

Qualitative Study on Consumers Buying Behaviour of Imported Shoe Products: The Case of Bule Hora Town

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore the consumer buying behaviour of imported shoe products in Bule Hora town. The study examined consumer preference, consumer attitude, product attributes, and demographic category in relationship with imported shoes. The study adopts an exploratory research design with a qualitative interpretative phenomenology approach. Purposive sampling technique is deployed to select a sample from the population of consumers of the town. This qualitative study relied on in-depth study on six participants and a focus group consisting of five members. Data are collected from the participants and focus group discussion members. Thematic analysis is used to analyse the data. The findings show that consumers in the study area prefer imported shoes, although they have no predetermined purchase schedule for imported shoes. Besides, the factors that influence purchase decision are price, income, and availability of smart imported shoes in the market. The consumers' buying behaviour is largely influenced by attributes such as the quality, design/style, price, and the colour of the imported shoe. Additionally, demographic profiles such as gender, age, educational status, and income accelerate consumer buying behaviour. The study recommends that marketers should focus on identifying changing consumers' preferences and adjust product attributes according to consumers' choice. Future researchers could ponder additional product categories since the relative influences of price, quality, colour and test in consumer evaluations appear to vary by differences in product category and place.

Key Words: Consumer preference, consumer attitude, product attributes, shoe products, thematic analysis

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1. Introduction

An adage has it that a consumer is the king of the market. And most marketing activities of business enterprises of today go around identifying the habits, tastes, preferences, perceptions, and attitudes of consumers (Gera, 2014). Hence, more and more marketers prioritize identifying the nature of consumer behaviour as it is crucial for marketers to stay on the same path with the changes in consumer behaviour to ensure product or service's success.

Consumers are shaped to some extent by the environment in which consumers live and consumers influence environments through consumer behaviours in turn (Morden, 1991). Since consumers are the most important factor for business continuation, the understanding of consumer behaviour is a key element in preparing marketing strategy (Palmer, 2001). Today, as a result of changing business environment and globalization, advances in communications and transportation technologies global competition is intensifying, foreign firms are expanding into new international markets and home markets are no longer as rich in opportunity. Local companies that never thought about foreign competitors suddenly find these competitions in their gates (Armstrong *et al.*, 2005).

Ethiopia, as one part of the world community, changes take place in the world business activity may affect negatively or positively its business activities, these include business activities performed by domestic shoe producers and marketers. Even though much of the Ethiopian market is dominated by imported goods, there are large number of manufacturing companies including shoe companies. The Ethiopian shoe producing companies supply their products in companies shoe stores and shops, boutiques, shoe retails shops and shoe retail chains. But studies conducted on the leather sector indicated that the footwear sub-sector in Ethiopia is dominated by cheap imports from Asia, particularly from China (Tegegne, 2007). According to the World Bank Group (2006), the domestic market for shoe products at present suffers from aggressive price competition from synthetic shoe products imported from China at much cheaper prices. Though low in durability, these low-quality Chinese shoes are considered somewhat stylish and fashionable in design and heel heights and are available for men, women, and children in all local shops. The above studies showed that domestic shoe markets are filled with various imported shoe. As a result, domestic shoes are facing stiff competition from abroad in their home market.

The consumers' buying behaviour of shoes has remained as open that need to be assessed. Yet, there are relatively few studies that have systematically investigated consumer buying behaviour in developing countries in sub-Saharan Africa and very little is known about consumer behaviour in Ethiopia and study area Bule Hora town. To address this research gap, this study has been undertaken to examine consumer buying behaviour towards imported shoe products in the Bule Hora Town. Since an understanding of what consumers' attitudes and why they prefer is important for shoe manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers.

The main aim of the study is to explore consumers' buying behaviour of imported shoe products in the case of Bule Hora town administration.

More specifically, the study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To analyse the consumers' attitude, preference and buying behaviour for imported shoe products.
- To explore product attributes that are mostly chosen by consumers when buying imported shoe products.
- To study the categories of consumers and their preference who buy imported shoe products more frequently.

