



# Ladies' purchase intention during retail shoes sales promotions

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to examine ladies' buying behaviour during shoes sales promotions in Malaysia, using the highly validated Belk's Model.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Using this validated model, the main research framework consists of Social Surroundings (SS), Temporal Perspective (TP), Task Definition (TD), Physical Surrounding (PS), used as predictors for Sales Promotion Purchase (SPP). Ethnic groups are used as a moderator for this study.

**Findings** – The results identify few key predictors during shoes sales promotion. Ladies expressed the importance of first day sales for first buyer's advantage, and they preferred large shops with music. Moreover, due to the multi-racial society in the country, ethnic group interaction on the model did not indicate impact of consumer differences affecting the sales promotion purchase. That is, during a specific festive season sale, all ethnic groups take full advantages of the sale.

**Research limitations/implications** – This implies that Belk's Model is still applicable even in multi sales promotions for a specific product – shoes. However, the study may have the slight possibility of biases due to the retrospective accounts of recalling purchase involvement in retail shops during sale promotions. Nevertheless, it is assumed that these biases are minimal as there are six sales per year in the country, averaging one sale per two months.

**Originality/value** – This study provides an insight of ladies' purchasing behaviour and their preferred types of retail outlets, which contributes to retail owners' sales promotional strategies to attract consumers during festive seasons.

**Keywords** Malaysia, Consumer behaviour, Women, Shoes, Social surroundings, Temporal perspective, Task definition, Physical surroundings, Retail shops, Sales promotions

**Paper type** Research paper



## 1. Introduction

All of us need shoes. A survey in the US showed the average pair of shoes owned per person is ten pairs and projected worldwide production of shoes by 2010 is 20 billion pairs (Albers *et al.*, 2008). Shoes, or generally termed footwear, includes sandals, high

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heels, sport shoes, etc., are considered as seasonal products demanded by consumers. Shoes are designer-made, custom-made, or mass produced. According to Sonja and Steven (1998) virtually all products are seasonal if it dictates business strategy. In Malaysia, shoes are promoted as festive seasonal products in all shopping malls. According to the Malaysia Retailer-Chain Association (MRCA) website, there are more than 200 retail chain stores covering at least 6,500 outlets in Malaysia. Although there is no specific indication of members' retailing, it is estimated that these members provide more than 60,000 job opportunities for the industry[1]. The Datamonitor's retail data books indicate Malaysia department stores for clothing and footwear increased at compounded annual growth (CAGR) of 4.9 per cent between 2002 and 2007 and in 2007 these stores' product sales have accounted for 57.3 per cent share. Recently, the Malaysia Retail Report forecasted a continual growth of MYR 167.37 bn (USD 47.52 bn) in 2011 to MYR 252.0 bn (USD 71.55 bn) by 2014[2]. This suggests that the retail industry has a significant economic contribution to the nation.

Malaysia is well known for its shoes design. Shoes retail sectors are generally positioned in modern shopping malls, housing specialty retail stores that promote famous local designers' shoes like Vinci, Lewre, and Jimmy Choo and imported shoes like Prada, Nose, Gucci, among others, inclusive of locally made non-branded shoes. Designer shoes sold in these outlets are targeted for middle to upper class consumers. Anecdotal evidence of these stores is located in Midvalley Mega Mall, City Square, Melaka Mall, and others.

Interestingly, in Malaysia there are at least six sales promotions yearly. With a multi-racial society, the country's sales promotions often coincide to commemorate the festive seasons of various ethnic groups. These include Hari Raya Adilfitri Sales (for celebration of Muslim's fasting month), Chinese New Year Sales (for celebration of Chinese New Year), Deepavali Sales (for celebration of Indian Festival of Light), Christmas Sale (for celebration of Christmas season), Malaysia Mega Sales Carnival (formerly known as year-end sale), and Retail Anniversary Sale; averaging one sale every two months.

In a competitive shopping mall environment, these shopping malls usually hold nation-wide sales simultaneously with the supermarket/grocery and retail shop outlets sales promotions throughout the year for consumers' visits and purchase. Due to its fast fashion fluctuation and seasonality, unsold off-seasoned shoes are often sold during sale promotion and often coincide with the nation shopping malls-wide sales.

To ensure sales promotion effectiveness, some shoes retailers even resort to using vouchers as promotion tools (Peter and Olsen, 2010, p. 240) while others introduced membership cards with redeemable accumulated points for future shoes purchase as sale promotion strategy to entice consumers. This scenario clearly depicts sale by promotions are tougher than ever. This implies shoes retailers are required to comprehend consumers' purchasing behaviour, which could vary in different culture and age group (Kwok and Uncles, 2005). For example, the Korean teens are conscious about their images and tend to purchase shoes of aesthetic value than quality (Yoh *et al.*, 2011). Whereas in America, shoes are extension of self among university students (Belk, 2003) and in India, there is no significant relationship between income and brand and imported shoes among urban consumers (Saha *et al.*, 2010). These studies enquired the shoppers' views about footwear. Based on these contentions, we suspect the local consumers purchasing behaviour would differ as in other countries. Thus, this leads us to examine the local differences in shoes purchasing behaviour, specifically during festive sales promotions in malls' shoes retail stores.

