7-1-2006

Influence of foreign media on fashion in young adults in Pakistan

Arif Hasan

Shaza Bari

DISCUSSION

Influence of Foreign Media on Fashion in Young Adults in Pakistan

Arif Hasan
Shaza Bari

Abstract

The extent of the influence of Indian media on fashion choices is studied by finding the underlying feelings and motives behind fashion product purchase decisions for young female adults. The results showed that the influence of Indian media on fashion choices is minimal and does not lead to an active search for a particular product. Rather, the exposure is used to make a decision when they are faced with a choice between a product seen on the media versus another product. Accessories are more easily adapted than clothes, which are too glamorized. The soap dramas are more popular among the masses than amongst females belonging to a higher social class. Hence, the latter's degree of adaptation is not as significant.

INTRODUCTION

Consumer spending over the life span of today's 18 to 25 year old emerging adults will reach into the $10 trillion range (Ige, 2004). This figure holds true for American young adults; for their Pakistani counterparts, this figure in our view must be hefty as well. With this amount of money involved, marketers, corporations, educational institutes and the entertainment industry can benefit from learning about the influences that affect the young adults of today. Among one of the major influence is the media, consisting of all the movies, dramas, fashion shows as well as advertisements. They are reaching audiences quicker than ever before through the cable industry, which is the fastest growing electronic medium of Pakistan (PEMRA, 2003). Thus the advent of more and more foreign channels brings in new ideas into the existing culture.

Television has been called an idiot-box in the past (Singer, 1981). Its influence is seen in many ways, from being an unhealthy past time (Bulck, 2000) to causing negative behaviors such as aggression (Kremar & Greene, 1999). The extent to which this holds true has to be judged and that is the purpose of this research: to judge the influence on fashion due to the advent of foreign (namely Indian) media. Doing this will help determine the extent to which Indian media has an influence on the purchase decisions of Pakistani youth.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The research has been conducted while considering several variables. Their operational definitions relating specifically to this study are explained below:

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

Foreign Media: All the programs on channels that cater to the Indian market (such as the *Star Network, B4U, Zee Network* and *Sony Television Asia*) which can be seen on the local cable television; Indian movies, songs and advertisements.

Fashion: The style followed by the participants in personal consumption products such as clothes, accessories (shoes, handbags, jewelry) and beauty products.

Young Adults: The people whose age ranges from 18 to 24. The study will concentrate only on females belonging to SEC A of Karachi.

SEC A: The socioeconomic class, which is the upper/upper-middle class of Karachi, residing in areas such as Defence, Clifton, PECHS and KDA. This is according to the researcher's own definition.

Patiala Shalwar: A new kind of fashionable baggy flaired shalwar (or trouser) worn by females.

Sari: The traditional Indian garment worn by females comprising 3 yards of cloth wrapped around the waist pleated in front and one end worn over a shoulder with a short blouse

Kumkum Sari: A kind of sari worn by an Indian actress with the screen name of Kumkum which is available in the market with this name.

Kashish Baliya: A kind of baliya or earrings worn by an Indian actress with the screen name of Kashish which are available in the market.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

To study the influence of Indian media on fashion in Pakistani SEC A females aged between 18 and 24 living in Karachi.

In order to develop an understanding of the topic, the following areas were explored by reviewing the relevant studies.

TELEVISION MEDIA

Television is seen to be the greatest development of the 20th century (Ige, 2004). Many arguments exist in favor of the influence of television on people as well as the personality factors that are seen as being common to television viewers. Television viewers are seen to want to know about the ongoing culture of society through the television and are less active than non-television viewers both in house chores as well as outside home activities such as going to museums and movies. They are able to achieve satisfaction with doing lesser number of activities than non-television viewers (Jackson-Beeck & Robinson, 1981).

156

Television, along with peers of consumers, appears to be an important agent in adolescent consumer socialization and increases interaction of adolescents with parents for consumption related queries (Churchill Jr. & Moschis, 1979), meaning that it could aid in increasing the influence of family in socialization. It also is seen to help in the construction of a mental picture of the real world (O'Guinn & Shrum, 1997). We might therefore come to believe how others live and behave without ever actually meeting them and because of the presence of more affluence in television programs, television viewers would believe that more affluence existed in the real world as well, and feel disadvantaged. Thus they might want to buy more fashion clothes as a result of watching television channels.

Television usage could also increase the awareness of the incidence of crime for television viewers (Wyer Jr., Shrum, & O'Guinn, 1998). Consumers might not think about the source of any information with regards to television and would in fact treat it as being true even though it might be false, unless they are made aware of a possible bias.

Television advertisements are also seen to have an impact on consumer role perceptions as well as sex-role perceptions (Moschis & Moore, 1982). Over a period of time, increased advertising exposure causes a person's behavior to be less socially desirable (Moschis et al.). It might make them buy products such as cigarettes which are of no social value. One thing to remember is that ads have to be placed in likeable programs to get more positive product impressions (Murry Jr., Lastovicka, & Singh, 1992). Therefore a good ad might be useless unless it is placed in the proper television time-slot of programming.