2. Literature Review

Consumer Buying Behaviour

Consumer buying behaviour refers to the buying behaviour of final consumers: individuals and households who buy goods and services for personal consumption. All these final consumers combine to make up the consumer market (Morden, 1991). Belch and Belch (2004), defined, consumer behaviour as “the process and activities people engage in when searching, selecting, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of product and services to satisfy their needs and desire”. As Armstrong et al., (2005), defined Consumer behaviour is the process individuals or groups go through to select, purchase, use and dispose of goods, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy their needs and desires. According to Peter, J. P. and Olsen, J. C. (2010), consumers buying behaviour has to do with the attitude, intention, preference and strength to the commitment and the consumer's ways of identification.

Consumer Preferences

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2010), there is a great demand for an enormous variety of goods and services, especially as consumers differ from one another in that of age, gender, income, education level, culture, and tastes. Moreover, the relationships between different consumers, as well as their contact with other elements of the world surroundings, affect their choice of products, services, and companies. The study conducted by Mohammed et al (2000), identified that consumers prefer imported products to local products this is because they perceive imported products are higher in quality than local products. Similarly, a study conducted by Robert (2009), depicts that superior quality and consumer tests are the two important reasons for the consumer preference for foreign products. In the same way, Yibeltal (2018), identified imported shoes dominated the consumers' choice.

Product Attributes

Product is anything that can be offered to the market for attention, acquisition, use or consumption that might satisfy a need or want (Palmer A., 2001). Developing a product involves defining the benefits that

the product will offer. These benefits are communicated and delivered by tangible product attributes, such as quality, feature, style, and design. Decisions about these attributes are particularly important as they greatly affect consumer reactions to a product (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010).

According to a study conducted by Endalew Adamu, (2011), shoe products are composed of many physical characteristics, which are perceived differently by various consumers. When considering a product purchase, consumers tend to compare and contrast alternative products made up of different attribute combinations. The finding of the same study depicted that consumers' preference for shoe items depends on product price, quality, design, and brand. Marketers should work on to improve this all-product attributes for the company's success.

The research gap is the uniqueness of this specific research from prior research (Malhotra, 2004). Here below empirical, methodological, knowledge gaps that are common in the qualitative research were discussed as follows.

The review of prior research shows that several studies are carried out in the area of consumer buying behaviour all around the globe but there are relatively few studies that have systematically investigated consumer buying behaviour in developing countries in sub-Saharan Africa only very few research were done on consumer buying behaviour related areas in Ethiopia and the researcher couldn't get a study done in the study area with the same topic. The most of the researches focused on particular themes, like consumer preferences, consumer attitude, consumer buying behaviour, and product attributes (Mohammed et al., 2000; Yibeltal, 2018; Gera, 2014; Endalew, 2011; Gual, 2011; Siraw Migbaru, 2014). Most of the studies compares consumer preference for imported shoe products and local shoe products and the study focuses on only leather shoe products it did not include other types of shoes other than the leather shoe. In this specific study, the researcher included consumer preference, consumer attitude, consumer buying behaviour, product attributes and demographic characteristics of the consumers who are intended more to buy imported shoes included in the study.

There are a few pieces of qualitative research that were conducted in the area of consumer buying behaviour in sub-Saharan Africa, but the researcher couldn't get a single study in Ethiopia on the phenomenon. Research by Endalew (2011) and Yibeltal (2018) were conducted that consumer buying behaviour was influenced by the quality, price, design, and colour of the product, yet their studies did not consider demographic characteristics. Consumer buying behaviour is known to be determined by demographic characteristics such as age, sex, income, education, etc. Therefore, this research will fill this research gap.

The research methodology of the current study is different from prior research methodology. The identified gaps are mentioned as follows:

The first gap may relate to the research design, which is qualitative research. Most of the research that have been conducted in consumer buying behaviour is concerned for cause-and-effect analysis. Therefore, the current research uses qualitative research design especially interpretative phenomenology. The second methodology gap that this research differs from that prior research that have been conducted in qualitative research design with some parts of the research design. For example, the current study has been collected primary data from interviews and focus group discussions. However, the other researchers have used only interviews as primary data collection tool. Quantitative research is used statistical representation as a parameter to measure data sufficiency. Here in the qualitative data the design is not supposed to consider the statistical representation of the sample, rather the data saturation takes into consideration. So, there is a gap in the methodology of the current research and the prior studies that may create a variation on the final finding of the research.

