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Abstract

The fashion retail sector is going through extremely challenging times with continuing globalisation and the ongoing impact of the recent global recession in many markets. Markets are highly competitive and companies must strive to craft strategies which will deliver competitive advantage. Across the developed and the developing world, populations are ageing. The trend is so marked as to have been termed an 'Agequake' by A.T. Kearney, (2011, 1) in terms of its predicted impact on economies, companies and most particularly, retailers. Women aged 50 and over are now one of the most powerful consumer groups in the UK, spending more than £2.5bn per season on fashion (Kantar Worldpanel 2014). Furthermore, 90% of British retailers are seeing most growth come from the 50 plus sector (Smithers, 2014). Yet research commissioned by retailer JD Williams in 2014 found that over 60% of mature women (defined in the study as 50 plus) felt 'underserved' and 'forgotten' by the fashion industry. Given the macro, socio-demographic trends of a growing segment of mature consumers with high disposable incomes, the question must be asked why mature women feel the fashion industry has forgotten them and whether fashion retailers are overlooking the opportunity for competitive advantage which would accrue from targeting this potentially lucrative segment? This paper will review the key literature in the areas of segmentation and maturity to gain an insight into the segmentation strategies of the fashion retail sector and their perception of the mature female consumer. Furthermore, the possibility of an academic / practitioner divide will be reviewed to establish whether this exists and if so to establish its impact on the segmentation strategies of fashion retailers.

Keywords: segmentation; fashion retail; mature consumers; academic-practitioner divide

Introduction

Of all consumer markets, none is more fickle or more dynamic than fashion (Richardson 1996). By their very nature fashion markets are characterised by volatile demand in an increasingly fragmented context (Hines 2001). The volatility of the fashion market (Hines 2001) makes demand much more unpredictable in comparison to other retail sectors such as grocery, where long term consumer demand patterns are observed (Jackson and Shaw 2009).

Despite major demographic change and the advent of what has been termed an "age-quake" across developed and emerging markets (Walker and Mesnard, 2011), fashion retailers continue to adopt an “only youth = fashion” approach to their market offering (Jackson and Shaw 2009, 53). This approach therefore blindly focusses on a diminishing youth market and overlooks the growing mature market, despite the high disposable incomes and more youthful lifestyles of mature consumers (Belleau et al., 1997). Consequently, mature female consumers of fashion are frequently frustrated at the lack of affordable, available and appropriately designed fashionable clothes for them in High Street stores (Nam et al., 2007).

This paper will first contextualise the demographic background to the Agequake before reviewing the literature on market segmentation to develop a clearer understanding of the challenges and benefits of segmentation methods available to fashion retailers. The paper will also review the literature on maturity and segmentation strategies for mature markets. Furthermore, the existence of a gap between academic theoretical development on segmentation and the needs of fashion retail practitioners will be explored. Finally, a conceptual framework will be proposed to act as a guide for research into this area.

The demographic context of the ‘Agequake’.

The world population has been experiencing significant ageing since the mid-twentieth century. Globally, the number of people aged 60 and over is growing at approximately twice the rate of the overall populations (UNDESA, 2013). The global share of older people (aged 60 years or over) increased from 9.2 per cent in 1990 to 11.7 per cent in 2013 and will continue to grow as a proportion of the world population, reaching 21.1 per cent by 2050 (UNDESA, 2013). A study conducted by consultancy company A.T Kearney in 2011 revealed what they term an ‘Agequake’ – a demographic earthquake of unparalleled proportions in the average life spans of people (1). The study contended that this Agequake will have significant and far-reaching implications for policy makers, marketers and retailers.