This paper is organised in the following way. It begins with the literature review on the Belk's multiple situational factors on consumers' buying behaviour during sales, in which the hypotheses are derived. The second section explains the research methodology that includes the quantitative analysis, sample and data collection procedures, and the empirical results. In the discussion section, the findings are discussed and recommendations proposed, with research limitations. Finally, the last section draws a conclusion of the study, with proposed future research.

## 2. Literature review and hypotheses development

There are arrays of consumers purchasing behaviour and decisions studies using Belk's (1975) situational factors. The situational factors consist of physical and social surrounding, task definition, temporal perspectives and antecedent states. Comparative analysis of past studies found these factors were tested in one and across different countries. Anic and Radas (2006) used these variables on hypermarket in Croatia setting on grocery items and Zhuang *et al.* (2006) examined collectively in three countries/regions in USA, China, and Hong Kong shopping malls on purchase of food or non-food products. In Zhuang *et al.* (2006) study, the findings indicate varying behaviour among shoppers in different countries. For example, Hong Kong shoppers feel their companion affect their buying behaviour on food but the US and Chinese counterparts have mixed feelings on companion's influence. These studies also used random intercept technique for data collection where consumers were randomly selected for interviews immediately after shopping in mall environments, followed by completion of questionnaires. Critical analysis on these studies indicate the data were collected in market and shopping malls during normal shopping periods with both genders and products mixed (food and non-food) purchased settings (Zhuang *et al.*, 2006; Anic and Radas, 2006; Roslow *et al.*, 2000 – see Table I).

Most countries hold similar sales promotions annually. During sales promotion, retail shops often display differences in physical surrounding with different décor, music, and sales discount ranging from 20 to 70 per cent. This environmental change would stimulate and affect consumer-purchasing behaviour. The intention of sales is to provide price reduction with product appeal (Alvarez and Casielles, 2005) with an outcome of drawing crowds to retail shops in shopping mall. Fam (2003) study on three types of sales: change-of-season (COS), Christmas sales, and general sales in New Zealand, Portugal, and Hungary show that sales promotion ensure stock clearance that increases profits, reinforcing store image, attracting new customers, and generate more in-store excitement.

With reference to past sales promotion literatures, most studies were conducted in Western developed countries, such as New Zealand (Parson, 2003), Australia, (Kwok and Uncles, 2005; Dawes, 2004), the UK (Gilbert and Jackaria, 2002), Canada (d'Astous and Jacob, 2002), but little is known on consumer's behaviour during sales promotions by retailers located in Asian countries, especially in a developing country like Malaysia. The intention to use Belk's model in this study is justifiable based on the following reasons. First, in Belk's literature (Belk, 1975), the author compiled and reviewed situational variables used by other researchers (e.g. Mehrabian and Russell, 1974; Kasmar, 1970; Sells, 1963) to derive paradigm that describes the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R), which is applicable to "array of situational dimensions." For example, the temporal perspective variable of Belk's model, the dimension of situations may be specified in terms of time of day to season of the year, past or future event, which other model did not

Country	Situational variables used	Dependent variable	Authors	Place/products	Research analysis/ gender
China, Hong Kong and USA	Tasks definition, social surrounding, temporal perspective	Purchase behaviour	Zhuang, <i>et al.</i> (2006)	Shopping mall/ mixed products	Logistic regression/ mixed
Croatia	Antecedent state, physical surroundings, temporal perspective, social surroundings, task definition	Purchase behaviour	Anic and Radas (2006)	Hypermarket retailer/grocery products	One-way ANOVA/ mixed
Cyprus	Antecedent state, temporal perspective, task definition	Purchase behaviour	Roslow, Li, & Nicholls (2000)	Market/wide selection of products	Logistic regression/ mixed
India and USA	Antecedent state, physical surroundings, temporal perspective, social surroundings, task definition	Purchase behaviour	Nicholls <i>et al.</i> (1996)	India – market; USA – shopping mall/wide selection of products	Logistic regression/ mixed

**Table I.**  
Belk's situational variables

address. Second, to our knowledge, Belk's model has not been used in sales promotion situation in mall's retail store and on one specific product – shoes. For instance, in Zhuang *et al.* (2006) study they found positive impact of shoppers' buying intention on non-food product (not specified) and they spend more time in a mall. The authors recommended examining on assortment of non-food products in retail settings to extend the external validity. Last, in the later development, Belk modified his model to include a non-situational factor and explained the significant characteristic of an individual or object (Belk, 1975) in which Zhuang *et al.* (2006) highlighted that the non-situational factor like gender and race are least examined.