3. Research Methodology

Research Design

Research design is a master plan specifying the methods and procedures for collecting and analyzing the needed information (Malhotra, 2004). For this study exploratory research design with an interpretative phenomenological study has been employed. Exploratory research design emphasis the discovery of ideas and insights (Kothari, 2004); thus, it enables the researcher to get consumer's ideas and insights about imported shoe products. The purpose of using interpretative phenomenological study is to explore and understand the lived experience of a specified phenomenon. It is phenomenological in that it is concerned with the individuals' lived experience and explores personal perceptions and meanings attributed to an object or an experience (Creswell, 2009). The interpretative phenomenological study enables to obtain the participants' perception and experience of buying about imported shoe products. Therefore, this enables the researcher to identify the consumers' preferences that influence them to make a purchase decision and their choice about imported shoes.

The target population that has been involved in this study was the general public; who were consumers of different imported shoe products.

Sampling is the process or technique of selecting a suitable sample for determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population (Malhotra, 2004). For this study, the Purposeful sampling method has been used for the selection of participants. Purposeful sampling is commonly used in qualitative research. It involves selecting research participants according to the needs of the study; in that researcher choose participants who give a richness of information that is suitable for detailed research (Kothari, 2004). Since the numbers of consumers are infinite and to get sufficient data the researcher has chosen two shoe

retail shops in the town purposefully. Eight consumers have been planned initially for the sample but six consumers of imported shoe products have been interviewed as the responses from further participants are redundant due to saturation of responses. In addition to the personal interview, focus group discussions (FGD) have been conducted to triangulate data. Selection criteria were inclusive and enable the researcher to get sufficient data about consumers' attitudes, experiences, preferences, and behaviour.

For this study personal interview and focus group discussion has been employed. This is because; interviewing is the best technique to use "to find out those things we cannot directly observe...feelings, thoughts, and intentions". (Merriam, 1998). All the interviews and focus group discussions were conducted and facilitated by one research assistant and researcher himself. Semi-structured interview questions have been used to undertake personal interviews and group discussions. In the beginning, the researcher prepared interview questions and had undertaken a pilot survey. This is mainly based on the belief that this approach will allow respondents to describe their experiences or express their feelings and also to check if further revision is needed before conducting the study. All questions were conducted at two chosen shoe retail shops. Informed consent notice has been presented to each informant before the start of the interview. The total duration of each interview has been 25 minutes. Thus, the total amount of time spent for interview purposes amounted to approximately two hours and 30 minutes. A list of general type questions were used at the beginning of the interview to guide the informants' who were encouraged to express their feeling freely concerning their buying behaviour. All the interviews have been audio-recorded and then translated into the written form of data at the early stages of the data collection. Observation notes were also taken during the interviews to capture informants' emotions such as nodding, laughter, smiles, frowns and other indicators for each response from the participant, which helped the data analysis to explore patterns from the similar response between participant to get meaningful insight from the study.

Data Analysis, reliability and validity

Creswell (2009) noted that data collection and analysis must be a simultaneous process in qualitative research. He states that qualitative data analysis involves classifying things, persons, and events and the properties that characterize them. To achieve the aim of this study the data collected through interviews and focus group discussions has been recorded and then incorporated. All the data acquired has been inspected and categorized recombining the evidence to address the phenomenon under study. The identity of the informants has been remained confidential in line with the ethical norms and considerations. The coding process was used to ensure the confidentiality of the names and positions of the informants. For this study thematic data analysis method which is a common method of data analysis in qualitative research has been employed. It enables the researcher to identify the main themes that summarize all the views you have collected.