The business effect occurs mainly in two spheres: that of companies as employers of older workers and that of companies as marketers of goods and services to older consumers. In both spheres, the coming demographic changes will require companies to ‘shift gears and adapt’, in the words of Jan Willem Kuenen, a partner at Boston Consulting Group who added ‘everyone knows of the [likelihood of an] impact, but not of the magnitude of the impact,’ (cited in EIU 2011, 2). Adapting to the radically different requirements of mature customers can have major consequences for retailers. A study conducted by A.T. Kearney (2011) found that mature shoppers do not feel they are adequately served by retailers and commented on the difficulties they face with regard to navigating large stores, in-store product placement (too low or too high), as well as issues with packaging and labels and in-store directions being difficult to read. ‘The Agequake may require a different paradigm shift in the design of stores and retail chains as aging shoppers – with up to 30 per cent more shopping power – have entirely different needs ‘ (A.T. Kearney, 2011, 10, see Appendix 1). The issue of shopping power is significant as ‘the segment of consumers over 55 is growing faster than any other – both in terms of their share of the total population and their expenditures for clothing’ (Keller et al., 2014). A.T. Kearney’s study concludes that as this segment continues to grow ‘smart companies’ will adapt their strategies to the needs of this segment to create competitive advantage (2011, 12).

Despite this background, mature consumers continue to feel neglected by retailers. In the UK, female consumers aged 50 and over are one of the most powerful consumer groups, spending more than £2.5bn per season on fashion, yet 61% of this segment feel their age group is forgotten by the High Street (Kantar Worldpanel 2014, cited in Smithers 2014). In order to gain more insight into the validity and potential reasons for this, the next section will review segmentation strategies within the context of the fashion retail sector.

The Evolution and Challenges of Market Segmentation

The concept of market segmentation is attributed to Smith (1956) and is defined as 'the process of identifying groups of people who behave in a similar way to each other, but somewhat differently than other groups' (Blackwell et al. 2006, p. 41). The rationale for segmentation is that customers who are grouped on the basis of similar needs and buying behaviour are likely to demonstrate a more homogeneous response to marketing programmes (Dibb, 1999). Dibb (1998) contends that businesses from all industry sectors benefit from using market segmentation in their strategic marketing planning. By improving customer orientation, market segmentation also has the potential to develop competitive advantage and improve business profitability (Wong and Saunders, 1993).

Interest in market segmentation research grew considerably during the 1960s when consumer markets gradually took precedence over industrial markets for theorists. Haley's (1968) work developed on from this and found that consumers sought different kinds of *benefits* from a product, thereby implying they could not be considered equally attractive as prospects for a brand. Other writers focussed on the identification of suitable variables to form bases for segmentation (Webster, 1965; Pessemier et al., 1967). These ideas led to more sophisticated lifestyle-orientated approaches to the segmentation of consumers. However, by the 1970s the nature of these developments resulted in the validity of the multivariate techniques used in segmentation research being questioned (Green and Wind, 1973; Blattberg et al., 1978). Wind (1978) was critical of a growing standardisation of methods employed in conducting segmentation research and observed that studies employing more innovative approaches should be undertaken. He asserted there was a need to identify new variables for use as bases of segmentation.

The apparent simplicity of Kotler's (1984) segmentation, targeting and positioning approach (STP) was appealing, however, due to the growing complexity of consumer behaviour and lifestyles, the main focus of both academics and practitioners in the 1980s was on the development of a psychographic segmentation model. Critically, the complexity of such models led to practical implementation problems being widely noted (Quinn et al. 2005).

The trend towards developing complex segmentation models continued into the 1990s which, in turn, contributed to increased implementation difficulties being experienced by practitioners which were widely observed and reported (Littler, 1992; Dibb and Simkin, 1997; Dibb, 1998). Compounding this, from the 1990s on, the marketing literature acknowledged that consumers were increasingly abandoning predictable patterns of consumption with changes in lifestyle, income, ethnic groups and age increasing the diversity of consumer needs and buying behaviour (Firat and Schultz, 97; Sheth et al., 2000). This suggested that segmentation approaches were becoming less effective and less efficient than they are often perceived to be. Venter, Wright and Dibb (2015) assert that despite the apparent simplicity of the segmentation, targeting and positioning process, the implementation of segmentation remains a significant challenge for organisations. They attribute this to a "poor fit between theoretical explanations of the segmentation process and practical applications" (Venter et al. 2015, p.64). This gap between academic research and practical implementation of segmentation will now be explored.