Therefore, in this study we fill the gaps by examining situational factors on female consumers' buying behaviour and link this to sales promotions. The situational factors consist of social and physical surroundings, temporal perspective, and task definition in mall shoes retail shops setting. We excluded antecedent state factor but replaced it with a non-situational factor, ethnic group as moderator to the framework to observe the predictors influence on sales purchasing outcome. Antecedent state factor was not included for reasons that we are examining buyers' shoes sales purchase experience and perceptions on the shops patronised. "Antecedent states are momentary moods or conditions of buying such as acute anxiety, pleasantness, hostility, cash on hand, fatigue, and illness" (Zhuang *et al.*, 2006; Belk, 1975) is only applicable when an intercept technique is used where the consumers could still momentary recall their shopping moods, shops they patronised, and items purchased.

We specifically choose all-female sample as past findings show that female spend more time and energy than men during shopping, thus making shopping as a form of leisure and enjoyment (Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003), and “a typical later aged female teen was born to shop” (Taylor and Cosenza, 2002). According to Lisa Lee Freeman, editor-in-chief of ShopSmart for non-profit consumer research group Consumer Union, “Women are passionate shoe shoppers and this survey shows that shoe shopping is almost a sport for women,” (Goldman, 2007). Understanding female’s shoes buying behaviour and intention, especially in a multi ethnic country like Malaysia would elucidate the significant characteristics of an individual woman.

This would provide mall retail owners some appropriate promotional objectives and strategies; product’s positioning, and target market to maximise sales profits. Furthermore, segmenting and understanding of target segments are important inputs to differentiating products and enhancing shopping propensity (Taylor and Cosenza, 2002). Furthermore, it adds to the external validity on purchase of shoes as non-food product recommended by Zhuang *et al.* (2006) using Belk’s variables.

### *2.1 Social surroundings*

Shopping incorporates a social experience outside the home and there is a correlation between time spent and with social companions (Nicholls *et al.*, 2002). Some consumers may view the shopping experience as a source of enjoyment and an opportunity for social interaction (Kim, 2002). For most teens, shopping at the mall is a place to hang out or vacation (Lowrey *et al.*, 2005; Matthews *et al.*, 2000) and Taylor and Cosenza (2002) state that shoes choice reflects social class and wrong choice is a social sin. In a busy sale promotion, it can be observed that some buyers are alone, while others with family (Dholakia, 1999) and Lowrey *et al.* (2005) suggest including shopping with friendship (or kinship) groups could yield interesting results on the ritualistic behaviours. Companion shoppers also play the role of retail salespersons by promoting the shoppers to purchase the product with satisfaction (Joan and Lauren, 2011). In contrast, there are shoppers who enjoy shopping alone than with family members (Adilson *et al.*, 2010) and in some cases there are shoppers that prefer to be left alone even without salesperson during purchasing process (Perry, 2011). Therefore, in predicating the relationships between social surrounding variables and sales promotion purchase intention, we hypothesised that:

- H1.* There is a significant relationship between shoppers with friends and purchase intention during sales promotions.

### *2.2 Temporal perspective*

It can be observed that some shoppers queue to rush in on the first day of sales for first buyer advantage to grasp the best bargain products available, while other non-rush shoppers prefer to visit the sales later (Nicholls *et al.*, 2002), assuming the bargains are still there. In Belk’s temporal perspectives, some researchers examine the shoppers’ spending during weekends and early shopping time (Anic and Radas, 2006), early and near shoppers’ travel time to shopping destination (Roslow *et al.*, 2000). In this study, the temporal perspectives variables are grouped into two categories: sales period and time spend during sales. The first category is sub-divided into three sales periods: first day of sales period (for early shoppers); mid-sales (non-rush shoppers), and last day (last minutes shoppers). In the second category, travelling time, more shoes design

available, availability of sales assistants and sales assistants affecting more shoppers' time spent are reviewed. During sales purchase, consumers often establish their temporal preferences that suit the task definitions. Therefore, we postulate that:

- H2.* There is a significant relationship between shoppers spending more time and purchase intention during sales promotions.

### 2.3 Task definition

Belk (1975) defines task definition as intents or reasons for consumers to shop for a general or specific purchase product or service, which has a significant impact on both store choice and store-attribute salience. In view of this, consumers buying intention depends on buyer's motivation and planning (Zhuang *et al.*, 2006) and Berkman and Gilson (1978) study indicates consumers actual buying depends on their intentions and higher intention suggests likelihood of actual purchase and vice versa. In contrast, individual consumer-buying decisions are sometimes influenced by other people (Mourali *et al.*, 2005). In other words, consumers who have the intention to purchase shoes during sales promotions are motivated to grasp the shoes with the design they have long been eyeing for, but may change due to friend's influence.

In Belk's (1979) literature, it indicates the difficulty to list store-attribute salience for task definitions due to different characteristics of various retail markets but Van Kenhove and Van Waterschoot (1999) qualitative study on DIY identified product quality, latest product different models, low price are one of few store-attribute salience across task definitions. Therefore, when purchasing a product (such as shoes), quality and features (design) are often considered as important choice criteria (Baltas and Papastathopoulou, 2003) including price/value (Roslow *et al.*, 2000). High prices often signal high quality (Kalita *et al.*, 2004), which would deter consumer purchase as they are limited by personal control budget. We, therefore, speculate that:

- H3.* There is a significant relationship between meeting shopping tasks and purchase intention during sales promotions.

