

Research on the Factors Influencing the Consumption Willingness of Women of Different Age Groups in the Apparel Industry

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Abstract:

This study explored the factors influencing offline clothing consumption intentions among Chinese women of different age groups through a mixed-methods approach integrating literature review, questionnaire survey, and in-depth interviews. The research conducted secondary data studies to synthesize existing research findings and empirical evidence related to the topic. A tailored questionnaire was designed, and a total of 118 valid responses were collected, covering three age groups of Chinese women: 15–30, 31–55, and 56–80. The collected data were analyzed statistically, including analysis of variance (ANOVA) and correlation analysis. The results indicated that clothing quality is a common concern among women of all age groups, but there are significant differences between age groups in attitudes toward price, brand image, and fashion trends. Specifically, young women (ages 15–30) pay more attention to fashion trends, middle-aged women (ages 31–55) prioritize brand image the most, and older women (ages 56–80) are most sensitive to price. Correlation analysis further shows that age is positively correlated with price sensitivity and negatively correlated with sensitivity to fashion trends, while no significant linear correlation was found between age and perception of brand image. Interview results supplement the findings of the quantitative study, indicating that these age-based consumption preferences are driven by factors such as conformity psychology, the need for status symbols, and long-standing consumption habits. This study enriches the academic literature on age differences in clothing consumption behavior among Chinese women and provides targeted marketing strategy recommendations for the apparel industry, offering practical reference value for brand positioning and product promotion in the offline clothing market.

Keywords: fashion; female consumption; economy

Introduction

The domestic market is showing signs of recovery. As the Chinese economy rebounds and consumer confidence gradually improves, the demand for clothing is expected to increase. The number of female consumers in China is huge, accounting for 48.7% of the national population. They play an important role in consumption activities, not only dominating their own purchasing decisions but also serving as the main decision-makers for family clothing consumption. Furthermore, women actively promote changes in fashion trends during the clothing consumption process, prompting clothing brands to pay more attention to consumers' individuality and spiritual needs. As the main force of the clothing consumption market, women's consumption behavior at different ages shows significant differences. For example, young women may pay more attention to trendy styles, while middle-aged women may pay more attention to the quality of clothing (Tu & Hu, 2018). With the socio-economic development and the change of consumption concepts, the driving mechanism for women of different ages to consume needs to be discussed in depth. In this paper, I will study the factors that affect the consumption willingness of women of different ages in the Chinese clothing market. Although some studies focus on the influencing factors of consumer behavior, the systematic analysis of the topic of this thesis is still insufficient. First, the existing research mostly focuses on foreign women's consumption (Erasmus et al., 2011) or consumption scenarios of all ages (Tu & Hu, 2018), and lacks a comparative analysis of age differences in Chinese clothing purchasing scenarios. Secondly, the role mechanism of factors affecting the willingness to consume in different age groups has not been clarified. My research objectives are as follows. First of all, it identifies the key factors that affect the consumption intentions of all ages. Besides, it analyses the differences in the consumption intentions of women of different ages when buying clothes. Moreover, it provides a theoretical basis for the clothing industry to formulate marketing strategies for different age groups and improve the consumption intention of the target groups. This study will use literature reading, questionnaire investigation, statistical analysis as well as interview to explore the consumption intentions of women of different age groups and their influencing factors, and finally put forward targeted suggestions.

Literature Review Introduction

The clothing market is a dynamic field where consumers' purchasing decisions are influenced by multiple factors. As an important consumer group in this market, women exhibit diverse purchasing behaviors due to differences in age, socioeconomic status, and personal preferences. This literature review explores the key factors influencing women's willingness to purchase clothing, with

a focus on the differentiated considerations of consumers of different age groups regarding price, quality, fashion trends, and brand perception.

Women in the Clothing Market

Previous research has established that women are an important component of the clothing market. For example, in India, the number of women in the workforce is continuously increasing, and their economic independence has been enhanced, thus they are more willing to spend money on clothing. In a study on Indian branded clothing, Rajput (2012) pointed out that women have specific perspectives and motivations behind their purchases. The research found that price, fit, and consumer income levels are significant factors. Moreover, these factors influencing purchasing decisions can also be found in many cultures, such as the Czech Republic and Bulgaria (Millan, 2013).

