average Amount of Money Spent per Shopping Trip** – Shoppers spent highest amount of money in stores in the mall and lowest in general cloth merchant stores. Average money spent varied across occupation and marital status.

a. Student and unemployed groups spent less on apparels compared to other occupation groups. Similarly single unmarried shoppers spent less than married shoppers.

5. **Other Shopping Habits** – overall observation among apparel shoppers are listed.

a. Friends were the major source of information about different categories of apparel stores. The result is consistent with past study Johar and Sirgy (1991) in that friends are important source of information about stores. In collectivist societies, compared to individualist societies, consumers rely more on interpersonal relationships for information search or exchange. This information search or exchange is especially important regarding store choice because, in a collectivist society, the positive experience with the product could enhance belongingness to the group (Money et al. 1998). This indicates the importance of word of mouth in influencing shopper’s behaviour.

b. Apparel shoppers visited stores whenever necessary and during festivals, and with family members as observed in Indian shopping habits in other studies.
6. **Importance of Store Attributes** – across different stores two to three dimensions of store attributes were found to be influencing the preference of stores. They are store image, shopping convenience and customer orientation.

6.3 **RESULTS OF INTENTION TO PATRONAGE APPAREL STORES**

In the second section, results of hypotheses investigated are discussed:

*Regression Results:* The researcher found strong support for most of the hypotheses pertaining direct effects of antecedents of intention to patronage an apparel store and antecedents of attitude towards shopping in apparel store. The research also found strong support for interaction effect of personality and situational variables influencing the intention to patronage an apparel store.

Regression results of model one, where intention to patronage an apparel store was dependent variable and attitude towards shopping, subjective norm, and perceived behaviour control as independent variables, showed that proposed hypotheses were strongly supported (refer Table 6.1) across different categories of apparel stores. The results of the present study were consistent with previous studies showing the importance of attitude influencing store choice behaviour (Blackwell et al 2005; Howard and Sheth 1969; McNeal 1973). The present study highlights the importance of emotional value towards a store which relates to positive feelings or dispositions towards the store which increases intention to patronage that store (Stauss and Neuhaus 1997; Yu and Dean 2001).
Table 6.1  Result of the Multiple Regressions for Intention to Patronage (Model 1) across Different Apparel Store Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Department Store</th>
<th>Discount Store</th>
<th>Specialty Store</th>
<th>Store in the Mall</th>
<th>General cloth Merchant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitude towards Shopping (H₁)</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective Norm (H₂)</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBC (H₃)</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dependent Variable – Intention to Patronage; S – Hypotheses Supported, NS – Hypotheses Not Supported

Previous research findings highlight the importance of constraints like subjective norm and perceived behavioural control in shopper’s choice process (Hagerstrand 1970; Desbarats 1983). Susceptibility to normative group influence relates to an individual’s status consumption and conspicuous consumption tendencies. This applies to clothing that is a publicly visible product. Clothing brands that serve to communicate social distinctions reflect consumers’ social life, aspirations, and their affiliation (Levy 1959; Solomon 1986). The social role of clothing is even more important in developing countries, where interpersonal relationships are of prime importance (Ger et al 1993). The results of the present study are consistent with the previous researches.

Across different categories of stores, the relative influence of attitude towards shopping, subjective norm, and perceived behaviour control differs. For department stores attitude towards shopping is more important, for discount stores, stores in the mall, and general cloth merchants, perceived behavioural control is more important and finally for specialty stores, subjective norm is more important.
Regression result of model two shows strong support for most of the hypotheses except for the hypotheses $H_{9A}$, $H_{8B}$ and $H_{8D}$, which were partially supported and $H_{12D}$ not supported (refer Table 6.2).