The influence of advertisements is shown through the use of premium offers along with the product itself (such as reusable containers or gifts), which is seen to influence consumers to like or desire the product (Shimp, Dyer, & Divita, 1976).

FEMALES

Historically, consumer and market researchers have viewed women in the traditional roles of wife, mother, homemaker, and hostess, or single girl preparatory to these roles (Venkatesh, 1980). A Pakistani woman's place in society can be seen in light of this study on the changing roles of women, which although very old, would help shed light on adolescents views. In our view, the traditional Pakistani woman's role is reflective of the traditional American housewife of the 1960's and 1970's. Among the three categories listed by Venkatesh, the study on feminists is of particular interest since they are closest to our sample characteristics. They were found to be younger, better educated, and revealed a greater sense of independence in terms of how they perceived themselves within the household, more self-confident, and less prone to television viewing (Venkatesh et al.). Other studies have shown that females have a stronger orientation toward their peers than do males (Churchill Jr. & Moschis, 1979).

157

In a study on male and female processing strategies (Meyers-Levy, & Maheswaran, 1991), it was found that a female processing often entails substantial, detailed elaboration of message content, sometimes resulting in female's heightened sensitivity to the particulars of message claims (Meyers-Levy et al.).

ADOLESCENTS

Youth is a crucial period for consumer socialization, a process that begins at an early stage and lasts through life (Lachance & Choquette-Bernier, 2004). Young people have less experience than adults and are more vulnerable because their low level of experience and their strong permeability to exterior influences like fashion and the opinion of their peers. It was interesting to note that if the subjects think they are competent consumers, their perception of other consumers are much less favorable.

Children's exposure to TV advertising of products which they would not even use may influence the perspective children have of the adult world (Gorn & Florsheim, 1985). Apart from television the mother seems to remain the most influential socialization agent but the father seems to play an increasing role. Young people's consumer socialization process is mainly achieved through communication, observation, and by learning through trial and error (Lachance et al.).

Childhood experiences are of great importance in shaping patterns of adult behavior. Marketers are primarily interested in understanding how young people develop consumer-related thoughts and actions (Churchill Jr. & Moschis, 1979), which later on form a basis of their choices during their adulthood. Young people have been recognized as a specialized segment of the market for a variety of products and services, and their behavior as consumers has received increasing attention among marketers, public policymakers, consumer educators, and students of socialization and consumer behavior (Moschis & Moore, 1979). Since the research is about young adults who were adolescents not too long ago, a closer look at adolescent's behavior needs to be taken.

Television may directly affect the youth's acquisition of expressive aspects of consumption. The amount of television viewing would be related positively to the adolescent's strength of social motivations for consumption and materialistic values, and to his/her frequency of interaction with parents and peers regarding consumption matters. (Churchill Jr. et al.).

Ages 18-25 is a unique stage of life called emerging adulthood (Ige, 2004). It's characterized by identity exploration, high levels of personal freedom and low levels of social responsibility. Present generation of young people can be classed as a hi-tech generation, extremely fascinated by innovation and advancements in technology (Ige, 2004).

Young people have acquired fairly sophisticated decision-making cognition skills by the time they reach early adolescence. Price and brand name were perceived as the

158

most important evaluative criteria. At the purchase stage, the adolescent's social environment is also likely to vary across different products. Emerging adults are immersed in peer-intensive social context thus peer norms strongly influence attitudes and behaviors of emerging adults (Ige, 2004).

There is also seen a link between education and age to watching television. As education and age increases, the use of television decreases (Bryant & Gerner, 1981).

Coming to advertising, it is powerful enough to influence social interactions. Advertising critics argue that advertising strongly influences youths and results in undesirable socialization, e.g., materialistic values and non-rational, impulse-oriented choices (Churchill Jr. et al.). Adolescents are greatly influenced by advertisements, and mimic a jingle of an ad or catchphrase or hold extended conversations over a particular advertising execution (Ritson & Elliott, 1999). Adolescents even feel left out or blank if they are unable to participate in such a conversation if they had not experienced the advertisements themselves (Ritson et al.). Adolescents even engage in mutual aid, where they help each other understand a certain ad (Ritson et al.). Thus adolescents are able to draw power by understanding ads better than their peers. Adolescents often describe ads in front of their peers to let their peers know their taste, which were endorsed by the larger group. There is a tendency however, on the part of male adolescents, to not understand ads that are inclined towards females. However, on the whole, adolescents are seen as forming views that are similar to the rest of the group because of the shared experiences as well as the similar background of the group (Ritson et al.).

AFFLUENT SOCIAL CLASSES

The socioeconomic class that a person belongs to would influence their attitude towards television commercials (Bearden, Teel & Wright, 1979). A developed cognitive structure is associated with a high social class level (Bearden et al.).

FASHION

Emerging adults are a powerful force in shaping demand for consumer products. The problem recognition style associated with emerging adults can help marketers understand this group of consumers and provide insight into what kind of products, services and messages will appeal to them as lifelong consumers (Ige, 2004).