To assure the reliability and validity of this study, the researcher has taken different measures. To ensure reliability interview questions are prepared based on literature review and to make the participants comfortable all interview and focus group discussion questions have been translated into the Amharic language. The pilot survey had been undertaken to check the interview question. Further revision is needed before conducting the study and also during the data collection detailed field notes, tape for recording and organizing the collected data has been employed. To ensure the validity of data collected through interviews of the participants and FGD has been triangulated to get patterns. To build the participants' trust approach participants closely and using the Amharic language have been employed. Finally, the rough draft of the research was checked by participants to ensure the credibility of the findings and interpretations.

4. Results and Discussion

The data collected through interviews and focus group discussions were transcribed and then integrated. All the data acquired were examined and categorized recombining the evidence to address the phenomenon under study. The themes identified within the data include: (a) the consumers' perception, (b) the consumers' attitude, (c) product attributes, (d) consumer buying behaviour and (e) demographic categories which purchase frequently. The identity of the informants remained confidential in line with the ethical norms and considerations. A coding process was utilized for this purpose. All of the interview informants were coded as R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, and R6, correspondingly. In the same way members of the focus group, discussion was coded as P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5. The coding process was used to ensure the confidentiality of the names and positions of the informants.

4.1. Results

Demographic profile

For this study the total of 6 consumers (5 male & 1 female) were interviewed. Their ages range between 25 and 37 and five of the informants' monthly income ranges between 5000 and 10,470 but informant (R4) mentioned he has no constant monthly income so that he doesn't know his monthly income. Concerning their educational background, five of the informants' educational levels lay in the range of grade 10 and masters. Besides this, the informant (R4) responded he is illiterate. Concerning marital status five of informants are married but informant (R3) responded she is single. Four of the informants are merchants but, informant (R4) responded he is a daily labourer, and the informant (R5) is a government employee. In the same way, five consumers of the imported shoe have participated in the FGD and all were male. The three of them were government employees and two of them are merchants. The educational status ranges

from grade ten to a master's degree. All of them are married and their monthly income ranges from 4000 to 6000 birr. The same interview schedule was provided for discussion as a discussion guideline.

Consumers' Preference

From the interviews of the participants and focus group discussion, key responses have been taken. All informants have responded that they prefer imported casual shoes but, their reasons are different. Some of the reasons are mentioned as follows: *"It is standardized, durable can wear conformably during work can easily be cleaned. Comparatively, its price is cheap"* (R1) & (R6). *"It is fashionable can serve for long duration can be purchased with minimum price favourable to wear"* (R2) & (R3). *"It is comfortable for me during my work, safety. One can wear a long period and can be purchased with minimum price"* (R4). *"It can be found easily in our locality. It is well designed and comfortable to wear Every category of people can attain its price because the high price to low price range products is available"* (R5).

Moreover, four reasons allow respondents to prefer imported shoe at Bule Hora town administration where informants (R1), (R2), (R3), (R4), (R5), and (R6) responded they prefer imported shoe because of its quality, design, and price. Besides, informant (R5) mentioned: availability of imported shoe products. In the same way, all members of Focus group discussion also agree with the views of the informants who also prefer casual imported shoes because of its price, quality, and design.

Consumers' Attitude

To see the consumers' attitudes about the imported shoe, the researcher has prepared different questions to the interviewees. Accordingly, all of the informants like imported cloth shoes to wear. But, for different reasons. *"... I used to wear imported shoe products for long period...I feel comfortable during my workIt can easily be washed..... Can wear it on any occasion...."* (R1), (R4), and (R6). *"...materials it is made of is good..... fashionable....one can wear it for a long period with comfort..... can easily be cleaned..."* (R2) & (R5). *"... it enables me to wear a long period..... it is favourable to me....."* (R3).

There are four reasons that make respondents to prefer imported shoe products. Some informants (R1), (R4), and (R6) responded they like the imported shoe because of its quality and design. In the same way, informant (R3) likes imported shoes because of its quality. Besides, informants (R2) & (R5) like the imported shoe because of its quality, design, and the materials it is made. In line with the above findings, four members of FGD mentioned that they like imported cloth shoe product but one of the members of the FGD (P4) describes he likes leather shoes. But all of the FGD members responded that they like the imported shoe because of its quality, design/style, and materials its made.