### 2.4 Physical surrounding

Shopping mall houses different types of stores nowadays. It is common to observe that shopping malls tend to put up impressive physical surrounding as extrinsic value to attract customers to the mall and stores. In addition, the image of the shopping centre encourages consumer store patronising (Sit *et al.*, 2003). This "front line" image attraction is beneficial to retail stores. Pleasant environment is the main reasons of store patronising (Jin and Kim, 2003). These include elements such as layout, interior architecture and décor, lighting, music, aroma and cleanliness (Baker, 1987). Observations during festive season like Christmas, individual footwear stores' salespersons dressed in festive clothing adds glamour its physical surrounding. These stores' environmental stimuli arouse attraction on consumers (El Sayed *et al.*, 2003) and create moods of consumers that affect purchase intentions (Bitner, 1992).

Other studies also show positive interactions by shoppers to the environment, which tend to satisfy their functional needs (Kim, 2002; Keng *et al.*, 2007). In the next purchase, consumers often try to form an evaluation of their past mall and store experiences on the physical surroundings and services render. These factors jointly



influence customer quality expectations (Baker, 1987) of a shopping mall and we hypothesised as:

- H4. There is a significant relationship between pleasant environment and purchase intention during sales promotions.

### *2.5 Sales promotions and ethnic group*

Malaysia as a tropical country does not have four seasonal climatic sales like most temperate countries, but have equivalent sales promotions that coincide with festive seasons due to its different ethnic group populations. Seasonal differences in purchasing behaviour have been studied in temperate countries. In Cyprus, for instance, during winter sales consumers purchased adult's clothing greater than in summer and during summer they purchased more food or beverage and spent more money than in winter (Roslow *et al.*, 2000).

The intention to purchase new products during the festive seasons is a cultural norm. For example, during Chinese New Year, the Chinese prefer to wear and use all items new. These include use of new money notes, decorative items, clothing, and most importantly, shoes; traditionally signifying "New Year, New Luck." This also applies to Malay and the Indian living in the country. During these festive sales, it can be observed that all ethnic groups are patronizing the malls taking advantages of the sales promotions. Past studies of ethnicity in Britain indicate ethnic minority market offers significant marketing potential (Burton, 2002), but in Australia, Kwok and Uncles (2005) research on ethnic group shows that there is no significant impact on responses to sales promotions was found. Therefore, corresponding to the ethnicity in Malaysia and sales promotions purchase, we developed the hypothesis to moderate purchase intention as:

- H5. There is a moderating effect of ethnic groups on social surrounding, temporal perspective, task definition, physical surrounding, and purchase intention during sales promotions.

## **3. Research methodology**

### *3.1 Survey instrument and data collection*

To predict the ladies' sales purchase during sales promotions, the authors developed a questionnaire with 30-item. In pre-testing the questionnaire, 30 sets were distributed to 15 female students and 15 university employees that consisted of junior administrative staffs and lecturers who were willing to participate in this survey. We found no discrepancy of the data except for social surrounding. This factor shows low negative reliability. For this reason, we decided to use one-item factor in the instrument, "I prefer to shop with friend(s)," to sales promotion buying behaviour. This would avoid the tendency for respondents to mechanistically completing the factor.

The survey instrument consists of two parts. Part A describes the user's demographics information, Part B uses a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) on five constructs. All situational factors were adapted from Belk's taxonomy (Belk, 1975) but the empirical elements were modified to suit the research context. For example, in task definition factor, "I will only purchase shoes when there is a design I like." After factor analysis, the independent variables consisted of temporal perspective (seven items), task definition (three items), physical surrounding (six items), and sales as dependent variables (six items), totalling 23-item.

A total of 300 questionnaires were printed for the survey. The questionnaires were distributed to different faculties and to administrative staff by hand. Some lecturers were willing to assist in collecting the data from the students in their classes. A total of 233 (77.7 per cent) respondents participated but only 225 (75 per cent) data were valid. The data was only representation of the university population.

### 3.2 Sample and data analysis

The authors collected the data by judgement sampling from a large private university in Malaysia. This convenient sampling method may curtail generalisability of the findings using specific female buyers as shoes experts (Sekaran, 2004, p. 277). Random sampling was not used for reason of mobility of respondents due to classes' change and staff's work schedules. The respondents races are Malaysian Chinese, Malay, Indian, and foreign students. The aim is to recruit young and affluent female shoppers from diverse ethnic groups thus, having chosen a university for this setting. These three groups were dummy coded with ethnic Malay as 1, Chinese as 2, and Others as 0. The Indian and foreign students were combined as "Other" group. The data set was analyzed by quantitative methods using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 16 package. These groups were also transformed and computed as interaction to the predictors of social and physical surroundings, temporal perspective, and task definition. The five constructs were computed based on means.

