

## 미국 Y세대의 청바지 구매결정요인에 관한 연구

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### The Y Generation's Decision Factors of Purchasing Jeans in the United States

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#### Abstract

The Y generation born between 1981 and 1995 is the largest consumer group in the United States. This study is to provide an insight of understanding Y generation's decision factors of purchasing Jeans and the fit issues. This study investigated their purchasing decisions factors, including fit, cost, brand, color, and the media/internet influences. It is revealed that the Y generation might have access to the internet, but they still rely more on their peers and savvy skills to decide what they purchase. They preferred to shop from the land based retail stores rather than the internet. The fit was the most important factor of their purchasing decision, but less concerns of the brand. In this study, 87% of them chose "fit" as the reason to buy a pair of jeans. Fit problems were related to the price category. This study suggests apparel manufacturers should understand Y generation's fit issues in the global market.

*Key words: generation Y(Y세대), jeans(진), purchasing decision factors(구매결정요인), fit(맞음새).*

#### I . Introduction

Generation Y has been of great interest for market research in the apparel industry. The Y generation is anyone born between 1981 and 1995. They are the largest consumer group in the history of the U.S<sup>1)</sup>.

They have grown up in the digital world and are aware of the resources that are available to them. Although young adults are, historically, self absorbed, generation Y has an extra sense of their individual identity and they resent it when others suggest that they know them better than they know themselves<sup>2)</sup>. This generation is also more diverse than any other

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- 1) OnPoint Marketing & Promotions, "Generation Y Defined", in *OnPoint* [magazine online] (14 November. 2006 [retrieved 7 March 2007]); available from World Wide Web@<http://onpoint-marketing.com/generation-y.html>
- 2) Jessica Sebor, "Y Me", *Customer Relationship Management* Vol. 10 No. 11 (November 2006), pp. 24-27.

previous generation in the history of the U.S. Their exposure to a variety of global view point has created a “mix and match” culture<sup>3)</sup>. This generation has already begun to have an influence on the U.S. economy and will continue to do so in years to come. It has become important for many companies to get a clear understanding of what this generation is searching for in apparel commodities.

Jeans are part of American culture and generation Y has been wearing them since they were toddlers. While many things have gone in and out of style, this generation has adopted denim jeans as a valuable commodity. They became largely accepted by female members of the generation Y in the mid 1990’s when the low rise jean was introduced. While denim jeans are a valuable commodity, designer jeans have not been able to become valuable for the Y generation. In the article in USA Today entitled, that some generation Y will occasionally shop at thrift stores, not because they have to, but because they want to save money<sup>4)</sup>. Veterans of the denim industry, like Levis Strauss and Gloria Vanderbilt, have all redesigned their labels to provide better fit for their costumers with affordable prices.

Apparel companies have already made efforts to attract this generation, but there is still an absence in understating fit problems in apparel garments with this particular age group. Apparel manufacturers at some point used vanity sizes to help solve the issues of fit. It has also been difficult for manufactures because styles for Missy have noticeably changed in pants with a lowered waistline placement and curved hipline<sup>5)</sup>. Shin and Istook<sup>6)</sup> note that the problem with jeans is that manufactures in the U.S. are still using

sizing systems that are based on the hourglass figure or pear shape and are not representative of the majority of U.S. women. Several previous studies have been done to investigate fitting problems. However, there is an absence in the area concerning the generation Y’s shopping preferences that are related to fit issues.

The purpose of this study was to get a better understanding of generation Y’s concern of denim jean’s fitting problems and factors of their purchasing decisions in USA. It was also vital to look at where and from whom this generation was shopping, and if there was any influence from the media on their purchasing power. The following alternative hypotheses have been formulated to address this issue:

- Hypothesis 1: The internet/media and people significantly influence the decision to purchase denim jeans. They might be different by the age groups.
- Hypothesis 2: There are significantly different shopping methods (how to shop) and shopping store (where to shop) preferences related to their ages and their sizes.
- Hypothesis 3: There are significant factors (cost, brand, color, and fit) to purchase a denim jean. Factors might be different by the price category, their ages and their sizes.
- Hypothesis 4: There are significant fitting problems related to the price category, their ages, and their sizes.