Academic / Practitioner Divide 1: Segmentation Strategies and Techniques

As noted, the marketing literature in the 90's was primarily concerned with the fragmentation of consumer lifestyles which posed significant challenges to the effectiveness of segmentation strategies (Brown, 1995; Firat and Schultz, 1997; Sheth et al., 2000). As a result, theorists in the main focussed on psychographic segmentation techniques which involved using multivariate segmentation analysis to deal with the heterogeneity of markets (Dibb, 1998). Firat and Venkatesh (1993) cautioned that the managerial response to this challenge was of critical importance given their assertion that any strategic marketing approach which ignored the complex and dynamic nature of contemporary markets was likely to lead to marketing failure. Quinn et al (2009) recognised that this market diversity and complexity emphasised for practitioners the need to develop a greater understanding of markets and that many managers saw segmentation as a logical step towards this. However, while theoretical developments were plentiful, practically useful developments were few 'as the process often fails to provide a manageable solution' (Quinn et al, 2009).

Dibb (1998) undertook an investigation into problems with implementing segmentation in practice and identified three major issues: problems with understanding segmentation principles; difficulties presented by complex and difficult to access literature and lack of practical guidance on what makes segmentation successful. Quinn et al (1997) cited a 2004 study of senior executives which showed that while 59% had recently carried out a major segmentation project, only 14% regarded the outcomes as having real value. The issue of lack of practical guidance is also taken up by Quinn (2009, 255) who is highly critical of 'the paucity of practical instruction' detailing how to choose segments, analyse the cost of serving them or how to monitor groupings of customers in a clear and unambiguous manner.

The segmentation process itself involves a number of assumptions and arbitrary decisions which contribute towards segmentation solutions that are then neither robust nor stable (Hoek et al., 1996). This is, in turn, also brought about by the lack of practical guidelines, coupled with the trend towards complex, fragmenting markets and diversity in consumer behaviour patterns, which lead to managers adopting simplistic and intuitive segmentation approaches. Intuition provides managers with a means of moving beyond rational data in order to make sense of particular situations they have to make decisions on (Clarke and Macanass, 2001).

Wedel and Kamakura (2000, 329) develop this theme and contend that 'every segmentation model is at best an approximation of reality'. They suggest that market segments are ultimately determined by the manager's strategic view of the market, whose perspective 'determines the way homogeneous groups of potential customers are to be identified by market research' (Wedel and Kamakura, 2000, 336). Wright (1996) is critical of the underlying assumptions of segmentation that consumer preferences will be largely homogeneous within segments and that companies would therefore be more successful when they matched their marketing mix to the needs of a particular segment. Wright is also sceptical of whether it is at all possible to deliver a separate marketing mix to different segments and suggests 'leakage' is likely to occur. However, even if that were the case he concludes 'it is quite possible..... that a mass marketing effort could have a better overall return' (Wright, 1996, p. 20).

Therefore, against a background of growing complexity of markets and consumer behaviour there is doubt about the concept of segmentation itself. Dibb (2001) documents the growing impact of technology in developing a rational approach to segmentation. Complex frameworks make use of data fusion techniques, linking infinite variables to provide insights into the nature of fragmented markets. Yet previous research by Hussey and Hooley (1995) had shown that multivariate techniques were seldom used in British companies (cited in Quinn et al., 2009).

Dibb and Simkin (2009, 221) cite events from a segmentation research event which identified a perceived divergence in the approaches of practitioners and academics for identifying segments, and also concerns that certain ‘academic truths’ have little relevance in practice, and an ongoing dearth of research examining implementation issues and the practical context in which research takes place. How this divide may be bridged is the subject of the next section.