### 3.3 Results

**3.3.1 Descriptive statistics.** Initial analysis using descriptive statistics was used to explore the data and to obtain an insight into the distribution of the respondents' information. Table II depicts the respondents consisted of students, 156 (69.3 per cent), university staff, 61 (27.1 per cent) and lecturers, 8 (3.5 per cent). In the age survey, the students' highest age groups were 22 (19.1 per cent) and 21 (16.9 per cent), and for working adults, the highest age groups were 24 (6.2 per cent) and 31 (3.5 per cent). In ethnic group data, the Chinese formed the largest group of 132 (58.6 per cent) followed by Malay, 70 (31.1 per cent), Indian and others ethnic groups 23 (10.3 per cent).

A high percentage of the university staffs and lecturers' monthly incomes are above RM 3000 (18.7 per cent) and students' monthly allowances below RM 500 (40.3 per cent). Each respondent was asked to indicate their budget allocation to purchase pair of shoes during sales and majority indicated from RM 41- RM50 (28.8 per cent) and 40 respondents would purchase shoes above RM 70 (17.2 per cent). At least half of the respondents said they would purchase at least 1 pair (53.6 per cent) during sales and 89 respondents (38.2 per cent) said they would purchase between two and three pairs.

The Cronbach alpha for Temporal Perspective is 0.762, Task Definition, 0.916, Physical Surrounding, 0.959, and Sales Promotion, 0.983. These factors met Nunnally's (1978) suggested internal consistency reliability coefficient of 0.7. Table III provides the reliability analysis of the factors. Homogeneity of two sample groups between student and university staff and lecturers was also performed by independent *t*-test by splitting the age at 24 that divides between students and university staff groups. The results show Levene's test *F*-value is 0.830 and *p*-value, 0.363 is not significant. This means the groups are homogenous and could not be split for between groups for further analysis.

**3.3.2 Multiple linear regressions.** In testing the hypotheses, the multiple linear regressions were used to determine the four factors that predict the impact of sales



**Table II.**  
Descriptive statistics data

Demographic information	<i>n</i>	%
Age – Mean: 25.65; SD: 6.931		
Students		
Highest group – Age 22	22	19.1
Lowest group – Age 18	3	1.3
University staff:		
Highest group – Age 31	8	3.6
Lowest group – Age 43, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 53	1	0.4
Respondents		
Students	156	69.3
University Administrative Staff	61	27.1
Lecturers	8	3.5
Ethnic group – Mean: 1.84; SD: 0.814		
Malay	70	31.1
Chinese	132	58.6
Indian and others	23	10.3
Others		
Monthly income/allowances – Mean: 3.51; SD: 2.825		
Below RM500	94	41.8
RM500-RM699	28	12.4
RM700-RM899	19	8.4
RM900-RM999	5	2.2
RM1000-RM1499	10	4.4
RM1500-RM1999	12	5.3
RM2000-RM2999	15	6.7
Above RM2999	42	18.7
Minimum budget allocation for sale purchase – Mean: 3.71; SD: 6.569		
Under RM30	25	11.1
RM30-RM40	53	23.6
RM41-RM50	66	29.3
RM51-RM60	30	13.3
RM61-RM70	14	6.2
Above RM70	36	16.0
Undisclosed	1	0.4
Maximum amount of shoes to purchase – Mean: 1.59; SD: 0.460		
0	1	0.4
Below 2 pairs	119	52.9
2-3 pairs	87	38.7
4-5 pairs	7	3.1
Over 5 pairs	11	4.9

**Table III.**  
Reliability analysis

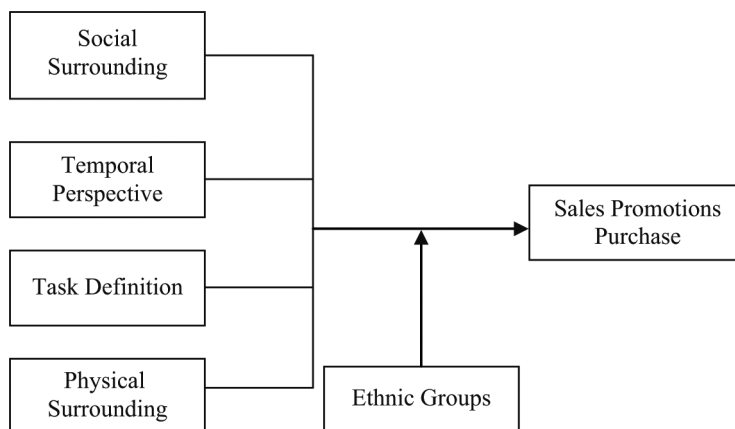
	No. of items	Cronbach alpha	M	SD
Sales purchase	6	0.983	3.50	3.49
Social surrounding (SSP2)	1	–	3.85	0.79
Task definition (TaskDef)	3	0.916	3.71	0.79
Temporal perspective (TempPersc)	7	0.762	3.21	0.49
Physical surrounding (PhySurr)	6	0.726	13.93	3.86

promotions purchase intention. After listwise deletion due to missing values and extreme outlier identified by Mahalannobois' distances, only 225 of 233 (96.6 per cent) usable data were analyzed. The skewness and kurtosis for each variable was checked to ensure no values greater than one. Only the physical surrounding factor was found to violate the kurtosis of 1.567. However, after squared transformed the kurtosis was reduced to 0.747. Homoscedasticity was examined using the scatter plots to identify the consistency of the distributions. The Durbin-Watson is 2.171, and the average VIF is close to 1, which confirms collinearity is not a problem for this model (Field, 2005). The framework showing the relationships between the situational variables and sales purchase intention, moderated by ethnic groups is presented in Figure 1.