Consumer buying behaviour

To know consumers buying behaviour of an imported shoe in Bule Hora town administration; The consumers interviewed to share their opinions on how often purchase the imported shoe and related issues. All of the informants responded they have no schedule to buy an imported shoe. But they explained different condition which makes them buy; For example, informant (R1), (R2) & (R6) mentioned that “.....I have no constant predetermined purchase schedule.... I buy imported shoes when I have seen the smart shoe in the shop.....I buy whenever I have got money.... When I have program/event...” “... I have no constant purchase arrangement.....I can buy three times in a year or sometimes up to four times in a year.... My purchase determined by income... availability of smart imported shoe leads me to buy.....”(R3) & (R5). “.....it is not constant..... I can buy once in a year ...sometimes when I get enough money I can purchase twice in a year....” (R4).

Based on the informants’ responses about having no constant predetermined schedule but different factors lead them to purchase. Informants (R1), (R2) & (R6) responded they purchase imported shoes when they see it is smart when they have enough money & they have program/event. In the same way informant (R4) purchases imported shoes when he has got enough income. On the other hand informants (R3) & (R5) responded that availability of smart shoe and their income determine purchase decision& they mentioned that they can make purchase decision three up to four times in a year. Members of FGD also supported the above view; they do not have imported shoe purchase schedules but purchase: when they see the new arrival of smart imported shoes but with enough money.

Informants also asked whether they consider advice from anyone during imported shoe purchase decision or not. They respond differently “.....I can make a purchase decision.....I decide by myself... (R1), (R2), (R5) & (R6). “..... Yes, I take advice from my friends.....” (R3). “.....my wife suggests me during my cloths purchase..... (R4).

Three informants decided by themselves during imported shoe purchase; but one informant (R3) took advice from her friends while informant (R4) took advice from his wife. All of the respondents are not conscious about the brand of imported shoe products rather consider the quality and design of imported shoes during the purchase decision. Members of the FGD opined the same views of the respondents.

Product Attributes

The question for product attributes was whether the product attributes caught the respondent’s attention and make him/her buy a pair of imported shoes. Informant responses led to four sub-themes: (a) how consumers consider the price of imported shoes? (b) How do consumers consider the quality of imported shoes? (c) How do consumers consider the design/style of imported shoes? & (d) How consumers consider

the colour of imported shoes? The product attributes make all of the informants to purchase imported shoe but different informants give different priorities of product attributes. Example informant (R1)*product fashion ability is mandatory to purchase...if its shape is not favourable for me I'm not going to purchase.*” “*I wanted to purchase a product which gives me comfort I prefer an imported shoe with affordable price....*” (R2) & (R4). “*I used to check product fashion ability and conformability to buy.....*” (R3) & (R6). “*.....I prefer imported shoe which is fashionable and well designed Products with attainable price.....I dislike imported shoes with bright colour especially yellow colour...*” (R5).

Based on the informant (R1) attracted by the design of the imported product; Informants (R2) & (R4) attracted by the quality and price of the imported shoe. Informants (R3) & (R6) attracted by the quality and design of the imported shoe and informant R5 attracted by the design and colour of the product. Here members of FGD mentioned that product attributes to influence their purchase decision; four of the members attracted by quality, price and design/ style of imported shoe but one member (P3) has stressed that He is more attracted by the quality of the imported shoe.

Consumers' price consideration

The question is forwarded to know consumers' attitudes about the price of an imported shoe in the Bole Hora town. They respond as follows: “*the price of the imported shoe is less when we compare with local products..... there is a wide option to choose favourable shoes.....wide variety of price range....*” (R1), (R2), (R4) & (R6). “*.....imported shoe is very expensive.....it is comfortable to weardurable when we compare with local shoe products...*” (R3). Most informants reported that imported shoe price is lower whereas, a few mentioned imported shoe is expensive when we compare with local products. The summary of FGD depicts that imported shoe price is less when compared with local shoe price in Bule Hora town.

Consumers' quality consideration

Here informants expected to mention their attitude about imported shoe quality. All of the informants responded imported shoes are better in quality as mentioned below: “*..... It is comfortable to wear...durable when we compared with local shoe products.....it is favourable for work.....one can wear a long period with comfort.....*” (R1), (R2), (R3), (R4), (R5) and (R6). In opposite to this, informant (R5) responded that there is some imported shoe product that is less in quality especially from China. Here members of FGD summarizes that imported shoe is overall better in quality and can serve well than local shoe product.