## II. Methodology

A survey was developed to get an inside stand-

3) Pamela Morton, “Targeting Generation Y,” *Public Relations Quarterly* Vol. 47 No.1 (2002), pp 46-48.

4) Jayne O’Donnell, “Gen Y Sits on Top of Consumer Food Chain” in *USA Today* [newspaper online] (10 November. 2006 [retrieved 28 August 2009]); available from World Wide Web@[http://usatoday.com/money/advertising/2006-10-11-retail-teens-usat\\_x.htm](http://usatoday.com/money/advertising/2006-10-11-retail-teens-usat_x.htm)

5) Su-Jeong Shin & Cynthia Istook, “The Importance of Understanding the Shape of Diverse Ethnic Female Consumers for Developing Jeans Sizing Systems,” *International Journal of Consumer Science* Vol. 31 No. 2 (2007), pp. 135-143.

6) *Ibid.*, pp. 135-143.

point of Y generation's concerns of jean's fitting problems and to find out if the media influences the decision of purchasing denim jeans. Simple random sampling was used to select 100 subjects (female between the ages of 18~26). The data were collected from January to March 2008. The subjects consisted of 63% Caucasian, 29% Hispanic, 4% Asian, 3% Mixed ethnics, and 1% African-American.

A little more than 50% of the participants were between the ages of 21~23, 39% were between the ages of 18~20, and 10% were between the ages of 24~26. They filled out the survey that consisted of 22 questions pertaining to media/internet usage influences on decision to purchase denim jeans, shopping places, shopping preferences of brand names and price range category, fitting problems on wearing denim jeans, brand name and price range category related to the fitting problems, price range category related to the fitting problems, and size category related to the fitting problems.

Data entry and analysis was done using Statgraphics<sup>®</sup>. Descriptive statistics were used to compare frequencies for each variable: age groups (18~20, 21~23, and 24~26), internet/media influences (internet, TV, magazine, radio, newspaper, no influence), shopping place (internet, specialty stores, department stores, discount stores, retail stores, and catalogue), size category (small, medium, large, X large, and XX large), fitting problems (hip, waist, pants length, crotch length, and no problem), factors of purchasing (cost, fit, color, brand, store), brand name and price range category. In the

<Table 1> Basic statistics of the samples (Unit: %)

Ethnics	Age			Total
	18~20	21~23	24~36	
Hispanic	8	16	5	29
Cocasian	26	32	5	63
African-American	0	1	0	1
Asian	4	0	0	4
Other	1	2	0	3
Total	39	51	10	100

brand name and price range category, the participants were asked to choose from groups of different priced jeans. In the survey, the answers were broken into five categories but only four price ranges were chosen (budget, moderate, bridge, and designer). High-end designer jeans were listed on the survey but were not selected.

Frequency tables and contingency tables for each set of variables were created, and a total of 21 tables were developed to compare each set of variables. Chi-square analysis was used to test the following significances: internet/media influences among the age groups, shopping place preferences among age groups, fitting problems related to the price range categories, the factors of purchasing associate with the size category.

### III. Results

#### 1. Internet/Media Influences on Purchase Jeans

The first hypothesis was about if the internet/media and people significantly influence on their decision to purchase a style of jeans. A chi-square test was used for significance testing and yielded a value of 0.801 with *P*-value of 0.8492. The chi-square test at a 95% confidence level shows that there was no significance of different media/internet influence among the age groups.

<Table 2> shows overall, of the 100 respondents to the question, 46% indicated that they do not have any influence on their decision to purchase denim jeans. The only two relevant sources that impact what gen yers buy are magazines and television, and

<Table 2> Media influence to Y generation (Unit: %)

Influence	% of the media influence
Television	11
Internet	4
Magazines	39
None	46
Total	100

36% stated that magazines played a role, and only 11% stated that television is an influence on the jeans they bought. Finally, only 4% felt that the internet impacted their shopping preferences. It can also be noted that radio and newspaper were not considered an influence on their decision.