**Table 6.2** Result of the Multiple Regressions for Attitude towards Shopping (Model 2) across Different Apparel Store Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Department Store</th>
<th>Discount Store</th>
<th>Specialty Store</th>
<th>Store in the Mall</th>
<th>General Cloth Merchant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand Consciousness ($H_4$)</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price Consciousness ($H_5$)</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Consciousness ($H_6$)</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety Consciousness ($H_7$)</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilitarian Motives ($H_9$)</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedonic Motives ($H_8$)</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Image Consciousness ($H_{10}$)</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store Image Consciousness ($H_{11}$)</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Shopping Experience ($H_{12}$)</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store Knowledge ($H_{13}$)</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dependent Variable – Attitude towards Shopping; S – Hypotheses Supported, NS – Hypotheses Not Supported

Consistent with the previous research findings on shopping orientation influencing intention to patronage behaviour (Shim and Kotsiopulos 1993; Stoltman et al 1991; Moye and Kincade 2003; Visser et al 1996; Preez et al 2007), the results of the present study supports the effects of
brand consciousness (H₄), price consciousness (H₅), quality consciousness (H₆) and variety consciousness (H₇) on patronage intention across different categories of stores through attitude towards shopping.

Shopping orientation is described as a shopping-specific lifestyle encompassing shopping activities, interests and opinions. According to Preez et al (2007) consumer’s store choice to a large extent depends on their lifestyles. This lifestyle is determined by among other factors shopping orientation. The results of the present study show that different dimensions of shopping orientations are significant for different categories of apparel stores as hypothesized.

- For department stores, variety consciousness, quality consciousness, and brand consciousness are significantly influencing attitude towards shopping.
- In the case of discount stores, brand consciousness and price consciousness are significantly influencing attitude towards shopping.
- For specialty stores, brand and quality consciousness influences attitude towards shopping.
- Variety consciousness, quality consciousness, and brand consciousness, significantly influences attitude towards shopping for stores in the mall.
- Finally for general cloth merchant stores, quality and price consciousness significantly influences attitude towards shopping.

These findings are to a certain extent in accordance with Shim and Kotsiopulos (1992b) findings, who found that apparel shoppers differ with regard to preferences for different categories of stores.
The influence of shopping motives – utilitarian (H₈) and hedonic (H₉) – on attitude towards shopping in an apparel store is significant for majority of the hypotheses except for hypotheses H₉₆, H₈₈, and H₈₉ which were partially supported. The results were consistent with findings from previous studies (Zimmerman and Hudson 2005; Ackerman 2007; Duff 2005; Embry 2006). The evolution of retail sector leading to increased competition results in retail strategies getting evolved to focus on providing utilitarian and hedonic values to the shoppers. Hedonic and utilitarian motives are tied to emotional aspects of the shopping experience (Babin and Darden 1995; Babin et al 1994). The results show that shoppers are expecting different value propositions from different categories of apparel stores; this is consistent with the findings of Carpenter and Moore (2006). Though in the highly competitive mature markets of the West all the categories of apparel stores are offering different degrees of utilitarian and hedonic values, in emerging markets, shoppers expect different value propositions in different categories of apparel stores. The results showed that shopping motives differs across different categories of apparel stores in influencing attitude towards shopping.

As hypothesized self image (H₁₀) and store image consciousness (H₁₁) significantly influences attitude towards shopping in department stores, specialty stores and stores in the mall, and is not significant for discount and general cloth merchant stores. This is consistent with the findings from previous studies for store image (Cardona 2003; Parsons 2002; Osman 1993; Doyle and Fenwick 1974; Houston and Nevin 1981; Lindquist 1974; Hirschman 1979; Onkvisit and Shaw 1994; Baker et al 1994) and self-image (Chebat et al 2006; Sirgy and Samli 1985; Sirgy et al 2000). Studies have also shown that congruence between self-image and store image affects store patronage (Bellenger et al 1976; Sirgy and Samli 1985). The results of the present study also shows that congruence of self-image and store image is important for department stores, stores in the mall, and specialty stores. In
turn, self-congruity influences shopper’s attitude toward a store and enhance patronage behaviour.

Previous shopping experience ($H_{12}$) and store knowledge ($H_{13}$) were significantly influencing attitude towards shopping. This is consistent with past studies (Keller 1993; Krishnan 1996; Hildebrandt 1988) findings. Both these dimensions influence along with store image, intention to patronage an apparel store through attitude towards shopping. The results of the present study shows support for the influence of previous shopping experience and store knowledge across different categories of apparel stores, though the results did not support for previous shopping experience in stores in the mall ($H_{12D}$). Possible reason could be that stores in the mall phenomenon are at early stage in Indian retail setups.

6.4 RESULTS OF MODERATION EFFECT

To investigate the moderation effect of personality and situational variables, the researcher followed procedure outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986).