Bridging the Academic / Practitioner Divide

The complexity of implementation of segmentation has long been recognised with Day and Wensley (1983) amongst those highlighting the problems this complexity brings for managers (cited in Dibb and Simkin, 2009). Yet, in the marketing segmentation literature little research has been carried out on the practical implementation issues associated with segmentation. Researchers have instead focussed on developing segmentation bases and models, and refining quantitative methods to determine statistically robust methods.

Baines et al (2009) and Baker (2001) go some way toward an explanation with their observation that to achieve success in their careers marketing academics must publish in ‘highly rated’ academic journals which are seldom read by marketing practitioners. This creates ‘a perverse incentive structure’ (Baines et al., 1990), since to achieve academic success academics must publish in outlets that are largely unknown by marketing practitioners. Baker (2001) further suggests that to overcome the lack of practical guidelines, more textbooks would be helpful, however ironically, publishing in academic journals is much more incentivised to the extent that ‘the position has been reached in many schools where emphasising relevance in your research and publishing involves significant career-related risks' (Piercy, 2002, 359; cited in Baines et al. 2009).

Endeavouring to provide practical guidelines, Dibb (2005) identifies three categories of barriers to segmentation which must be identified and addressed as early as possible to avoid incorrect groupings. The tangible or hard barriers relate to data, expertise and resources while the intangible / soft barriers concern areas such as organisational culture and structure. These barriers will variously impact the segmentation process at the planning (infrastructure) stage, during segmentation (process) and also at the implementation stage (Dibb, 2005). Dibb and Simkin (2009) captured these barriers into a framework which they then tested on a longitudinal case study of a large British utilities company which was undertaking a major segmentation project. Their findings confirmed the sequential nature of the segmentation process in practice and the different barriers which occur during the process. However some barriers were greater than expected, particularly in relation to resistance to change due to new business priorities. Dibb and Simkin (2009) then drew up a veritable manual of 'implementation rules' for practitioners which focussed on the context in which they can be applied and the mechanisms which can be used.

Dolnicar and Lazarevski (2009) contend that the main reasons for the theory - practice divide lie in the focus of academics on developing statistical techniques and also in managers' lack of understanding of fundamental segmentation basics. Quinn (2009) believes that given the complexity of markets and the increasing availability of high-volume data, it is particularly important to investigate the level of complexity in terms of the segmentation solutions that managers find appropriate in practice. He conducted individual depth interviews with 12 key managers in 10 fashion retail organisations. The study found that many managers were actually critical of quantitative segmentation typologies with one manager remarking ‘as soon as you put numbers on people it gives a spurious sense of robustness and accuracy’ (Quinn, 2009, p.262). The managers asserted they needed a solution which enabled them to react to the rapidly evolving, day-to-day pressures of their role. Packaged solutions were considered ‘unrealistically expensive’ (p.265) and many informants maintained a preference towards their own, frequently intuitive, applications of the segmentation concept. Dolnicar and Lazarevksi’s (2009) study found that over 60% of managers indicated they perceive marketing as a black box and therefore have difficulties interpreting segmented solutions.

Theory and practice then may have come closer over the last five years, however the divide has not yet been bridged. Dolnicar and Lazarevski (2009, 370) assign responsibility to managers to ‘take responsibility to educate themselves and their staff about the basics of the process underlying any segmented solution’. However Quinn (2009, 268) is critical of the concept as it has evolved and concludes ‘it is evident that the conceptual and methodological foundations of market segmentation have not been accurately reflected in the managerial practices examined.…. contemporary applications and uses no longer provide synergy with the methodological and conceptual foundations of the market segmentation concept.’

The Challenge of Segmenting Fashion Retail Markets

The retail marketing literature acknowledges the importance of segmentation as a concept as it enables retailers to more effectively aim their products towards their target market (Goworek and McGoldrick, 2015). However, the specific challenge of segmentation for retailers is highlighted by Barchet, Forsyth and Stack (2013, p.21) who suggest that ‘the ins and outs of retail can easily turn segmentation into an expedition into the wilderness’. They contend that retailing is much less homogeneous than

FMCG and also that the pace of change in retail marketing is much faster than with manufacturer brands.