**2. Shopping Methods (How to Shop) and Shopping Store (Where to Shop) Preferences**

The second hypothesis was to find out if there was any significance of shopping methods (how to shop) and shopping store preferences (where to shop) among the age groups. When they were asked about how to shop, there was no significance of different shopping methods within the Y generation. They all did not respond to shopping from catalog. <Table 3> shows the results of the Y generation’s shopping methods in USA. As shown in <Table 3>, none of them shop through catalog order and only 6% of the participants shop through online. Shopping at specialty store (37%), retail stores (31%), and department stores (20%) were common shopping ways for the generation.

When they were asked about the shopping store preference, it was found that 48% of the participants

<Table 3> Y generation’s shopping methods in USA  
(Unit: %)

Shopping methods	% of the shopping methods
Go to dept. stores	20
Shop from catalog	0
Shop through online	6
Go to discount stores	6
Go to retail store	31
Go to specialty store	37
Total	100

shop at specialty stores, such as: Express, Gap, American Eagle, etc. The majority that shops at specialty stores came from the ages of 21~23. According to the chi-test at a 95% confidence level, there was significance of shopping place preferences among the age groups ( $\chi^2=24.027^{**}$ ,  $p=0.0075$ ).

<Table 4> shows shopping store preferences by the age groups in USA. As shown in <Table 4>, it was also observed that this particular age group shops more at higher-end retail stores like Nordstrom and SAKs than other age groups. It was found that the ages of 24~26 shop less in specialty stores (2%), showing the observed frequency was less than two

<Table 4> Shopping store preference by the age groups in USA  
(Unit: n (%))

Shopping place	Age	18~20	21~23	24~26	Total %	$\chi^2$
	Budget (Wal-Mart, Target, K-Mart)	0 ( 0.39)	0 ( 0.39)	1 (0.51)	1	
Discount (Ross, TJ, Kohl’s)	8 ( 4.29)	1 ( 5.61)	2 (1.1)	11		
Moderate store (JC Penny, Mervyns)	5 ( 3.12)	2 ( 4.08)	1 (0.8)	8		
Department store range moderate to better price (Dillard’s, Macy’s)	5 ( 5.07)	6 ( 6.63)	2 (1.3)	13		
Specialty (Express, Gap, American Eagle)	16 (18.72)	30 (24.48)	2 (4.8)	48		
Designer Department store (Nordstrom, SAKS, Neiman Marcus)	5 ( 7.41)	12 ( 9.69)	2 (1.9)	19		
Total % of the group	39	51	10	100		

\*\* $p<0.01$ ,  $p=0.0075$ .

times the expected frequency.

This can be due to the fact that they have shopped around in different apparel companies and have found fitting problems in all price ranges. It was found that the ages of 18~20 shop more at discount department stores than any other age group, showing the observed frequency was more than the expected frequency. In the contingency table, 73% of the discount department store was the ages of 18~20. The Y gens are known for being money conscious and shopping at discount stores not because they have to but because they want to save money.

**3. Factors of Purchasing Jeans**

The third hypothesis was to investigate if there was any significance of factors (cost, fit, brand, and color) to purchase a denim jean. Fit was the most important factor in choosing to buy denim jeans, 87% of the participants chose it as the reason to buy a pair. Cost was second in 13% percent. It is noted that only cost and fit became relevant factors in deciding to purchase a pair of jeans. Color and brand were not considered as an important factor by the participants.

〈Table 5〉 shows factors by the size groups. When a chi-square test was used for significance testing the factors relation to sizes and to ages, it was found that there was a significant difference of the factors among the size groups ( $\chi^2=15.439^{**}$ ,  $p=0.0086$ ), not by ages. As shown in 〈Table 5〉, it was observed that respondents who wear large sizes considered

cost more than the expectation, while respondents who wear small sizes considered fit more than cost. This can be in part due to the overwhelming disappointment in finding jeans that fit and settling for a reasonable price.

**4. Fit Problems by the Sizes and Price Categories**

Since the fit (87%) was the most important factor in choosing denim jeans, it was necessary to investigate if there was any significance of fitting problems related to the price category, sizes and ages. According to the chi-square test at a 95% confidence level, it was found that their specific fit problem areas were associated with their sizes ( $\chi^2=20.156$ ,  $p=0.0278$ ) and price categories ( $\chi^2=26.708^*$ ,  $p=0.0312$ ).