Fashion is about novelty, proliferation of goods and mass consumption (Thompson & Haytko, 1997). All of this affects adolescents differently. Some of them may think of fashion as being practical, conservative as well as projecting the social construction of gender (Thompson et al.). Their fashion interpretations support their personal desire to be judged on the basis of their character, abilities and achievements as well as for positive moral virtues (Thompson et al.).

159

It was seen that consumers use fashion to develop their personal identity by contrasting their personal fashion orientation with others in their social setting (Thompson et al., 1997). Thus personal identity is seen as being continuously changing as a result of social relations. Some even associate fashion with continuous family and societal pressure to conform to a particular type of fashion. Some adolescents want to feel unique and non-conformist, by always contrasting themselves against an imagined conformist, so that they themselves do not become sensitive to the opinions of others (Thompson et al.). A prominent point noticed was that female adolescents are knowledgeable about fashion models (Thompson et al.). Overall, the adolescents reject or accept any fashion meaning on the basis of whether it works well with what their own personal beliefs and values are and not the social norms.

Fashion in adolescence, branded apparel in particular, is influenced by peers (Lachance, Beaudoin & Robitaille, 2003). During adolescence, clothing-related decisions are associated with an important social risk. Parents, peers and television are recognized as representing the major sources of interaction when it comes to consumption matters. The most important agent in developing brand sensitivity in apparel appears to be the influence of peers, confirming the huge importance of friends and pals during adolescence, and the role that clothes seem to play in their relationship with them (Lachance et al.). It was found that teens almost never wore selected clothes like those worn by persons in magazines and on TV (Lachance et al.). If this fact holds true for young female adults remains to be seen.

Men and fashion followers reflect a need-based approach to fashion problem recognition, whereas both fashion change agents and women reflected a want-based approach to problem recognition (Workman & Studak, 2005).

GAPS

All the different findings have to be reviewed cautiously because all journal articles selected have no data about Pakistan and no reliable studies could be located relating to Pakistan. Almost all articles that were used are based in U.S.A. and the rest in Canada. Hence the application of this past data to new one has to be done with caution because the different cultural settings and factors will have affected the results of these studies.

Certain articles also contain statistics relating to young people's online shopping habits in countries which are other than Pakistan. These results are reached after collecting the data from a non-Pakistani sample. Therefore, the study would miss out factors that might come into play as a result of our distinct culture. The degree to which they can be applied to Pakistan is questionable; although since the sample is of class A of Karachi sector, we believe that young people from this class mirror some of the characteristics of the young people in U.S.A. and Canada because of the amount of exposure they get through the foreign media.

Almost all the researches, barring a few, were based on quantitative method analysis, instead of the qualitative one that we are conducting in our research. Therefore, the results were difficult to correlate.

There are also studies that pertain both to males and females as well as other studies whose sample considered females whose age ranged higher or lower than our sample. Therefore, findings from these studies have to be sifted through to remove any that might contain results not relating to our sample directly.

Studies about American media creates a gap for the researchers since lack of data in this regard means that other articles have to be viewed in their context in order to be understood and that they can not be transferred to Pakistan fully.

There is also data that is quite old; hence some of the results might have changed. These results would not hold true even for the US. New factors introduced into the market might have changed certain behavioral patterns of people. More so, the behavioral patterns of our own society will not be covered in such a study. The studies do not reflect our social setup.

Certain articles also contain information which is irrelevant. Therefore, the task to find the data relevant to our research is again increased.

Even qualitative studies included here have their results based on the interpretations from a particular period and would not reflect on Pakistani young adults of class A, so certain differences might exist between the approaches of the two samples.

A study dealing directly with female fashion influences have a major shortcoming that the sample was small and non-Pakistani including males and is not representative of even the population of the country in which it was conducted. In some cases, the sample consisted of children, making the findings completely irrelevant for our research.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Does Indian media influence the way young Pakistani girls make their purchasing decisions regarding fashion?

2. Is the Indian Media causing Pakistani girls to change the way they perceive themselves and how they feel they are perceived by others?

3. Is Indian media being viewed more and more in a positive light, even taking on the role of Pakistani channels for entertainment for Pakistani girls?

POPULATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Our study focused upon 8 young unmarried females belonging to SEC A of Karachi whose age ranged between 18-24 years. Six participants were currently enrolled in

government medical colleges, one was enrolled in a private medical college and one participant had recently completed her studies and was currently employed. The sample was chosen because we felt that the group could express their views about fashion freely and give a broad perspective about the changing fashion scenario of Pakistan.

Our sample could not be probability based, due to time constraint as well as convenience. Therefore, the sample was non-random convenience based, where participants were acquaintances of the researchers who could be contacted easily. Along with this, two participants were included in the sample due to the snowballing effect.

RESEARCH DESIGN METHODOLOGY

For this study, we felt that given the nature of the topic under consideration, a qualitative exploratory study would be the better option. The aim is to gauge the influence of Indian media on the purchase decisions of fashion products in Pakistani girls, so an exploratory study would aid in understanding the phenomenon better. Since no previous research based on this topic is available from Pakistan, the exploratory method would provide the initial work and provide further cause for future research on this subject.