Factors Affecting Purchasing Willingness

Extensive research has shown that price perception greatly affects a consumer's decision to purchase a product. It explains information about a product and provides a deep meaning for the consumers (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Hence, price plays an important role in the purchasing decision, especially for products that are frequently purchased, which influences the choices of which store, product, and brand to patronize (Faith & Agwu, 2014). Furthermore, Djatmiko and Pradana (2016) demonstrated the significant impact of brand on purchase decisions by the descriptive quantitative research methods. Marta (2016) considered that most consumers tend to purchase products from brands labeled as trustworthy. Existing research acknowledges that product quality plays a crucial role in purchase decisions (Rajasa et al., 2023). Haryanti's (2020) study suggests that consumers tend to buy trendy clothing because they seek approval from others based on the theory named "hedonic motives". The results from the study's 96 samples indicate that fashion trends influence the decision to purchase veiled clothing in the horse market, encompassing both partial and simultaneous effects.

Differences in factor preferences across age groups

Price is an important determining factor for the purchasing intentions of clothing among women of different ages, although the effects vary. Young women, especially those aged 18-24, often prioritize price due to limited disposable income (Noble et al., 2009). Wood (2006) found that among 261 female consumers in the UK in this age group, low prices alone are often sufficient to drive purchase decisions, reflecting a cost-oriented consumption tendency. In contrast, middle-aged women exhibit a more nuanced

approach to price and affordability, balancing cost with quality and brand reputation (Bennett & Rundle-Thiele, 2005). This nuance may stem from greater financial autonomy, allowing them to invest in higher-priced goods that are perceived to have greater durability and quality. For older consumers, Sharma (2014) found that they prefer timeless and durable clothing; among older women surveyed, 72% chose a small number of high-quality garments over many low-cost alternatives, indicating a tendency towards pursuing long-term value rather than short-term savings. These findings cannot be extrapolated to all patients. The situation in each country is different because the level of economic development varies. People's choices for inferior goods and normal goods differ by the standard of living.

The quality of clothing is a multifaceted concept that encompasses considerations throughout the entire life-cycle of garments, from purchase and use to disposal (Aakko & Niinimäki, 2021). Although 89% of young respondents in Morgan and Bertveit's (2009) survey indicated that quality is important, a prioritization of fashion over durability was revealed. In contrast, middle-aged women place more emphasis on fabric quality and craftsmanship, increasingly leaning towards brands that adhere to sustainable and ethical production practices (Joy et al., 2012). An eye-tracking experiment by O'Cass and Lim (2018) further indicated that middle-aged shoppers spend 47% more time than younger consumers examining product information related to quality, highlighting a thoughtful focus on tangible attributes. For older adults, quality becomes the primary consideration: Lee and Johnson (2020) report that among 500 surveyed seniors, 82% listed quality as their top priority, far ahead of price (58%) and style (42%).

The influence of fashion trends on purchasing decisions varies across different age groups. Young women, in particular, are more susceptible to the rapid changes in trends, primarily due to recommendations from influencers and exposure on social media (Phau & Teah, 2009). A survey conducted by Park (2022) found that 68% of 1,200 Generation Z consumers prioritized "current style" over price (52%) and quality (47%), highlighting the importance of alignment with trends. Middle-aged women tend to selectively engage with trends, incorporating elements into their existing wardrobe while prioritizing fit and comfort (Miller & Woodside, 2010). Twigg and Majima (2014) noted that after the age of 40, comfort often surpasses style, with 62% of participants rejecting fashion items due to size issues. For older adults, fashion trends are consistently downplayed. A longitudinal study by Twigg (2013) found that only 9% of participants over 70 considered "fashion" important, reflecting a shift towards preferences for functionality and timelessness. However, this does not apply to every region due to different fashion cultures. In

some European areas, fashion is reflected in people of all ages, as it represents their attitude towards life.

The impact of brand on purchase intention varies at different stages of the product life cycle. Younger women often gravitate towards brands that resonate with their identity and social circles, frequently influenced by online reviews and social media presence (Bennett & Rundle-Thiele, 2005). Park and Rabbit (2022) observed that 72% of young participants view brands as "social badges" to show group affiliation,

highlighting the role of brands in identity construction. Middle-aged women usually develop brand loyalty based on accumulated experience and perceived quality.

Bennett and Rundle-Thiele (2018) reported that brand loyalty peaks among individuals aged 45-54 ($M=4.2/5$), primarily driven by previous positive experiences ($\beta=0.39$, $p<0.001$). For older consumers, the importance of brands declines. Twigg (2013) found that only 22% of adults aged 65 and over consider brand name important, while 58% place more value on "known applicability reliability" regardless of brand, reflecting their concern for functional consistency over brand identity.