The results of the moderation effect are summarized in Table 6.3. The moderation effect of involvement ($H_{14}$ and $H_{15}$) is consistent with findings of previous studies (McInnis and Jaworski 1989; Mittal and Lee 1989; Howard and Kerin 2006). However, the main effects of product involvement for stores in the mall and general cloth merchant store, purchase decision involvement for stores in the mall were not significant. In case of stores in the mall involvement level would possibly be affected by specific stores shopped, hence overall effect of involvement may not be observed. In general cloth merchant store, level of product involvement may not be significant in influencing the intention to patronage. Overall the result of main effect shows that the effect of attitude towards shopping is stronger than
involvement. The interaction effect highlights as the involvement level
time; increases the difference in intention to patronage the store decreases between
weak and strong attitude shoppers.

**Table 6.3 Summary of the Results of Interaction Effect across
Different Apparel Store Categories**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Department Store</th>
<th>Discount Store</th>
<th>Specialty Store</th>
<th>Store in the Mall</th>
<th>General Cloth Merchant Store</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRI ME</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRI IE</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDI ME</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>S</td>
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<td>S</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDI IE</td>
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<tr>
<td>BL ME</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
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<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL IE</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTP ME</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>S</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTP IE</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR ME</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>S</td>
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<tr>
<td>PR IE</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP ME</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP IE</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** S – Hypotheses Supported; NS – Hypotheses Not Supported

Note: PRI – Product Involvement; PDI – Purchase Decision Involvement; BL – Brand Loyalty; PTP – Perceived Time Pressure; PR – Perceived Risk; DP – Deal Proneness; ME – Main Effect; IE – Interaction Effect.

The results of moderation effect of brand loyalty (H_{16}) were in line
with the findings from previous studies (Kapferer and Laurent 1993;
Sethuraman 2000; Ailawadi et al 2001). This is because shoppers choose a
particular brand and their purchase is increasingly driven by their emotional
needs. Because emotional value is closely related to positive feelings from
using the brand and it increases shopper’s intention to revisit the store (Stauss
and Neuhaus 1997; Yu and Dean 2001). Brand loyalty along with favourable attitude towards shopping creates emotional benefits desired by shoppers from a store brand and will have greater impact on intentions and actual patronage behaviour (Gobe 2001; Batra and Homer 2004). The interaction effect similarly highlights the importance of catering to brand loyal shoppers to enhance intention to patronage even though some shoppers might have weak attitude towards shopping in that particular store.

High perceived time pressure reduces in-store information processing (Park et al 1989) and accelerates information processing and filtering, and thus makes the shoppers to focus on important peripheral cues (Svenson and Edland 1987; Dhar and Nowlis 1999). Hence under high time pressure, consumers with strong attitude towards shopping in a particular store tend to patronage more compared to shoppers with weak attitude towards shopping. The results of the present study (H17) were consistent with findings of earlier studies (Nowlis 1995; Kaplan et al 1993; Suri and Monroe 2003).

The result of moderation effect of perceived risk (H18) on intention to patronage was consistent with previous findings (Lumpkin and Hawes 1985; Samli et al 1998; Baker et al 1994; Sweeney et al 1999) in that under high perceived risk the difference in intention to patronage was higher between strong and weak attitude towards shopping consumers. At high perceived risk, other risk reduction cues becomes important and those shoppers who are having strong favourable attitude towards shopping in a store tend to patronage that store more compared to shoppers with weak attitude towards shopping in that store.

The main effect of deal proneness in discount stores and general cloth merchant store was not significant however interaction effect was significant (H19). Deal proneness refers to the shopper’s tendency to respond
to sales promotions and deal prone shoppers were more likely to be affected (Lichtenstein et al 1995; Lichtenstein et al 1993; d’Astous and Jacob 2002). Hence the interaction results were consistent with the findings of previous research.

6.5  IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher has significant theoretical and managerial contributions to make. This research allows educators, retailers, marketers, and producers, of apparel products and services to effectively respond to the needs and preferences of multiple consumer groups. The preferences of consumer groups are often determined by examining attitudes, which are consumers overall evaluation of likes and dislikes toward an object (e.g. store) or behaviour (e.g. purchasing a pair of jeans from The Gap) Engel et al (1995). The present study finds support to this observation.