Having decided to conduct a qualitative study, we felt that a focus group session with all participants would be the ideal way to gather data for this study. There were several reasons for choosing a focus group session. It was our understanding that fashion and the media is a topic young girls could freely discuss with each other and have a good knowledge of. Hence, group synergy would lead to more thoughts and underlying feelings and emotions emerging as a result of an interactive session rather than in-depth interviews. The participants in the study belonged to SEC A and were mostly students in well reputed medical colleges of Karachi, hence we assumed that their opinions would not be influenced by others during the focus group session and they would feel free in expressing themselves. This would lead to a better emergence of underlined ideas. Due to the time constraint factor, it was convenient for us to collect data through an hour long focus group session, and also convenient for the participants to spare an evening from their busy schedules.

DATA COLLECTION

The data collection procedure was an hour long focus group session with 8 participants and was held in a comfortable home setting. The session video recorded after gaining consent from all the participants and was moderated by us. Before the start of the session, the consent form was read out aloud for the participants' benefit and any queries were answered satisfactorily. After all participants had signed the consent form, they were asked to fill a short pre-test questionnaire to gather basic information such as their media watching and shopping habits. This was followed by the actual focus group, which was conducted in two halves of 30 minutes each. An hour long refreshments and prayer break took place in between.

162

The pre-test questionnaire findings are as follows:

- Seven participants took a nap after reaching home from college and one surfed the Internet or flipped channels on television. Four of them indicated that they watched television to relax at home while others either read books or talked to friends on the telephone.

- The average amount of television watched per day was two to three hours. The popular television channels were Star World, B4U, AXN, Sony, ETC, and English movie channels like HBO and Movie Magic. Only one participant indicated that she watched news channels such as CNN/BBC and Business Plus, while another said she only watched the Disney Channel and Nickelodeon. Indian shows such as B4U, Just Request and Kaun Banega Crorepati were among some of the favorite shows, along with American sitcoms and talk shows such as The Opera Winfrey Show. One participant said that cartoon shows were her favorite.

- The participants' shopping trips frequency ranged from as high as once a week to as low as once in two months. One of the participants said that her mother did all her shopping for her. The most popular shopping malls were Gulf Way Shopping Mall, *Ashiana* and Park Towers. All participants wore mostly tailored clothes with only three wearing both tailored and ready-made clothes.

The video recorded session was later transcribed and the following key findings emerged:

- None of the participants could relate to the lifestyle shown in Indian dramas. It was considered *"too fake", "very superficial"* and too glamorized to be real. One participant said she could relate to the emotions but not to the extravagance.

- All participants knew about products available in the market such as *"Kumkum sari"* and *"Kashish baliyan"*. According to the participants, these items are very popular in the masses but do not appeal to them.

- Participants indicated that their family and religious values affected the fashion adopted by them.

- When questioned on what changed fashion, everyone agreed that media was responsible for changing fashion. Participant 3 said that *"people first see the fashion on TV and copy it from there. Thus it* [fashion] *spreads."* The participants described fashion as *"the latest trends in clothes and accessories"* and *"something which suits a person"* (Participant 3) and everyone agreed on its being very transitory. According to participant 6, *"Fashion is a vicious cycle and it is always changing. Patiala shalwars were the rage in my mom's generation as they are now."*

163

- The environment and the people around were a major influence on what the six participants belonging to government medical colleges chose. They appeared to be extremely reluctant about standing out among the crowd in their college. Peers didn't appear to influence their choice of fashion as much as the surroundings did. However, outside the college, their choice reflected an influence of peers and their own personality. For formal wear, participant 7 said, *"We try to make them* (formal clothes) *different…to stand out",* and *"…in the dramas you think the saris are very pretty. I mean, you can't wear them around the house like they show in their houses, but maybe you could adapt the same thing when you are going to a party or something."*

- For participant 6, who belonged to a private medical college, the major factor influencing her decision of what to wear to college was her own personality.

- All participants indicated that for casual wear, they were more likely to buy accessories seen on TV rather than apparel. *"At times the bags and shoes are pretty stylish and I won't mind buying them, but the clothes… I mean they just cross their limits sometimes."* (Participant 5) *"Yeah… even though our culture is slightly similar, we really can't relate to it"* (Participant 3). *"We get more influenced with Indian culture because you know that its going to suit you… you see good hair styles and clothes in English movies but you can't relate to them."* (Participant 6).

- They felt that fashion for casual clothes in India was a little too westernized, and therefore could not be adopted by them due to cultural and social constraints.

- The factors that affected the participants' decision as to which fashion they adopted were cost, one's own physique and decency.

- The extent of the influence of media also depended on age. Participant 4 recounted an anecdote where at the age of 15, she chose a Gucci handbag over another as she had seen Karishma Kapoor (a popular actresses at that time) carrying it in the Indian movie *Dil To Pagal Hai*. Now, however, she would not do the same. Her friends and she also copied a hairstyle off of an Indian movie for their A Levels farewell party *"since it looked so good in the movie"*. Participant 5 recounted the time when Rani Mukharjee's smoky eyes makeup from her movie *Chalte Chalte* was very popular in girls.