Park and Sullivan (2009) assert that market segmentation is a crucial strategy for the retail sector, and that it is fundamental to understanding consumer behaviour. Omar (1999) cautions that it is key for retailers to be able to define their market in terms of the customer or shoppers. Shoppers ultimately decide what the retail market really is – by their buying patterns. By their purchases they effectively choose which products and services will remain in the market (Omar, 1999). For retailers, a superior understanding of shopper needs can therefore be a significant source of potential competitive advantage and therefore demands the attention of senior managers.

While it is undoubtedly important that segmentation is regarded as a strategic issue, Danneels (1996) encountered evidence that target market definition can be a political issue within firms. Retail market segmentation can impact commercial strategy, marketing, supply chain and purchasing, store management and merchandising (Barchet et al, 2013). Therefore all relevant stakeholders will need to be involved in the process if they are to buy in to the results of segmentation.

Bases for fashion retail segmentation

Consumer needs are the basis for shopper behaviour and should therefore be the basis for strategic retail segmentation (Omar, 1999; Barchet et al 2013). As retailers tend to define markets quite broadly, these large groups will inevitably contain customers with quite different needs and wants. Omar (1999) provides a list of the most important bases for retail segmentation, summarised in Table 1 in Appendix 2. While undoubtedly useful as a starting point, the listing does pre-suppose an acceptance by *the retailer* of the benefit of segmentation. While the literature is clear on the strategic role of segmentation, Rudelius et al. (1987) suggest that, in spite of the extreme importance of the market segmentation concept, marketing theorists have not studied how it is actually applied in practice. Two seminal studies attempted to overcome this divide in fashion retail: Danneels (1996) study of Belgian fashion retailers and Quinn, Hines and Bennison's (2007) case study of the bridge brand Reiss.

Danneels' (1996) study consisted of semi-structured, in-depth interviews with managers from various fashion retail formats. The findings were quite startling and in direct contradiction of academic theory. For example, under the normative approach to segmentation, retailers should divide up the market into groups of similar customers, and then they should decide which of these groups to target. However in Daneels' study, *none* of the retailers in the sample conducted a formal segmentation study prior to creating their first store concept. 'Thus, a market segmentation did not provide the foundation of the initial store formula' (Daneels, 1996, 39).

Quinn et al (2007, 459) found that segmentation through the practices exemplified in their case study is 'highly intuitive and emotional, rather than planned or rational'. Their findings confirmed the argument of Clarke and Mackaness (2001) that intuition 'as compressed experience' appears to provide managers with a way of moving beyond rational data and information to make sense of particular situations (443).

One of Danneel's (1996) most critical findings was in relation to segmentation strategies, as a strong theme from all of the interviews indicated a major limitation of traditional segmentation theory; that socio-demographic characteristics, such as those outlined in Table 1 (Appendix 2), do not relate directly to buyer behaviour. In particular this was found to be the case with age and social class. Quinn et al (2007) also observed in their research that "age as a defining variable is flexible" (455). In order to deal with this perceived low correlation between age and buying behaviour, particularly in relation to the style actually purchased, Danneels found that quite a few retailers developed the notion of “reference age”, and used this concept to define their target market. Reference age refers to the consumers’ mental age, i.e. the age they identify with and feel and behave like.

Given the findings of both studies described above in relation to age, the next section will explore the concept of maturity and review key issues raised in the literature in relation to segmenting mature markets.