6.5.1 Theoretical Contributions

This study has significant theoretical contributions:

1. The researcher extends the applicability of extended model of theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen 1985, 1991) to the context of intention to patronage different categories of apparel stores. In addition, through this study the researcher included multiple dimensions of antecedents like shopping orientations, shopping motives, store and self image, previous shopping experience, and store knowledge, in influencing the attitude towards shopping and in turn intention to patronage apparel stores.

2. Through this study, the researcher offers some rationale for inconsistencies in the effect of certain antecedents in the past
studies (Brunner and Mason 1968; Berry 1979; Lusch 1981; Arnold et al 1983; Arnold et al 1978; Mattson and Dubinsky 1987). By investigating the interaction effect of personality and situational variables, the present study showed that, the effect of attitude towards shopping on intention to patronage is moderated by these variables.

3. The third contribution is that the present study focused on understanding patronage behaviour across different categories of apparel stores. The results showed that shoppers’ lifestyle, shopping motives, store image and self image, personality and situational variables, contribute to the differences in intention to patronage across different categories of apparel stores.

4. The Indian apparel retail market is undergoing transformation and is at an inflection point. Investigating the store patronage behaviour in this dynamic market, the researcher significantly contributes to the body of literature, which till now was confined to understanding of the phenomenon in mature market of the west – US and Europe. To our knowledge, this is one of the few studies investigating patronage behaviour in emerging economies like India across different categories of apparel stores.

6.5.2 Managerial Implications

The present study has important managerial contributions:

1. The present study, by providing a comprehensive knowledge of intention to patronage at different categories of apparel stores, helps the managers to design appropriate strategies to attract and retain customers. Information on store patronage antecedents and purchasing behaviour of different shopper
groups should reveal areas that need more cautious approach in planning and implementing complementary-marketing programs.

2. Information from this study can help retailers and marketers respond to the changing wants and needs of the apparel shoppers in the competitive apparel market environment. Retailers and marketers can use these results to develop retail environments that extend beyond physical attributes, but also include retail environments that focus on psychological aspects (motives, orientation and image consciousness).

3. Shopping orientation is a key element in positioning of the retail stores along with store image (Pessemier 1980; Osman 1993). Since shopping orientation is described as shopping specific-lifestyle, it is important that managers understand the influence of different dimensions of shopping orientation in influencing intention to patronage an apparel store across different categories of apparel stores. The results of the study shows that lifestyle of the shoppers determine their preference for a store. This indicates that to increase the footfall and to increase sales, managers have to devise and cater their marketing mix to appeal to distinct segments of consumers. This can be achieved by capitalizing on the shopping orientation by capturing their attention with non-traditional persuasive communication messages. Message content could address relevant lifestyle for each category of stores and the importance of social influencing factors like friends and families. Communication should convey information regarding significant dimensions of shopping orientations like brand consciousness, price consciousness, quality consciousness, and variety consciousness.
4. Shopping motives – utilitarian and hedonic – are another focus area for managers in differentiating the retail strategies of an apparel store. Managers should enhance shopping experience by providing consumers with a combination of utilitarian and hedonic values (Babin and Darden 1995) to increase store patronage. Consumers seek utilitarian value in a task-oriented, rational manner (Blackwell et al 2000). In contrast, hedonic value reflects emotional or psychological worth of the purchase. Sources of hedonic value include the joy and/or the excitement of shopping. Hedonic value is more personal and subjective rather than utilitarian value and is often the result of fun and playfulness (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982). For example, managers can enhance the utilitarian value by arranging the assortment such a way that shoppers can quickly find the product they needed, and hedonic value by creating an excitement associated with shopping experience. In department stores and stores in the mall managers should provide both utilitarian and hedonic values, in discount and general cloth merchant stores managers should focus on utilitarian values. In specialty stores hedonic values needs to be emphasized to enhance store patronage.