- Five participants said that if they liked something on TV, they would not actively look for it in the shops. But if they came across it while out shopping and recognized it from TV, they would only buy it if they liked it. Participant 8 said that she would only buy it if she liked it and needed it.

- Pakistan's fashion is influenced by religion, geography and the fashion industry.

- Well-known fashion trendsetters are Rani Mukherjee and Sushmita Sen from India, Amin Gulgee, models Iraj, Eman and Sunita Marshall from Pakistan and Princess Diana from the West. Pakistani designers Rizwan Beg and Umar Sayied are also considered very fashionable.

- The movies identified as having started a fashion trend were *Devdas, Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam, Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham, Chalte Chalte, Kal Ho Na Ho, Mohabbatein, Dil Chahta Hai* and *Bunty aur Bubbli*.

- Watching TV did give ideas for fashion. Channels such as Star Plus and Zoom which covers all fashion shows in India should be watched. The time slot between 7:30 p.m. and 10 p.m. was considered ideal. Apart from TV, magazines and parties also give ideas for fashion.

- About the future of Pakistani fashion, participants 5 and 6 felt that due to the phenomenal increase in the number of Pakistani television channels on cable, it was possible that Indian fashion would be influenced by Pakistan. Participant 6 said that Pakistani fashion designers were now showcasing their apparel with Indian designers in fashion shows such as Bridal Asia so it was very likely that Pakistani fashion would be copied there. However, when asked about the continuing influence of Indian dramas on Pakistan's population, everyone agreed that it would probably grow in the foreseeable future.

DATA ANALYSIS

Our findings are consistent with Churchill and Moschis' (1979) views about television and peers being important agents of adolescent consumer socialization. However the extent of this influence differs in our sample where it was seen that religion, family values and social setup play a more important role.

O' Guinn and Shrum (1997) provided their finding of television helping consumers to construct a mental picture of the real world. This was inconsistent with our finding where all participants felt that Indian soap dramas were very extravagant and one of them felt that *"...it is too fake!"* while another said they are *"...too glamorized to be real..."*

Unlike some studies (Moschis and Moore, 1979), participants felt that their surroundings, family values and their personalities played a more significant part in influencing their purchase behavior. *"Fashion depends upon our personality."* (Participant 3) One participant said that even a middle-aged woman could carry off a fashionable dress if she was comfortable with it.

Venkatesh's (1980) categorization of women into three categories and Bryant and Gerner's (1981) findings did not apply to our sample's personality traits and characteristics. Even though all of them were young, better educated and self confident making them feminists according to Venkatesh's definition, they were not less prone

165

to watching television. In our pre-test questionnaire, some of the participants indicated that they watched at least 3-4 hours of television in a day.

Consumer socialization is a process that begins at an early stage and lasts through life (Lachance and Choquette-Bernier, 2004). One participant recounted the time when at the age of 15, she had chosen a handbag over another because she had seen it in a movie. She further went on to say that now that she is older, she would not do the same.

Our interpretations were consistent with Gorn and Florsheim's (1985) that mothers remain the most influential socialization agent. One of the participants in our study felt left out and unable to contribute much since all her decisions regarding fashion products were made by her mother. This finding also correlates with Ritson and Elliott's (1999) that adolescents feel left out if they are unable to participate in a conversation. However, the role of the father is still unexplored and is cause for further research.

Moschis and Moore (1979) suggest that price and brand name are the most important criteria while purchasing any product. Our sample verified this fact and indicated other important variables such as social acceptability and their own personality in their decision regarding purchase of fashion products. Peer norms influencing attitudes and behaviors as suggested by Ige (2004) is consistent with our finding of participants feeling that they could only wear fashionable clothes outside their college environment, for instance while going out to a dinner with friends.

Our sample exhibited very practical and conservative choices when it came to their buying decision regarding fashion products. This is one of the categories defined by Thompson and Haytko (1995) as well. For most participants, Indian fashion was ahead of what they were used to and *"no match between what we are and what their fashion is"* (Participant 5). This related more to casual clothing rather than formal wear, where the Indian media portrays casual fashion as being greatly influenced by the Western values, which the participants felt they could not relate to.

Consumers use fashion to develop their personal identity by contrasting their personal fashion orientation with others in their social setting (Thompson et al., 1997). Some of the participants felt that fashion was molded by peers. *"If you see people wearing something around you, it grows on you and you also want to adopt it"* (Participant 3). Thompson and Haytko also feel that some adolescents want to feel unique and non-conformist. In our findings, only one participant felt that maybe she could start a new trend. However, this action would only be undertaken in an environment where the participant was reasonably certain that it would get accepted and not be *"looked at funny"* (Participant 5).