Segmenting Mature Markets

The so called ‘grey market’ of 50+ or ‘older population’ is increasingly becoming the focus of marketers, also in the apparel business (Mumel and Prodnik, 2005, p. 445). Yet Carrigan (1998) believes there is a general lack of understanding by companies of the needs of the 50 plus consumer. Carrigan contends this is common among marketers who have a tendency to approach the “grey market” as a homogeneous group of “hard-to-please” customers (Doka 1992, cited in Carrigan, 1998). Greco (1986) suggests that to successfully segment this market, marketers need to look beyond the traditional demographic profiles and broaden their market analysis so that it includes aspects of lifestyle and activity dimensions. Carrigan (1998) argues that marketers need to realise that – just like any other consumers – older consumers tend to buy products based on their needs, not on their age, which would suggest that segmentation based on simple chronological factors is not likely to succeed.

There is no clear definition of maturity in the academic literature, or even where maturity begins: 50-, 55-, 60-, or 65-plus?' (Nielson and Curry, 1997, cited in Birtwistle & Tsim, 2005). Carrigan (1998) identifies “the grey market” as consisting of adults over the age of 50. However Lacoste-Kapstein (2011) points out that while the perception of “old age” began at 50 in 1980, by the year 2000 that perception had moved to 65.

Moschis et al (1997) warn against considering age of itself as a good criterion for segmentation, as “there is a great deal of variability in aging”. Age is a multi-dimensional concept as people age biologically, psychologically and socially (Dychtwald, 1997). In the main, older people feel younger than their age and view the actual term “older” as applying to others (Doka, 1992).

In order for retailers to successfully target the mature market they must first avoid the tendency to view it as a uniform and homogenous segment (Bone, 1991). The essential first step towards defining an effective marketing strategy to target the mature market is to acknowledge that they are a diverse, complex and differentiated consumer grouping. ‘With reference to age, consumers are not homogeneous’ (Moschis & Nguyen, 2008). Mumel and Prodnik (2005, 446) definitively concluded that it is not true that “all older people are the same” as far as the apparel business is concerned. In fact it has been suggested that there is more variation between those within the mature market in comparison to younger markets as ‘people become increasingly different from others with age’ (Moschis, 2003).

Consumer Behaviour of the Mature Female Consumer

Despite the recognised advantages of targeting the mature consumer segment there has been relatively little information gathered so far about their shopping behaviour and there is a dearth of data available on this important issue (Birtwistle and Tsim, 2005). However research has shown that this market has a multitude of preferences in terms of clothing, much of which is based on their lifestyles and tastes (Moye & Giddings, 2002). In addition to this the mature market has begun to recognise their own viability as they desire many of the same products and services as younger generations (Moye &

Giddings, 2002). This was underlined by a recent UK survey which found that older women consider that they are largely disregarded by high-street retailers despite their growing numbers and spending power (Smithers, 2014). Fashion is considered to be more than simply a necessity for many and mature female consumers are no exception, despite their limited choice in comparison to younger generations (Holmlund et al., 2011). While mature women have been found to place more importance on clothing comfort, fabric and quality than younger generations (Belleau et al., 2007) they also continue to value 'fashionable clothes, up-to-date cuts, and the current season's fabrics' (Holmlund et al., 2011) however, not 'at the expense of comfort' (Nam, et al., 2007).

In order for marketers to successfully target the mature female cohort they must understand the factors that influence their purchasing behaviours as well as those that are unlikely to impact purchasing decision-making. 'The differences in consumption habits are due to several factors including physiological and aging, psychological, social, and other life circumstances that people face at different stages in life. These factors affect the ageing person's mind-set and act as the main drivers of his or her consumption habits' (Moschis & Nguyen, 2008).

Despite the noted advantages of market segmentation, marketers largely continue to ignore the older generation in favour of the youth market (Belleau *et al.*, 1997). The reluctance of marketers to target the mature cohort has been said to be due to a lack of information about the mature market as well as the fact that 'many of the marketers themselves are much younger than their potential target audience' (Moschis *et al*, 1997). This suggests that marketers are unable 'to identify with the target market' and are fearful of making errors (Miller, 1993 as cited by Carrigan and Szmigin, 1999). Another potential reason for the lack of target marketing to this cohort may be due to society's negative perceptions of ageing and the fears that are associated with it. Such fears or negative perceptions are termed 'gerontophobics' (Mumel & Prodnik, 2005).