Consumers design/style consideration

This is to know the consumers' attitudes concerning imported shoe design/style. All of the informants responded that imported shoe is better in terms of design/style. The informants responded like "...it is fashionable to wear.....*there is a wide variety of options to choose....portable to wear.....attractive and favourable product.....*" (R1), (R2), (R3), (R4), (R5) and (R6). The summary of FGD mentioned that imported shoe is fashionable and there is a wide variety of product design; it is better in terms of design and style.

Consumers colour consideration

Here informants expected to express their attitude about whether the imported shoe has a colour option or not. All of the informants (R1), (R2), (R3), (R4), (R5) and (R6) responded that there is a wide option of colour choice in case of the imported shoe. Here informants (R1), (R2), (R3), (R4), & (R6) added, they do not consider colour during purchase decision rather they consider quality, price and design to make purchase decision whereas informant (R5) mentioned he considers colour during the purchase decision. The members of FGD also summarized that there is a variety of colour options but, they focus more on product design and quality other than the colour of the product.

Demographic category

Here it is important to know which demographic category prefers to purchase and uses to wear imported shoe products more frequently. All of the informants responded as follows: "... *young people, literate can use the imported shoe more.... Nowadays both male and female are wearing the imported shoes.....there is a wide variety of price range for high-income people and low-income people...*" (R1) &(R2). "... *both male and female prefer imported shoe.... It seems high income, literate youngsters prefer imported shoe more.....*" (R3) &(R5). "... *I think young male consumers prefer more to buy imported shoes... those educated prefers imported shoe more.....it is obvious if "here is no enough income one cannot think imported shoe to buy.....*" (R4) & (R6).

Based on the informants (R1) & (R2) mentioned young, literate, both sex and both low and high-income people make purchase imported shoes frequently. High income, literate, young and both sex prefer to buy imported shoes frequently. Whereas (R4) & (R6) mentioned male, literate, young and high-income consumers prefer to buy imported shoes frequently. The summary of focus group discussion also agreed on the above results and explained both male and female, young, literate and high-income consumers prefer to purchase imported shoe frequently.

4.2. Discussion

Consumers' preference

Consumers' purchase choice is determined by consumers' product demand and preference. The preference can be shaped by different reasons like better product quality, style/design, and lower price. This is consistent with Mohammed et al (2000) that consumers prefer imported products to local products because they perceive imported products are higher in quality than local products. The present study indicated consumers prefer imported shoe products to purchase because of its better quality, design, price, and availability. This is supported by findings of Yibeltal (2018) whose study identified that imported shoe dominated the consumers' choice: quality played an important role in influencing consumers shoe preference. Consumers prefer the product which they perceive better in any aspect.

Consumers' attitude

Attitude is the way consumers believe, feel, experience and respond to the internal and external environment. Understanding the consumers' attitudes about the product is the key issue for business success. Since consumers' attitudes determine purchase decisions highly. Similarly, Gera (2014) in his study identified that attitude and perception variation affects consumers purchase decision. In the present study, consumers like the imported shoe because of its quality, design, and materials it's made of and explained it is fashionable and comfortable to wear. In line with this, Yibeltal A. (2018), concluded in his study that product quality, price, brand, and country of origin affects consumers' attitudes positively against the imported shoe.

Consumer buying behaviour

Consumers buying behaviour is the whole process of the purchase of goods and services from the perception of the product at the beginning to post-purchase dissonance. The definition given by Armstrong et al (2005), also in line with the above idea, it is the process of individuals or groups go through to select, purchase, use and dispose of goods, services, ideas and experiences to satisfy their needs and desires. This purchase decision process is influenced by different factors; In the present study, respondents have no predetermined purchase schedule, but their purchase decision are influenced by their income and availability of smart imported shoes in the market. Similarly, Endalew (2011), concluded in his study that consumers purchase behaviour affected by product design and availability; imported shoes are stylish than local products. During the purchase decision, the majority of the respondents decide by themselves but some of them receive advice from family and/or friends.