According to Workman and Studak (2005), women have a want-based approach to fashion problem recognition as opposed to men's need-based approach, which was partially consistent with our results where some participants felt they would buy a product if they liked it, while another felt that *"I would only buy it if I like it and I need it"* (Participant 8).

166

FASHION INFLUENCES

Media plays an important role in the popularity of a fashion trend. *"People first see the fashion on TV and copy it from there, thus it [fashion] spreads"* (Participant 3).

Not only does media inform people about what new trends are being followed, it also spreads the trend over a wide geographical area. Participants recounted the popularity of certain trends which came from the media such as Rani Mukherjee's smoky eyes from the movie *Chalte Chalte*, Prity Zinta's black spectacles and the color combination of the dress she wore in the song *Mahi Ve* from the movie *Kal Ho Na Ho*, patiala shalwars from the movie *Veer Zara* and short, round ended shirts with collar along with mirrored handbags from the movie *Bunty aur Bubbli*.

Apart from media, a person's personality also influences the fashion adopted. Fashion is *"something which suits a person"* (Participant 3), hence, if a person can carry something off and is comfortable with it and *"not too conscious"* (Participant 8) that defines their personal fashion sense. *"I will not wear something if I feel too conscious about it"* (Participant 8).

Peers are another variable in the fashion adoption process. *"If you see people wearing something around you, it grows on you, and you start liking it, and you also want to wear the same thing"* (Participant 3).

Peers play a role in affecting fashion decisions. People would want to adopt a new trend if they see that their friends have. However, they would only adorn the new apparel or accessory in a place where they know they *"won't stand out like a sore thumb"* (Participant 3). They could also start a new trend on their own but where they wear it depends again on the occasion and surroundings.

SOCIAL ACCEPTABILITY

One issue which greatly influenced what the participants chose to adopt in fashion, and which cropped up several times during the discussion, was social acceptability.

"You have to dress according to the surroundings and the people around you and the occasion. I mean, I couldn't carry a golden bag here!" (Participant 5). The surroundings play a more important role in influencing what the participants chose to wear than do peers. *"Its not about peer pressure, it's about your surroundings"* (Participant 7).

We felt that for the participants from government medical colleges, their surroundings played a major role in deciding what they wore to college. *"If you go to Dow [government medical college]… I wouldn't feel comfortable wearing straight pants or bell bottoms there, or even jeans for that matter. But if I'm going to a formal party, or coming here, I wouldn't mind wearing straight pants or something"* (Participant 5).

We felt that the government medical college students were very conscious about the sort of image they portrayed in their college and even something as simple as earrings or a nice handbag could make them stand out. Hence, the level of casual accessorizing seems very limited in that environment.

"[The level of accessorizing] *depends on your surroundings. If you were in CBM or some other institute, you would want to dress up more because the people around you are dressing up more. But in our own institute, in a medical college, no one actually dresses up*" (Participant 3).

"You feel like you're sticking out like a sore thumb because the people around you would be judgmental" (Participant 3).

There are a lot of factors which are considered before deciding what should be worn. And being socially acceptable is a very important one. Before we conducted the study, we had some preconceptions about the sample that since the participants were from SEC A, their choices would be affected more by peers. However, the results lead to the conclusion that gaining social acceptability from those other than peers was the most important factor. We feel that the occasion and surroundings play the most significant role in shaping a fashion related decision. Secondary to these are personality and peers.

Religion and family values also play a significant role in shaping decisions. *The* [casual Indian] *clothes… I mean they just cross their limits sometimes"* (Participant 5).

"Yeah… even though our culture is slightly similar [to India], we really can't relate to it" (Participant 3).

"They [Indians] *are very very forward than us [Pakistani]. There is no match between the way they are following their fashion industry and the way we are"* (Participant 7).

Even though the Indian culture is viewed as being similar to the Pakistani culture to a certain extent, people here can not copy all that the Indians do, since religious and family values play an important role in the decision-making process. The casual fashion in India is a little too westernized, thus can not be adopted by everyone due to cultural and social constraints. However, there are some segments in the Pakistani society where such fashions are adopted and appreciated as well.

"There are sections in our society [that wear such clothes]… so its not that they are ahead or we are behind, we find all kinds of people here, they're probably wearing the same stuff that they [Indians] wear" (Participant 4).

168

PERSONAL CHOICES

While the Indian media could be related to in terms of emotions, fashion was seen as *"…something that suits you"* (Participant 2) and that *"exposure is good to a limited extent"* (Participant 7). This implies that fashion is more about personal choices that suit you, meaning that it is very subjective and is not always influenced by the media. This is again recounted by the fact that several movies were recalled such as *Veer Zara* showing the *"Patiala Shalwar"* but, as one participant mentioned, it is not for everyone and has to be able to go with your own personality.

Weddings and other formal occasions were seen as being good places where new things could be worn in order to *"stand out"* (Participant 8). Participants did not actively go out and look for an Indian product, which they felt that they did when they were younger.

Thus participants did not feel compelled to buy any product and relied more on personal choices and preferences before making any personal fashion product purchase.