Research gap

The literature review above concludes the contents of previous researches. These researches have studied on female consuming behaviors in clothing market across many cultures. However, few studies have investigated Chinese female clothing market in any systematic way. In addition, up to now, far too little attention has been paid to the comparison of different age groups, purchasing preferences in female clothing market. The unique nature of clothing market makes it in need of the marketing strategies for specific age groups. By filling the research gap, the findings of study can be applied to real Chinese clothing marketing to better fit consumers, demands.

Methodology

Overview

The current study employed both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies to find out the factors affecting women's purchasing willingness across different age groups. The process of the research will be described thoroughly in this part, and the reasons for choosing corresponding methods of the steps will be given. The process is roughly split into three steps. One is by using the literature research method to find out the factors affecting consumption willingness across different age groups. The other one is based on data collected by questionnaires, building a statistic model and carrying out analysis to the correlations between the factors influencing the purchas-

ing willingness and each age groups. The last one is to interview the consumers in each age groups and elicit the reasons for their purchasing decisions.

Questionnaire

The literature review was an essential part of developing the questionnaire. It was important to review papers to indicate factors influencing purchasing decisions. Then, a questionnaire was used to assess data based on the information concluded from the literature, including the females, purchasing preferences. In the questionnaire, the ages of the participants were asked about and categorized firstly. Then, four questions regarding how different factors influenced their purchasing intentions were asked.

The factors mentioned are price, quality, fashion trend and brand image of the clothing. Participants were required to select the degree of importance they attached to each factor from 1 to 5. Each question appeared as: 'In your opinion, how important is the xxx that affects your purchasing willingness?' A likert scale appeared beneath each question. The left-hand anchor numbered 1 was labelled, 'I am sure it is not important'. The right-hand anchor numbered 5 was labelled, 'I am sure it is very important'. The participants invited were unpaid volunteers. They were recruited through responding to an online questionnaire. The number of participants collected is 119 Chinese females from age 15 to 80. The final valid samples are 118. The objective was to recruit people from three different age groups. There are 46 young females aged 15-30, 38 middle-aged females aged 31-55 and 34 elderly people aged 56-80.

Analysis of Data

The Excel spreadsheet was used to record data collected from the questionnaire and the website of SPSSAU is a tool for data analysis.

One - way Analysis of Variance is a basic form of analysis of variance. The single independent variable in the current research is the age of female consumers which was divided into three groups (15-30, 31-55 and 56-80). There are four dependent variables including the degree of importance for the low price of clothing, good quality of clothing, fashion trends and brand images.

Correlation analysis is a statistical method used to measure the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables. In the current research, the independent variable are female consumers' ages. The dependent variables are the degree of concern for price, fashion trends and brand images.

Interview

In this study, the interview method was used to complement the lack of personalized responses to the question-

naire. It helps to explore the motivations of consumers' purchasing decisions in depth. Six interviewees took part in the interview: 2 females aged 15-30, 2 aged 31-55 and another 2 aged 56-80. They were asked about the reasons for their purchasing decision-making. The interview was structured. The questions asked are, for example: 'If you think the price is important, what are the reasons for choosing a low price when making decisions of purchasing clothing?'

Other factors were mentioned as well. The answers to the questions from interviewees were recorded. After summarizing and concluding their answers, several reasons for consumers' purchasing preferences could be found.

Results

Three steps of analysis were executed to obtain results.

Questionnaire

In the questionnaire collection, 118 samples were valid including 46 young females aged 15-30, 38 aged 31-55 and 34 aged 56-80. The degree of importance of factors was leveled from 1-5. There were 22 high school students, 14 college students and 50 workers, as well as 32 women retired.

Statistical Analysis of Data

Analysis of Variance

Based on the provided one-way data from the analysis of variance, the following conclusions can be drawn. First of all, there is no significant difference in attitudes towards clothing quality among different age groups.

Statistical results from Table 1 show that for clothing quality scores across different age groups (15-30 years old, 31-55 years old, and 56-80 years old), the F-value is 2.852 and the p-value is 0.062 ($p > 0.05$), which does not reach the significance level. The average scores of the three groups are 3.78 ± 0.92 , 3.47 ± 0.80 , and 3.35 ± 0.77 respectively. The numerical differences are small and statistically insignificant,

indicating that all age groups have consistent perceptions and preferences regarding clothing quality.