Product Attribute

Based on the interview, informants and focus group members were asked whether product attributes catch their attention and make them to buy an imported shoe or not. All of the informants answered yes without any hesitation. Product attributes any product feature that makes consumers decide to purchase a product. Product attributes like product quality, design and price affects consumers' purchase decisions. In the present study, informants responded that product attributes like product quality, price, design, and colour affect their buying behaviour. All of the respondents explained imported shoe products are better in quality, design, colour, and price than local shoes. In line with this study by Gual (2011), explained design plays an important role in clothing consumption. Another study conducted by Endalew (2011) depicts imported shoes is stylish than a local shoe. In the present study, the quality of an imported shoe is better than a local shoe. In line with this study conducted by Siraw (2014), explained that imported shoes are more qualitative than a domestic shoe. In the present study, consumers experienced imported shoe price is less than the local shoe price. A study conducted by Endalew (2011) also explained that consumers purchase decisions highly affected by price; imported shoe price is cheaper than a local shoe. From this one can understand that consumers buying behaviour is highly influenced by product attributes like quality, design & price colour and imported shoe product is better than a local product in terms of quality, price and design.

Demographic Category

Informants and focus group members were asked to know the demographic category which prefers to purchase and use to wear imported shoe more frequently. Here consumers' buying behaviour determined by demographic factors like gender, age, education status, and income. In the present study, all informants mentioned that male and female, young, literate and high-income consumers prefer to purchase and use imported shoes more frequently. Besides, they assume that all age categories without income variation used to wear imported shoes. But one can recognize that those young people who have better incomes are more enthusiastic to purchase and use imported shoes.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The main aim of this study is to analyse consumers buying behaviour of imported shoe products in the case of Bule Hora town administration. This is to see their preference, attitude and product attribute which affects consumer buying behaviour during the purchase decision. The study findings address an important gap in the consumer behaviour literature. Interpretative phenomenology /qualitative approach of investigation

allowed the researcher to have an understanding of consumers' preferences, attitude and product attributes that should be considered during the purchase decision. The study indicates consumers prefer imported shoe because of their experience that imported shoe is quality, well designed, have a colour option and its price is less than that of local shoe product. Consumers in the study area have no predetermined purchase schedule for imported shoes. Besides, consumers mentioned that the factors which lead them to make purchase decision are: price, income, and availability of smart imported shoes in the market. Consumers in the study area experienced that consumer buying behaviour is mainly influenced by imported shoe attributes like quality, design/style, price, and colour. Again, consumers' buying behaviour differs based on demographic factors like gender, age, educational status, and income. In this study, male and female, young, literate and high-income demographic categories of consumers prefer to buy imported shoes more frequently. To be successful in the shoe market, marketers should focus on identifying consumers' preferences and adjust product attributes according to consumers' choice. Future researchers could consider additional product categories and additional towns since the relative influences of price, quality, and test in consumer evaluations appear to vary by product category and place difference.

5.2 Recommendation

For those domestic shoe manufacturers, policymakers, and government, the present results suggest a difficult challenge in the shoe manufacturing industry and changing the attitudes of consumers towards domestic shoes. To improve the above problems:

1. The government of Ethiopia should encourage efforts aimed at improving the quality of domestic shoe products.
2. Where it is possible, local shoe manufacturers should consider joint venture or franchising arrangements with well-known foreign shoe manufacturers. So that product attributes can be improved. Since product attributes are important to influence consumers' preference.
3. The physical product improved in terms of quality, price and design the consumers' mindset enhances the product marketability as well as improves the export market of the country and reduces the overall reliance on imported shoes.

Finally, the study is not without limitations; it examined the buying behaviour of 11 participants in the Bule Hora town administration. Even though data collected from the respondents provide a generous data source, sampled respondents were very few to represent the diversity that is found in the town. Another limitation is that findings can only be generated to the product category assessed: only imported shoe was investigated.

The study was conducted in Bule Hora town administration and the pattern of purchase of consumers in Bule Hora may be different from those in other parts of the country.

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