〈Table 6〉 shows different fit problem areas are related to the price categories. No fitting problem was found in the budget price category at 1% and the better price category at 2%. While respondents in the better price category had fewer problems in hip, waist, and crotch length than expected, it was found that they had more problems in the thighs at 23%, showing the observed frequency was more than the expected frequency. In the moderate price range, they had more fit problems in the hip and waist area than expected frequency. In the bridge price range, they had more fit problems in the hip area. In the budget price category, they had more fit problems in the area of the pants length, thigh, and waist.

〈Table 7〉 shows different fit problem area by the sizes. It was found that fit problem areas were

〈Table 5〉 Factors by the size groups in USA

(Unit: n (%))

Importance \ Size	Small	Medium	Large	X-Large	XX-Large	XXX-Large	Total(%)	$\chi^2$
Cost	3 ( 4.03)	2 ( 3.77)	1 ( 2.34)	2 ( 1.56)	4 (0.91)	1 (0.39)	13	15.439**
Fit	28 (26.97)	27 (25.23)	17 (15.66)	10 (10.44)	3 (6.09)	2 (2.61)	87	
Total(%)	31	29	18	12	7	3	100	

\*\* $p<0.01$ ,  $p=0.0086$ .

〈Table 6〉 Fit problem area by the price category

(Unit: n (%))

Price category \ Fit problems	Budget	Moderate	Better	Bridge	Total % of the fit problems	$\chi^2$
Pants length	9 (8.46)	24 (24.91)	13 (12.22)	1 (1.41)	47	26.708*
Waist	5 (4.14)	14 (12.19)	4 ( 5.98)	0 (0.69)	23	
Hips	0 (2.52)	11 ( 7.42)	1 ( 3.64)	2 (0.42)	14	
Thighs	3 (1.98)	2 ( 5.83)	6 ( 2.86)	0 (0.33)	11	
Crotch length	0 (0.36)	2 ( 1.06)	0 ( 0.52)	0 (0.06)	2	
No problems	1 (0.54)	0 ( 1.59)	2 ( 0.78)	0 (0.09)	3	
Total % of price category	18	53	26	3	100	

\* $p < 0.05$ ,  $p = 0.0312$ .

〈Table 7〉 Fit problem area by the sizes

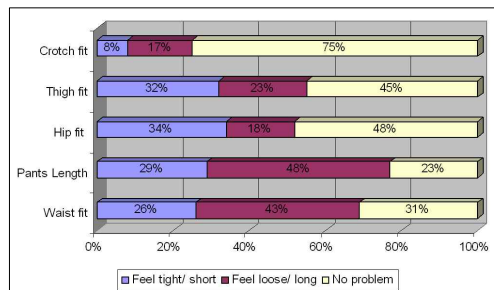
(Unit : n(%))

Size \ Area problems	Small	Medium	Large~ XXXL	Total (%)	$\chi^2$
Pants length	21 (14.57)	11 (13.63)	15 (18.80)	47	20.156*
Waist	3 ( 7.13)	7 ( 6.67)	13 ( 9.20)	23	
Hips	2 ( 4.34)	8 ( 4.06)	4 ( 5.60)	14	
Thighs	4 ( 3.41)	1 ( 3.19)	6 ( 4.40)	11	
Crotch length	0 ( 0.62)	0 ( 0.58)	2 ( 0.80)	2	
No problems	1 ( 0.93)	2 ( 0.87)	0 ( 1.20)	3	
Total (%)	31	29	40	100	

\* $p < 0.05$ ,  $p = 0.0179$ .

different by the size groups ( $\chi^2=20.156$ ,  $p=0.0179$ ). Respondents who wear small sizes had more pants length problem than others while respondents who wear large sizes had more fit problems with waist, thigh, and crotch length. The crotch length was a less problem in the small and medium size groups. Re-

gardless their ages, 97% of the participants indicated fit problems. Only 3% responded there was no problem with fit. As shown in 〈Table 6, 7〉, overall, the biggest fit problem was pants length at 47%. The second biggest fit problem was waist at 23%. Hips at 11% and selected crotch length at 2% were the biggest



〈Fig. 1〉 Fit problems by the area.

fit problem. 〈Fig. 1〉 shows the overall fit problems by the area. Compared to other fit problem areas, crotch length was not a problem (75%). As shown in 〈Fig. 1〉, 48% of the pants length problems were too long, and 43% of the waist fit problems were too loose. This result can be caused by the fact that most denim companies carry only three lengths for jeans: short, regular, and tall.