In analysing the model, since there is no *priori* hypotheses been made to determine the order of the predictors, a direct method was employed (Neill, 2007) for predicting Belk's situational factors. The four variables results in Model 2 show significant  $R^2$  of 0.307 and adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.288 ( $F(4, 224) = 21.438, p = 0.000$ ) for predicting sales purchase among the respondents with large effect size of 44.3 per cent (Cohen, 1992). The strongest predictor "Temporal Perspective" has a significant regression coefficient  $\beta = 0.339, t(224) = 5.597, p = 0.000$ . The weakest predictor is "Social Surrounding" with non-significant regression coefficient  $\beta = 0.109, t(224) = 1.783, p = 0.076$ .  $H2$ ,  $H3$ , and  $H4$  are supported,  $H1$  is not. Table IV depicts the results of the models. Therefore, the intention of sales purchase model is presented as:

$$\text{Sales Purchase} = 0.109 * \text{SSP2} + 0.171 * \text{TaskDef} + 0.339 * \text{TemPersc} + 0.208 * \text{PhySurr} + \text{Error}$$

When ethnic groups' variables were examined as moderators, the interaction terms were transformed and computed. The results show a small increase of  $R^2$  of 0.324 and adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.293 ( $F(4, 224) = 1.359, p = 0.249$ ) for predicting sales purchase and a large effect size of 47.9 per cent. Temporal Perspective is the strongest predictor and has a significant regression coefficient  $\beta = 0.397, t(244) = 4.248, p = 0.000$ . The non-significant weakest predictor is "Task Definition" with regression coefficient  $\beta = -0.021, t(244) = -0.205, p = 0.838$ . Therefore,  $H5$  is not supported.



**Figure 1.**  
Belk's model of situational  
factors on sales  
promotions purchase  
intention

**Table IV.**  
Moderating effect of  
ethnic group on sales  
purchase

	DV: sales purchase intention		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<i>Control variables</i>			
Age	-0.17	0.45	0.054
Income/allowance	-0.019	-0.061	-0.082
<i>Main effects</i>			
Social surrounding (SS)		0.109	0.136
Task definition (TaskDef)		0.171 ***	-0.021
Temporal perspective (TemPersc)		0.339 ***	0.397 ***
Physical surrounding (PhySurr)		0.208 ***	0.252 ***
<i>Interactions</i>			
Ethnic x Social surrounding			0.911
Ethnic x Task definition			0.638 **
Ethnic x Temporal perspective			-0.326
Ethnic x Physical surrounding			-0.286
$R^2$	0.034 *	0.307 ***	0.324
$R^2$ Adj	0.026	0.288	0.293
$\Delta R^2$	0.034	0.273	0.017
Effect size	3.52 (small)	44.3 (large)	
<b>Note:</b> Significant level: * $p < 0.1$ ; ** $p < 0.05$ ; *** $p < 0.01$			

The situational factors' individual items in Model 2 were also computed with the dependent variable to check the significant (Table V). Here, which individual items that affect purchase intention during sales promotions were examined that could provide retailers insights to sales promotions planning. For example, retail owners can consider feedback on physical surrounding that music and store size were more important than impressive internal and external décor design and bright store.

#### 4. Discussion and recommendations

This study examines the extent to which ladies experienced in yearly purchased of shoes during sales promotions in mall retail shoes shop lots. In model 2, the findings revealed that at least 30.7 per cent of the variance in sales promotions purchase is explained by Belk's situational factors of Social Surrounding, Temporal Perspective, Task Definition, and Physical Surrounding. In model 3, the results show that the ethnic groups do not moderate the situational factors.

##### 4.1 Temporal perspective

The best predictor for sales promotion on buying intention is temporal perspective variables. The consumers expressed the importance of first day of sales period for first buyer's advantage on more shoes designs selections. The last day of sales period is not significant. Perhaps the buyers know during the last period of sales, only few fancy shoes are left on display. Other interesting significant findings are the shorter travelling time, which is consistent with Nicholls *et al.* (2002) study; and more shoes designs affect longer time spent in a retail shoes shops.