Secondly, there are significant differences in attitudes towards clothing price, brand image, and fashion style among different age groups. The F-value for clothing price is 12.786 and the p-value is 0.000, showing significance at the 0.01 level. The score of the 56-80 age group (3.0) is 4.41 ± 0.70 , which is significantly higher than that of the 15-30 age group (1.0, 3.41 ± 1.05) and the 31-55 age group (2.0, 3.50 ± 0.98). This indicates that the elderly group has significantly higher attention to or sensitivity towards clothing prices. Also, the F-value for brand images is 9.864 and the p-value is 0.000, showing

significance at the 0.01 level. The score of the 31-55 age group (2.0) is 3.92 ± 1.02 , which is significantly higher than that of the 15-30 age group (1.0, 2.89 ± 1.10) and the 56-80 age group (3.0, 3.26 ± 1.05). This suggests that the middle-aged group attaches the highest importance to brand image. Besides, the F-value for fashion trends is 19.190 and the p-value is 0.000, showing significance at the

0.01 level. The scores of the 15-30 age group (1.0, 4.48 ± 0.75) and the 31-55 age group (2.0, 4.18 ± 0.69) are significantly higher than that of the 56-80 age group (3.0, 3.53 ± 0.56). This indicates that young and middle-aged groups pay much more attention to fashion style than the elderly group.

Table 1 Analysis of Variance Analysis of variance

	Age groups(Mean±Standard Deviation)			F	p
	15-30 (n = 46)	31-55 (n = 38)	56-80 (n = 34)		
quality	3.78 ± 0.92	3.47 ± 0.80	3.35 ± 0.77	2.852	0.062
price	3.41 ± 1.05	3.50 ± 0.98	4.41 ± 0.70	12.786	0.000**
brand image	2.89 ± 1.10	3.92 ± 1.02	3.26 ± 1.05	9.864	0.000**
fashion trend	4.48 ± 0.75	4.18 ± 0.69	3.53 ± 0.56	19.190	0.000**

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

Moreover, the intensity of influence of age groups on various factors was analyzed which can be judged by Partial η^2 and Cohen's f values. As for fashion trends, results from Table 2 indicates that Partial $\eta^2 = 0.250$, Cohen's f = 0.578, with the strongest influence of 25% of the variance that can be explained by age groups. And for clothing

price, Partial $\eta^2 = 0.182$, Cohen's f = 0.472, with the second strongest influence. Brand image had the Partial η^2 of 0.146 and Cohen's f of 0.414, with moderate influence. Clothing quality had the weakest influence and no significance with Partial $\eta^2 = 0.047$ and Cohen's f = 0.223.

Table 2 Effect Size Indicators In-depth Analysis - Effect Size Indicators

Analysis Items	SSB	SST	Partial η^2	Cohen's f
Clothing Quality	4.020	85.085	0.047	0.223
Clothing Price	22.435	123.322	0.182	0.472
Brand Image	22.273	152.110	0.146	0.414
Fashion Trend	17.908	71.568	0.250	0.578

Analysis of Correlation

Based on the provided Pearson correlation analysis data, the following conclusions can be drawn about the relationship between age and the clothing price, the fashion style, and the brand image.

Age and clothing price have significantly positive correlation. In the Table 3, The correlation coefficient is 0.398** ($p = 0.000 < 0.01$)**, showing significance at the 0.01 level. People's attention to clothing prices shows a moderate upward trend as age increases (correlation coefficient of 0.3-0.5 indicates moderate correlation).

Table 3 Pearson Correlation between Age and Clothing Price Pearson Correlation

Clothing Price	
Age	Correlated Coefficient p value Samples
	0.398** 0.000 118

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

Age and fashion trends have significantly negative correlation. Table 4 shows that the correlation coefficient is

-0.451** ($p = 0.000 < 0.01$)**, showing significance at the 0.01 level. People's attention to fashion trends shows

a moderate downward trend as age increases (correlation coefficient of 0.4-0.5 indicates moderate correlation).

Table 4 Pearson Correlation between Age and Fashion Trends Pearson Correlation

		Fashion Trends
Age	Correlated Coefficient p value Samples	0.451** 0.000 118

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

Age and brand image have no significant correlation. Table 5 shows that the correlation coefficient is 0.169 ($p = 0.094 > 0.05$), not reaching significance level.

There is no statistically significant association between age and brand images, with a correlation coefficient close to 0. This does not contradict the previous result from the

analysis of variance that 'the age group of 31-55 scored the highest on brand images' - the analysis of variance shows that the middle-aged groups has outstanding scores, but overall, the linear correlation between age and brand image is weak, suggesting a possible non-linear relationship or other moderating factors.