SOCIAL CLASS INFLUENCE

The issue of social class did not emerge through the focus group discussion as the participants did not mention its influence on fashion and media. However, we felt it to be a valid connection. Participants appeared to have a preference for accessories shown in Indian movies as opposed to Indian soap dramas possibly because the latter were seen to lean towards being for the masses. Hence, a handbag shown in a movie would be purchased like the one shown in the movie *Bunty aur Bubbli*, as recounted by participant 5. This showed that accessories had more brand power if they were not shown on soap dramas and would be bought if they were perceived to be exclusive in nature by being shown in movies.

LIMITATIONS

There were several limitations to the research. Firstly, time constraint meant that we could not discuss the government's role in regulating access to the Indian media as well as the family communication aspect of consumer socialization. Both of these would have shed new light onto the subject.

Besides this, the sampling done was convenient sampling, which meant that the results might not be representative of the entire population. Using the focus group as a research instrument meant that group synergy, which might well bring out underlying feelings and emotions, might also have led to groupthink, making the participants agree with each other. All efforts were made to minimize and remove this; however this factor can not be ignored.

THREATS

To better manage validity and reliability issues, descriptive validity was achieved through the use of video recordings to ensure that the data collected from the participants was accurate and complete. Along with this, note-taking was done the same day to ensure that interpretations were listed immediately.

To have interpretative validity, member checks were used where through out the focus group, participants were asked to elaborate and then confirm what they had said. This was done to give adequate importance to the participants' point of view.

To achieve theory validity, outliers were not left out from the key findings and no data collected was considered to be irrelevant.

Generalization internal validity was ensuring that no views expressed by one participant were generalized for the sample.

Reliability or the consistency of our results was checked through talks with other researchers who were in our class so that the interpretations were consistent.

CONCLUSION

Based on our findings we feel that the influence of Indian media on Pakistani girls' fashion products choice is small but significant. If they come across an accessory which they like on television, they will not actively go out to look for that product. However, while out shopping, if they recognize a product from television, their decision to buy the product will depend on three factors: price, social acceptability and their own personality or choice. This would be true for casual everyday wear accessories such as handbags, jewelry and shoes.

In the case of apparel, they would be much more cautious in making their purchase decisions and would be reluctant to buy any cloth that did not match their personality or was not acceptable in their everyday social setting. The Indian media was not viewed in a positive light and its glamorous yet pretense nature was realized. Thus they would not be willing to buy anything that would be associated with the masses such as *"Kashish baliyan"* and would much rather buy accessories that are shown on movies. The extent of media influence is minimal and is controlled by more powerful forces such as social acceptability and social class.

Thus Indian media is becoming the prime source of entertainment for young female adults, although its influence on their fashion choices is limited.

FUTURE DIRECTION FOR RESEARCH

There are several areas in which this study could be carried out further. Research could be carried out on the comparative influence of Indian media on females and males. The same study could also be carried out on other socioeconomic classes so that a larger panoramic picture of the influence of Indian media can be seen; the results could possibly vary from this current study such as the influence being more prominent in other segments of socioeconomic classes.

A further aspect of this could be a quantitative study carried to find out the number of young adults that watch Indian channels, which channels and time slots are most popular. All of this could help other agencies such as the government, MNC's and the academia.

The same research could also be carried out on a different sample such as business or arts students to determine the influence of such foreign media on them. The same could be carried out with middle-aged women whose characteristics would be completely different and the lifestyle associated would bring out different issues to light.

APPENDIX

PRE-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What do you do when you get home from college?
2. What do you do to relax at home?
3. Do you watch television every day?
4. How many hours of TV do you watch in a day on average?
5. What time do you generally watch TV?
6. Which channels do you watch mostly?
7. Which are your favorite channels and shows in particular?
8. Can you relate any of the material shown on TV to your life?
9. How often do you go shopping for clothes and accessories?
10. Which shopping centers do you visit mostly? Please name them.
11. Do you get tailored clothes or buy them from a boutique?

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Can you, as an average Pakistani, relate to any material shown on Indian channels to your life? If yes, How?
2. What is your opinion about the fashion shown on Indian channels and movies? In particular clothes, accessories?
3. How do you think the fashion scenario is changing in Pakistan?
4. Describe your personal fashion sense? What is fashion to you?
5. How do you decide what style clothes to make and which accessories to buy?
6. Can you identify any one factor which affects your purchase decision of fashion products?

171

7.   Where does Pakistani fashion originate from?

8.   Who is responsible for fashion? Who are the trendsetters?

9.   Does fashion have an age attached to it?

10.   Identify well-known people who you'd call fashionable.

11.   Does watching TV give ideas for fashion wear?

12.   What channels in particular should be watched?

13.   Do you appreciate Indian fashion? Is TV the only medium that gives you access to Indian fashion? Which channels in particular?

14.   Do fashionable people you know watch particular channels? Where do you think they get their influence from?

15.   What is the best time for a woman to watch TV if she wants to watch it for fashion wear? Any channels in particular? Can you name any Indian movies which you think started a fashion trend?