This study reveals the distance from home to mall influences buyer's choice of mall. While the distance is beyond the control by the owners, they should ensure shoes

Factors	Social surrounding	Temporal perspective	Task definition	Physical surrounding
Social surrounding: $F(1, 225) = 16.305$ , $p < 0.000$ ; Effect size = 7.3 per cent (small)				
Shopping with friends	NS			
Temporal perspective: $F(7, 225) = 11.903$ , $p < 0.000$ ; Effect size = 38 per cent (large)				
First day of sale		S		
Mid-sale		S		
Last day of sale		NS		
Travelling time		S		
Availability of shoe designs		S		
Sales assistant advice		NS		
More sales assistant		NS		
Task definition: $F(3, 225) = 9.183$ , $p < 0.000$ ; Effect size = 12 per cent (small)				
Design I like			NS	
Extra money			S	
Following friend's purchase			NS	
Physical surrounding: $F(6, 224) = 6.197$ , $p < 0.000$ ; Effect size = 17 per cent (small)				
Impressive external design				NS
Impressive interior design				NS
Large store				S
Nice odour				NS
Music in store				S
Bright store				NS

**Table V.**  
Summary of individual  
factors

quality and sale prices are competitive among other competitors to persuade the buyers' visits. Nicholls *et al.* (2002) study shows that merchandise, location, and specialty stores are important criteria for mall selection. For these reasons, mall retail managers need to provide sufficient shoes designs and promote sales through appropriate media about their specialties.

#### 4.2 Physical surrounding

The second important predictor is the physical surrounding for sale promotions. In this study, buyers were asked about shops preferences that include exterior and interior décor, selected soothing music, bright lightings, and scented environment to commemorate the occasion. These buyers emphasised enjoying shopping in an environment with music and in large retail shoes store. Past studies have shown that music have significant impact on audience moods and purchase intentions (Keng *et al.*, 2007; Alpert and Alpert, 2006; Baker, 1987). It was found that neat and spacious atmosphere affect utilitarian shoppers' level of intention to patronise, time and money spent (Jin and Kim, 2003).

The non-significant factors of exterior and interior décor, bright lightings, and scented environment may suggest this group of consumers are accustomed to these yearly affairs and would not affect the buyer's behaviours much.

Selection of music should match with the consumers' age and occasions. Wrong choice could be annoying to music lovers and managers need to take heed of that. Malls retail shops are mainly leased to occupiers or retail owners and the rental costs depend on the space occupied. Occupiers generally have little control over space unless their businesses are viable for bigger space and higher rental costs. A method retail owners could do is to elevate the interior shop design to make it look spacious. According to interior design experts mounting wall mirrors would serve to elevate space, decorative, and provide the functional aspects to the shop/home (Tice (n.d.); Smythe, 2011).

#### *4.3 Task definition*

The third significant predictor to sales promotion purchase is the task definition. Task definition was represented by "I will only purchase shoes when I saw the design I like," "... when I have the money," "... when I saw my friends have it, I would want it." Among the three items, money is the significant factor. In other words, shopping motives is related to money spent during a shopping trip (Jin and Kim, 2003).

Presumably, these sale shoppers are price sensitive buyers and their buying intention and motivation are related to "I will only buy shoes when I have the money," implies this group of buyers may shift from shops to shops if the sales discount is not attractive. Furthermore, there are many shoes retail shops in a shopping mall.

Therefore, retail owners should consider providing some form of monetary sales promotions strategy, such as rebate and coupons (El-Adly, 2007; Kwok and Uncles, 2005), for first purchase to "lure" prospective buyers for further reducible discount in the next purchase.

#### *4.4 Social surrounding*

The non-significant of one-item social surrounding, "I prefer to shop with my friends," implies that during sale shopping, the social groups may split and engross in trying shoes themselves, resulting in the possibilities that friends may or may not influence the consumer on shoes choice. Cross-cultural study by Nicholls (1996) shows different products were purchased in different countries among social shoppers. It depends on the companion's role in the particular shopping expedition (Zhuang *et al.*, 2006).

#### *4.5 Ethnic group moderation*

The initial idea of investigating the interaction between situational influences and shoppers' purchase intention was originated from the assumption that different ethnic groups will react differently and uniquely toward their buying behaviours corresponding to different festive and other sales seasons (Roslow *et al.*, 2000; Burton, 2002). Understand this phenomenon would direct retailers to different sales promotion strategy. However, the result from ethnic group indicates no distinct culture sensitive groups that segregate themselves in different festive and other sales seasons purchase. This is consistent with Kwok and Uncles (2005) findings in Australia where cultural differences are independent to sales purchase intention.

Obviously, this can be argued based the following viewpoints and past studies. First, shoes are wear-and-tear items that need replacement. Second, recreational discount seekers are bargain seekers and tend to buy as much as possible and have

the characteristics of “fashion/novel consciousness” (Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003). Third, all shoes have its unique designs part of garments and female consumers tend to be fashion conscious and often match their shoes with their clothing (Nam *et al.*, 2007).

## 5. Contribution to marketing practice

### 5.1 Planning for sales promotion

**5.1.1 Short messages service (SMS).** Marketing managers should capitalise on sending sales promotion messages to their registered members as part of communication strategy, informing them of special knock-down discount price for pre-sales. This planning has three implications. First, shoppers who reside far from shopping malls are well informed of the sales and would pre-plan the shopping outing for the week. Second, members would entice their friends to become members to make full use of the pre-sales benefits (although not necessarily they would shop together). Third, this promotion tactic is effective as messages are communicated directly to members. This strategy indirectly fit into temporal perspective as “stimulus” time factor (Anic and Radas, 2006; Belk, 1975) that allows consumers to pre-plan their shopping schedule.