Table 5 Pearson Correlation between Age and Brand Image Pearson Correlation

		Brand Image
Age	Correlated Coefficient p value Samples	0.169 0.094 118

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

Interview Six interviewees were invited to answer questions including two young females aged 16 and 23, two middle-aged at ages of 39 and 50, as well as two elderly females aged 60 and 75. In the investigation, two young females were found to be concerned about fashion trends when choosing clothing. One of them considered it as a sense of conformity and the older one thought it was because the young liked the style of clothing. As for the two middle-aged women, the brand image is their priority. One aged 39 thought it was a status symbol and showed their life attitudes. Another interviewee loved the design of well-known fashion brands. The two elderly totally agree with their motivations for choosing low prices. They said it was her habit to save money and not willing to buy clothing at higher prices. It was due to the Chinese culture few decades ago that the living standard was low and the price level is much lower. Nowadays, the economy is growing fast and price level is increasing sharply in very short time. The elderly who could not follow the growth of economy and price level thought the clothing are expensive. Finally, all of them mentioned that quality represents comfort and durability.

Conclusion

In the current study, 118 participants were invited to answer the questionnaire, providing valid data. Interview is another method to

complement the information about consumers' ideas. The young female explained their attention to the fashion trends as the sense of conformity and the preference of style. Middle-aged consumers focuses mainly on brand images due to the consideration of the symbol of status and the love of special design. The elderly agreed that the cultural customs and purchasing habits made them more concerned about price of clothing. All of them considered that quality represents comfort and durability.

Discussion

The factors affecting purchasing willingness The data analysis of the questionnaire found that price, quality, fashion trends and brand image are the main factors affecting women's purchasing willingness in the offline clothing market, among which quality shows no significant difference between different age groups ($p = 0.062$), while price, fashion trends and brand image exhibit significant age differences. This finding indicates that quality is a timeless demand in clothing consumption for women of all ages when purchasing clothing, becoming a fundamental expectation that is independent of age, which represents comfort and durability. In contrast, the importance of price, fashion trends and brand image varies significantly with age, suggesting these factors are more sensitive to generational differences. The results are consistent with existing research in the literature review. The reasons

for still being cautious is that the study worked in China which may have regional limitations. In addition, there might be other factors that were not covered in the study such as after-sales services and store environments. The consistency between this study's findings and the literature indicates that price, quality, fashion trends, and brand image are indeed key factors affecting women's clothing purchasing willingness.

The preference by the young The results of this study show that young women value fashion trends the most (mean = 4.48 ± 0.75), and there is a significant negative correlation between age and attention to fashion (correlation coefficient $r = -0.451$, $p < 0.01$), while brand image is the factor they care about the least (mean = 2.89 ± 1.10). Their attention to trends may reflect a desire to conform to social norms or remain aligned with their peers. These results reflect those of Park (2022) who also found that 68% of Generation Z consumers prioritize "current style" over price and quality. This can be explained by what interviewees clarified. One of them mentioned a "sense of conformity", while another referred to a natural preference for fashion styles, which are particularly prominent in this age group. These findings may be somewhat limited by the sample size which is relatively small as 46 young women that cannot represent all the young female consumers' clothing purchasing behaviors. Moreover, the young age group of 15-30 covers a wide range, and there may be differences in preferences between teenagers and young adults, which are not further distinguished in this study.

Comparison of the findings with those of other studies confirms that young women prioritize fashion trends in clothing consumption, with brand image being less important.

The preference by the middle-aged The current investigation found that middle-aged women place the highest importance on brand image (mean = 3.92 ± 1.02), which is significantly higher than other age groups ($p < 0.01$), while also maintaining a moderate focus on fashion trends and prices. This indicates that brand image has become a central factor in the purchasing decisions of middle-aged women. These results corroborate the findings of a great deal of the previous work by Bennett and Rundle-Thiele (2018), who reported that brand loyalty peaks among individuals aged 45-54, mainly driven by previous positive experiences. Middle-aged interviewees explained their focus on brand image, referring to it as a reflection of 'status symbols' and 'lifestyles,' with one noting a preference for 'well-known fashion brand designs'. These responses highlight that brands hold both symbolic and practical significance for this group, justifying their higher priority for brands. Another source of uncertainty is that the middle-aged sample may have differences in consumption preferences due to factors such as occupation and income,

which are not further analyzed in this study. This also accords with our earlier observations, which showed that middle-aged women attach great importance to brand image in clothing consumption while balancing fashion trends and price.