#### IV. Conclusion

In the previous reiterative review, the Y gens spent more time watching television and browsing the internet than any other age group. In this research, the majority of the Y gens were not influenced by the media and internet usage. It was interpreted that since so much information was poured into the internet, generation Y became good at catching false advertising. They might have access to the internet, but they still rely more on their peers and savvy skills to decide what they purchase.

Their ways of shopping (how to shop) were still from the land based retail stores such as department stores, discount stores, and specialty stores. In this study, only 6% of respondents shopped from the internet. Catalog shopping seems to be obsolete in the generation. In this study, it was also found that their shopping stores (where to shop) were different by their ages. The ages of 18~20 shop in discount stores and specialty stores, while the ages of 24~26 shop less in specialty stores. It is interpreted that

generation Y seems to be money conscious, not because they have to, but also they care about quality of the fit. They also desire to have great fitting jeans at reasonable prices.

Fit was the major decision factor to purchase a certain style of denim jeans in the Y generation. In this study, 87% of the participants chose "fit" as the reason to buy a pair of jeans, regardless of their ages. However, the brands and colors of denim jeans were not a concern for them. When they were asked cost or fit, the factors were different by their sizes. Respondents who wear large sizes concern more the cost while respondents who wear small and medium sizes concern about the fit. It is interpreted that this can be in part due to the overwhelming disappointment in finding jeans that fit and settling for a reasonable price in the specific size range.

While fit was a major concern for all age groups, the Y generation was indifferent. Regardless of their ages, generation Y was having problems with fit in pants length, crotch length, and waist girth. In this study, it was found that their fitting problems were associated with the price category and their sizes. This might be caused by the fact that apparel manufacturers ignored various body shapes of their target consumers. Thus, further research should be directed to the Y generation's fitting issues related to various body shapes and sizes, understanding consumers' needs of the fit.

Understanding the growth of the global market, it would be necessary to analyze and compare the Y generation's purchasing factors in different countries. The Y generation's purchasing decision factors might be different in South Korea. Thus, further study should be done for comparisons of the generation's purchasing factors between South Korea and the United States, and further analyses with ANOVA and multiple comparison tests will be necessary to investigate the significance of differences in fitting issues.

## 국문초록

Y세대는 시장연구에 있어서 많은 흥미를 갖는 세대이다. 이 세대는 1981년에서 1995년에 태어난 사람들로 미국의 역사상 가장 큰 소비자 집단을 이루고 있다. 본 연구의 목적은 미국에 있어서 Y세대들이 청바지를 구입할 때 고려하는 결정 요인들과 맞춤새 문제에 대한 그들의 관심을 잘 이해하는 것이며, 연구 결과를 통해 미국 의류업체들이 소비자들의 요구를 잘 반영할 수 있도록 기초자료를 제공하려는 것이다. 본 연구 결과, 미국의 Y세대들은 인터넷이나 미디어에 영향을 받기 보다는 또래집단이나 자신들의 직감능력에 더 의존하는 것으로 나타났다. 쇼핑 방법에 있어서는 리테일 스토어를 백화점이나 디스카운트 스토아보다 더 선호하였다. 또한, 청바지 구매시 맞춤새를 브랜드나 색상보다 더 중요한 결정 요소로 생각했으며 87%가 그런 생각을 갖고 있었다. 맞춤새 문제에 있어서 대부분 젊은층인데도 불구하고 바지 길이, 엉덩이앞뒤길이, 허리둘레에 문제가 있다고 하였다. 이 맞춤새 문제는 가격대와 사이즈와도 관련이 있는 것으로 나타났으므로 의류 생산 업체들이 다양한 신체 형태와 대상 소비자들의 이해에 관심을 갖을 필요가 있는 것으로 사료된다.

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