**5.1.2 Advertising.** For barrier to reach non-members on sales promotions, retailers can use house-to-house pamphlet advertisements. Though costly, this advertising technique is effective to reach most households. The pamphlets could be printed with some attractive designer shoes and enclosed discount coupon to motivate potential shoppers. However, retailers must ensure sufficient stocks are available for the advertised shoes.

### 5.2 Staging for sale promotion

**5.2.1 Gifts and rebates.** Studies have shown that door gifts and rebates are known to encourage store loyalty (Peter and Olsen, 2010; Kumar and Karande, 2000). With pamphlets discount coupons and members purchase points, consumers are likely to be attracted to the stores.

**5.2.2 Music and interior lighting.** Yalch and Spangenberg (2000) found consumers tend to shop longer when the music hit their emotional state and the music are familiar to them. This implies the right choice of music is important and it is suggested that manager should play the most recent chart songs. Lighting creativity is the responsibility of the retail manager (Sharples, 1987). With the recent improvement on diode lighting, it is possible for retailers to “bend” the lighting to improve lighting décor. Furthermore, diode lightings are bright, colourful, and consume low electric power. Music and lighting are recommended for both the mall and individual footwear store as each displays its characteristics of its environments that delight the customers (Jackson and Konell, 1993).

**5.2.3 Product mix.** Retailers should promote new arrival shoes in line with on sales shoes as product mix. Consumers may sometimes consider purchasing new arrivals with sales shoes as trading off costs. The owner must also ensure sufficient shoes designs are available in stock for such sale strategy.

**5.2.4 Space extension.** If owners require additional space for more shoes display during sales promotions, they need to negotiate with the mall management for temporary space extension at the vicinity of the store with discounted charges. Caveat to this concept is the additional temporary staffs required for the extension.



## 6. Limitations and future study

The study was conducted by convenience sampling in a university with a group of students and university staffs using Belk's framework. The respondents' perceptions and buying experience on local shoes sales promotions were found. As such, there are three apparent limitations identified. First, the results are not generalisable to other female's groups of age above 31, education level, income above RM 3,000, and other demographic attributes not specified in this study.

Second, the study may yield different results if the respondents are intercepted immediately after shopping as the respondents' are able to recall then shopping events. This was due to the possibility of biases in retrospective accounts of past events (Schwenk, 1995; Singh and Greenhaus, 2004). However, it is assumed that these biases are minimal as there are six sales per year in the country, averaging one sale per two months. Despite the limitations, the findings provide some insights on the present day sales shoppers' behaviours for mall practitioners and researchers. Third, the dependent variable only asked the respondents' perceptions on all sales promotion in cluster as opposed to perception of different sales promotions.

Future study should test on the antecedent state for the same frameworks, moderated by different age and incomes groups, and education level on the same product in retail shoes store setting to confirm the consistency of the findings by comparing the dataset with the present results. If the social surrounding factor consists of more than one-item, the questions should include few negatively worded questions to prevent the tendency of mechanistic respond from the respondents (Sekaran, 2004, p. 240).

## 7. Conclusion

In this study, we examine ladies shoppers buying intention in mall retail shoes stores using Belk's model (Belk, 1975). The situational factors using social surrounding, temporal perspective, task definition and physical surrounding to sales purchase intention have identified few key variables that influence this group of shoppers' behaviour. Thus, the study is concluded as follows:

- As shoppers preferred shopping during the first day of sales, retail owner must ensure pre-first day sales are well advertised in appropriate media.
- As shoppers preferred shopping in outlet with more shoes designs, retail owner must ensure sufficient on sales shoes and new designs are display at the shelves.
- As shoppers preferred an outlet with music and bright store, retail owner must ensure the right choice of music to match shopper's age group and festive songs couple with fancy bright lighting decoration.
- As shoppers preferred to shop in large store, retail owner should consider mounting wall mirrors as interior design to elevate shop's space to meet consumer's preference on large shop space.
- As shoppers are limited by budget during purchase, retail owner to consider strategies associated with the choice of monetary promotions and non-monetary promotions to suit all buyers (Kwok and Uncles, 2005) to attract them for next sales visits.

Overall, the study indicates current mall sale retail shoppers' buying behaviour and decision, which may change over time. Compliance of these factors would induce more

time spend among shoppers in the store and positive impact on buying behaviour and an impact on external validity. Therefore, successful retail investment will require constant monitoring and adequate response to changing consumer behaviour and needs in order to achieve and sustain competitive advantage and long-term profitability (Wong *et al.*, 2001).

## Notes

1. Malaysia Retailer-Chain Association (MRCA), available at: [www.mrca.org.my/content/mrca+profile-33.aspx](http://www.mrca.org.my/content/mrca+profile-33.aspx) (accessed 16 February 2011).
2. Department Stores in Malaysia, available at: [www.reportlinker.com](http://www.reportlinker.com) (accessed 16 February 2011).

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