16.   Which Indian channels are most popular in your opinion? Why?

17.   Do you think watching Indian TV channels and movies influence your choice of accessorizing (shoes, clothes, bags, make-up, hair style, jewelry)?

18.   Do our shopping malls fulfill peoples' need for fashion wear? Which malls in particular?

19.   What future trend do you foresee for fashion in Pakistan?

REFERENCES

Bearden, W.O., Teel, J.E. & Wright, R.R. (1979). "Family Income Effects on Measurement of Children's Attitudes Toward Television Commercials", The Journal of Consumer Research, 6, 308-311. *www.jstor.org*

Bryant, W.K. & Gerner, J.L. (1981). "Television Use by Adults and Children: A Multivariate Analysis", The Journal of Consumer Research, 8, 154-161. *www.jstor.org*

Bulck, J.V. den (2000). Is Television Bad for Your Health? Behavior and Body Image of the Adolescent "Couch Potato". Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 29, 273-287.

Churchill Jr., G.A. & Moschis, G.P. (1979). "Television and Interpersonal Influences on Adolescent Consumer Learning", The Journal of Consumer Research, 6, 23-35. *www.jstor.org*

Gorn, G.J. & Florsheim, R. (1985). "The Effects of Commercials for Adult Products on Children", The Journal of Consumer Research, 11, 962-967. *www.jstor.org*

Ige, O. (2004). "Electronic Shopping: Young People as Consumers", International Journal of Consumer Studies, 28, 412-427. *www.blackwell-synergy.com*

Jackson-Beeck, M. & Robinson, J.P. (1981). "Television Nonviewers: An Endangered Species?", The Journal of Consumer Research, 7, 356-359. *www.jstor.org*

Kremar, M. & Greene, K. (1999). "Predicting Exposure to and Uses of Television Violence", The Journal of Communication, 24-45. *www.scholar.google.com*

Lachance, M.J. & Choquette-Bernier, N. (2004). "College Students Consumer Competence: A Qualitative Exploration", International Journal of Consumer Studies, 28, 433-442. *www.blackwell-synergy.com*

Lachance, M. J., Beaudoin, P., & Robitaille, J. (2003). "Adolescents' Brand Sensitivity in Apparel: Influence of Three Socialization Agents", International Journal of Consumer Studies, 27, 47-57. *www.blackwell-synergy.com*

Meyers-Levy, J. & Maheswaran, D. (1991). "Exploring Differences in Males and Females Processing Strategies", The Journal of Consumer Research, 18, 63-70. *www.jstor.org*

Moschis, G.P. & Moore, R.L. (1979). "Decision Making Among The Young: A Socialization Perspective", The Journal of Consumer Research, 6, 101-112. *www.jstor.org*

Moschis, G.P. & Moore, R.L. (1982). "A Longitudinal Study of Television Advertising Effects", The Journal of Consumer Research, 9, 279-286. *www.jstor.org*

Murry Jr., J.P., Lastovicka, J.L. & Singh, S.N. (1992). "Feeling and Liking Responses to Television Programs: An Examination of Two Explanations of Media-Context Effects", The Journal of Consumer Research, 18, 441-451. *www.jstor.org*

O'Guinn, T.C. & Shrum, L.J. (1997). "The Role of Television in the Construction of Consumer Reality", The Journal of Consumer Research, 23, 278-294. *www.jstor.org*

PEMRA (2003). Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority - Report 2003. *www.pemra.gov.pk*

Posner, R.A. (1972). "The Appropriate Scope of Regulation in the Cable Television Industry", The Bell Journal of Economics and Management Science, 3, 98-129. *www.jstor.org*

Ritson, M., & Elliott, R. (1999). "The Social Uses of Advertising: An Ethnographic Study of Adolescent Advertising Audiences", The Journal of Consumer Research, 26, 260-277. *www.jstor.org*

Shimp, T.A., Dyer, R.F. & Divita, S.F. (1976). "An Experimental Test of the Harmful Effects of Premium-Oriented Commercials on Children", The Journal of Consumer Research, 3, 1-11. *www.jstor.org*

Singer, J.L. (1981). "Television, Imagination, and Aggression: A Study of Preschoolers", Lawrence Erlbaum Associates

173

Thompson, C.J. & Haytko, D.L. (1997). "Speaking of Fashion: Consumers' Uses of Fashion Discourses and the Appropriation of Countervailing Cultural Meanings", The Journal of Consumer Research, 24, 15-42. *www.jstor.org*

Venkatesh, A. (1980). "Changing Roles of Women: A Lifestyle Analysis", The Journal of Consumer Research, 7, 189-197. *www.jstor.org*

Wyer Jr., R.S., Shrum, L.J., & O'Guinn, T.C. (1998). "The Effects of Television Consumption on Social Perceptions: The Use of Priming Procedures to Investigate Psychological Processes", The Journal of Consumer Research, 24, 447-458. *www.jstor.org*

Workman, J.E. & Studak, C.M. (2005). "Fashion Consumers and Fashion Problem Recognition Style", International Journal of Consumer Studies. *www.blackwell-synergy.com*

174