The preference by the elderly Another finding is that elderly women have the highest sensitivity to price (average = 4.41 ± 0.70), and there is a significant positive correlation between age and price concern ($r = 0.398$, $p < 0.01$), while their attention to fashion trends is the lowest (average = 3.53 ± 0.56). This indicates that price is the main driving force for elderly women when purchasing clothing offline, while the importance of fashion trends is declining. Their focus on price may stem from long-standing habits or economic considerations. This outcome is contrary to that of Twigg (2013) who found that quality was the main factor affecting the older women's purchasing decision. This discrepancy may be explained by cultural context. Sharma's (2014) research focused on a broader global sample, while the current study targets Chinese elderly women, whose price sensitivity could be more strongly shaped by unique socio-economic experiences. A note of caution is due here since the small sample size of elderly participants limits generalizability. Additionally, unmeasured variables such as pension levels or regional economic disparities in China could further explain the heightened price sensitivity observed. However, the findings of the current study do not support the previous research. The inconsistencies between the current research and existing literature indicate that cultural and generational backgrounds play a key role in shaping the apparel preferences of older women, and in the Chinese sample,

price sensitivity may outweigh the general emphasis on durability mentioned in global studies.

Evaluation Several questions that were not mentioned in the research still remain to be answered. The major limitation of this research is the regional limitation in China. Although the current research focuses on Chinese female consumers, the differences between urban and rural areas as well as the north and the south were not clearly distinguished. The current research was mostly done in the second-tier city. However, due to the varied living standards and lifestyles, there might be significant differences in the preferences of consumers across areas. The absence of such regional stratification limits the universality of the research findings in China's diversified market. This would be a fruitful area for further work. Future studies should incorporate regional stratification such as first-tier and third-tier cities, which reflects regional diversity in China.

In addition, the small sample size of 118 valid questionnaires did not allow the robustness of the statistical results. It also reduced the ability to detect subtle age differences. A natural progression of this work is to expand

the size of samples. More participants would help us to establish a greater degree of accuracy on this matter.

Moreover, the scope of this study was limited in terms of the lack of difference between online and offline shopping. Offline shopping is greatly influenced by in-store experiences, while online consumption depends more on reviews, logistics, and digital marketing. The lack of the distinction limits the applicability of the findings in the integrated online and offline clothing market. Further researchers should be undertaken to explore the difference of influencing factors in online and offline consumption within the same age groups that helps us clarify the scenario-specific mechanisms.

Conclusion

This study explores the influences on Chinese women of different ages when deciding to purchase clothing in physical stores. The results indicate that their preferences vary by age: younger women care most about whether clothes are fashionable, middle-aged women focus more on brand image, while older women primarily pay attention to price.

However, regardless of age, everyone considers quality important. These findings help fill the research gap regarding how Chinese women of different age groups shop. They also reveal that while some global concepts of consumer behavior apply here, there are cultural differences — for instance, older Chinese women are more price-sensitive due to their unique life experiences.

These results can be applied to retail in real life. For young shoppers, stores can focus on fashionable designs to make the shopping experience more aligned with social media needs, such as setting up photo areas. For middle-aged customers, brands can tell their stories and emphasize quality, and implement loyalty programs. For elderly shoppers, offering good deals and clear pricing would be helpful. Stores can also arrange their layouts according to these needs — placing fashionable clothing in areas where young people gather, and placing affordable, durable products in areas easily accessible to elderly customers.

In addition to helping businesses, this research also tells us more about how gender and age influence Chinese consumer culture, showing that society and the economy are undergoing changes — for example, women have more say in consumption. It can also be used to study other products, helping to formulate better retail policies and create more inclusive shopping experiences to meet the needs of various age groups.

There are several ways to expand on this research. First, a larger and more diverse sample would be helpful. If we survey more people, including those from different regions of China — such as urban and rural areas, or

the east and the west — it would make the results more broadly applicable and address the current lack of regional data. Second, comparing online and offline shopping would be useful. For example, observing how social media influences young people's choices online versus in stores, or the importance of delivery services for older online shoppers, can help us better understand how people shop across different channels. Third, examining other factors like income, occupation, or education, which this study did not cover, could provide more explanation for why different age groups have different preferences, especially regarding middle-aged consumer loyalty to certain brands.

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