5. Store image and its congruity with the self-image of the consumers is very important determinant of store patronage. According to Dichter (1985) store image is the total impression an entity makes on the minds of others. Sheth and Mittal (2004) stated that store image is the sum total of perceptions customers have about a store, is determined by merchandise, service, and price factors; it is also determined by atmospherics, advertising, and store personnel. Hence managers have to develop an image of the store which appeals
to their targeted consumers by tailoring the components of store image to match with the self-image of consumers. Though at present, at least in Indian market, the distinctions are not clear between different categories of apparel store; this will not remain in future. So, managers of department stores, specialty stores, and stores in the mall, have to strive to identify a unique image to build which will appeal to larger and more profitable sections of the population to increase their market share. Store image can be enhanced through substantial advertising (Cardona 2003) to increase retail patronage (Parsons 2002; Parsons and Ballantine 2004). In addition to advertising, managers have to match it with actual shopping experience to enhance store image. Managers must also pay attention to the degree to which store’s image fits with the lifestyle and identity of the target market.

6. The influence of previous shopping experience and store knowledge on intention to patronage highlights the importance of managing store equity. This can be achieved by (a) examining the knowledge structures in the target customer’s minds to (b) create marketing activities that capitalize on the potential of these knowledge structures (Keller 1993). Importantly, managers need to recognize how the company’s marketing activities might enhance, modify, or alter their customers’ knowledge structures. Managers of a specific store should make tactical marketing decisions (e.g., store atmosphere, employee appearance, product mix lines and width, pricing strategies) based upon the concept of leveraging the positive store category associations and minimizing the negative store associations.
7. The results of the moderation effect of personality and situational variables highlights the importance of influencing individual differences in personality traits and situational variables in influencing intention to patronage the store. For e.g., as the involvement level increases the difference in intention to patronage decreases between weak and strong attitude consumers. This highlights that, even though some consumers might have weak favourable disposition towards the store, but their intention to patronage can be enhanced by increasing the involvement of the consumers in products or in purchase decision involvement. Bloch and Richins (1983) propose that shoppers become involved with the purchase of a product if a particular situation is perceived to be important. Similarly, managers can influence personality variables and situational variables in enhancing intention to patronage different categories of stores.

8. As markets globalize, consumers are not only interested in local brands and shopping experience, but also in global brands and shopping environment. A study of consumer attitude and decision making styles is an important area in marketing strategy. Information about consumers’ attitude and decision-making styles can be useful for corporations when targeting shoppers.

9. Retailers attempting to determine why consumers shop their store will find this research important. Empirical studies such as this which details the consumers’ shopping habits will provide retailers with the tools necessary to identify, attract and retain consumers. The consumer knowledge gained enables retailers to better adapt their marketing mix and tailor competitive strategies to retain their current target market. It is
also important for retail executives, who develop and implement these marketing strategies (Williams 1994).

10. The present study has significant contributions to make across different retail categories. Clearly, the department store marketer needs to understand and acknowledge the importance of consumer feelings in determining satisfaction and future patronage. Consumers appear not only to seek out, but to expect more pleasurable and stimulating emotional experiences in this type of store. Given this motivation, it would be expected that the department store marketer who can effectively stimulate positive feelings within their customers may, in fact, find that customers not only patronize the store but also lengthen their visits when doing so. On this basis, it appears that, when in the department store setting, consumers are more emotion-sensitive rather than price-sensitive, so any costs incurred by the marketer to enhance the customer’s experience (e.g. staff training, facility improvements, etc.) and recouped through price increases, may well be tolerated by their patrons. On the other hand, the discount store marketer needs to be mindful of the consumer’s motivation to seek out value in this store. However, this does not mean that a concentration on lowering prices is the only way to achieve this. Value, in terms of perceived benefits derived from service dimensions that facilitate, for example, ease of merchandise selection and transaction completion and convenience to consumers, and can be gained through careful facility and service process planning. In other words, the focus may not need to be offering the lowest possible prices in town, but providing the best possible value to customers through the service offering. This study significantly improves
understanding of the retail market and, ultimately, better strategic decisions by retail firms.

11. For specialty stores, since the product portfolio of these types of retail stores is dominated by a single brand, managers of these retail stores have a unique and powerful opportunity to increase retail store loyalty through the effects of self-image concept congruities. Managers of brand-specific retail stores can seek to enhance the positive effects of such congruities through continued efforts to better match the images of their store to the self-images held by their consumers. In order to accomplish this matching enhancement, it is increasingly important that brand-specific retail store managers are intimately aware of the collective self-concepts of their target market. Fortunately, it is likely that members within such a target market may have significant overlap in meaningful aspects of their individual self-concepts due to the inherent similarities among these consumers which form the basis of this market segment. Furthermore, managers have the opportunity of repositioning the images of their store to better match the self-images of their target market through minor product modification and/or via the use of advertising content and appeal that is congruent with the self-concepts of their consumers. Although self-concept congruities seem to serve a lesser role in the creation of retail store loyalty for multi-brand stores, results of this study do suggest that self-concept/brand image congruity does lead to trust in such stores. Therefore, managers of these types of retail stores can focus on matching the images of their brands to those of the self-image of their consumers in an effort to increase this trust. It is also evident, however, that other antecedents, such as brand commitment
and those not incorporated in this study (e.g. product choice, convenience) may play a greater role in creating retail loyalty for multi-brand stores than in brand-specific stores.

6.6 LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

While results of this study provide meaningful insights into the creation of retail store patronage, no study is without limitations.

1. The present study concentrated on urban shoppers. Though this is an important segment, our study excluded another important and huge segment, i.e., rural consumers. Therefore results of the present study cannot be generalized to rural consumers who are distinct from urban consumers. Future studies can extend this framework to investigate and understand store patronage behaviour among rural consumers.

2. The present study was more generic in nature, i.e., the researcher did not concentrate on men’s wear or women’s wear or kid’s wear. Since each of these markets is distinct in itself, the researcher cannot generalize the results of the present study to these specific market segments. In future, researchers can investigate across these segments of markets and contribute to the growing literature.

3. Another limitation of our study is the researcher did not differentiate the apparel products like modern wear, ethnic wear, etc. Future study can investigate and throw light on behaviour towards such products.

4. Another important segment which is not addressed in our study is online apparel buyers. Since online market is growing
exponentially and is distinct from offline market, investigation of online patronage behaviour is very important.

5. Though the researcher looked at important antecedents of patronage behaviour, the researcher did not consider habit as an indicator of patronage behaviour. So future studies can investigate the effect of habit on buying behaviour.

6. This study only used one apparel item, a dress. Perhaps the examination of multiple products (e.g., dress, suit, and sweater) and/or multiple product categories (e.g., sportswear, active wear, knitwear/sweaters) would be of interest to future researchers. This variable would allow researchers to make comparisons across apparel items.

7. Future research also can be replicated using additional personality trait variables and their impact on shopping motives, orientation and patronage behaviour.

8. Also, there are some constructs that may have influence on consumers’ apparel purchase behaviour which were not included in this study. For instance, the situational factors like out-of-stock merchandise may have influence on consumers’ apparel purchase behavior also.

6.7 CONCLUSION

Satisfying consumers are not enough to yield a competitive advantage, what marketers need to do is lock consumers into what their store has to offer. Retailers need to seek bonding and lasting relationships with their consumers, to ensure a competitive advantage. This they need to do by positioning their store in the minds of the consumer and entrench their offerings with a intrinsic and extrinsic value added proposition. The key to doing this is to understand the reasons for store patronage behaviour.
Shopping is a term that covers a lot of ground. Some see shopping as time pass activity, others enjoy it; still others see it as a painful chore to be finished as quickly as possible. It’s such a large topic it’s tough to know just how to split it up. But it is always essential to know about customer’s attitude towards shopping and behaviour. Insights into background of the shopper will act as facilitator in targeting the customer. Examinations of psychographic and demographic factors are necessary to obtain an informed consumer profile for market segments. Psychographic factors describe the motives, attitude, orientation, social influence, self control, and store knowledge activities, whereas, demographics describe segments of consumers in such terms as age, income, and education (Engel et al 1995). This will help retailers gain a competitive advantage over intra and inter-store competition among retailers by producing a pleasant shopping environment and assortment which match the customer shopping behavioural profile.

Today consumers incorporate alternative formats and technologies (on line shopping) into their shopping habits and patterns. The study's findings will add to an understanding of consumer shopping habits and emerging attitudes towards alternative shopping avenues (department, discount, specialty or general cloth store). And knowing what drives consumers to use these multiple avenues for obtaining apparel items could help retailers’ to better shape products and services to meet the shopper’s demands and lifestyle needs.