In line with Moschis et al.'s (1997) concept of physiological ageing, as women mature, they naturally experience body changes associated with the ageing process. As a result of these body changes mature women are often left irritated and dissatisfied with the standard sizing system which overlooks their changing shape (Holmlund et al., 2011). Lacoste-Kapstein (2011, 605) notes 'proper fit remains one of the most important, yet difficult, considerations in purchasing apparel'. For this reason retailers and marketers alike must be aware of these changing body shapes in order to appropriately and successfully cater to the mature female segment.

Academic / Practitioner Divide 2: Targeting Mature Consumers

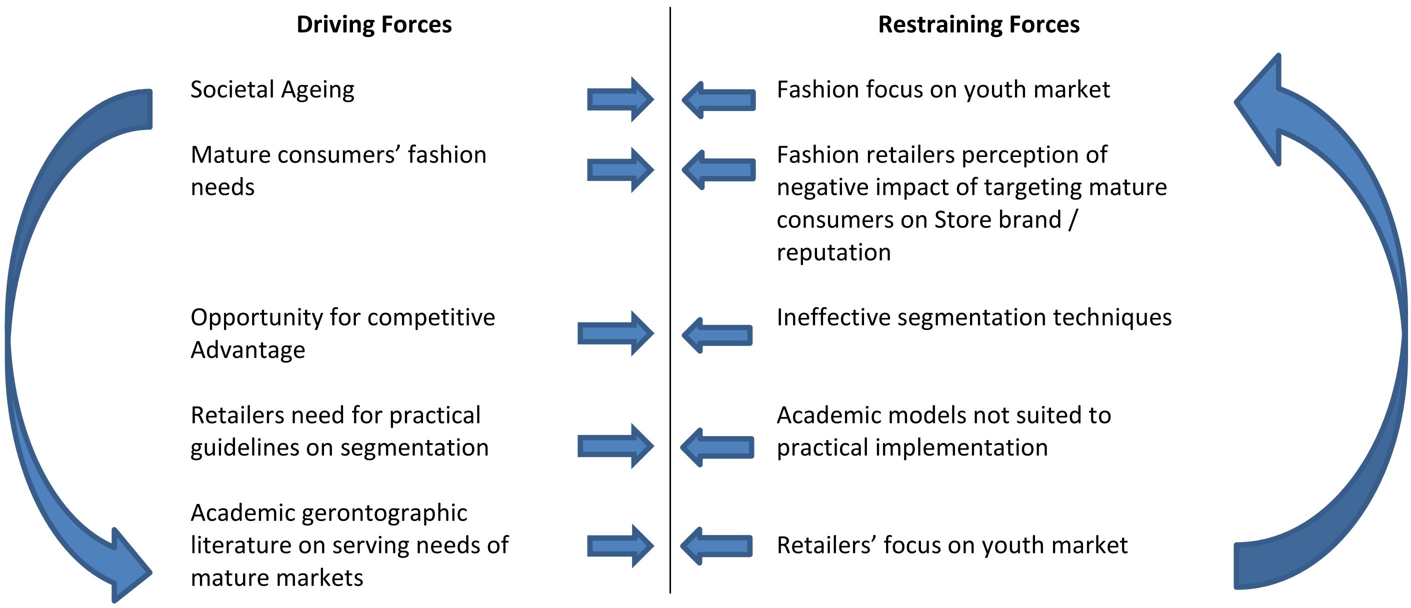
The literature on marketing to mature markets reviewed here reveals a further academic/practitioner divide. A large body of literature exists in relation to the complexities involved in segmenting the mature consumer extending back to Greco, 1986, Bone 1991, Carrigan, 1998, Doka, 1992, and the earliest works of Moschis, Lee & Mathur, 1997. Common themes emphasised the growing importance of the mature segment, the heterogeneous nature of the "grey market" (Carrigan, 1998) and the need to address a number of needs in relation to retail environment and product choice.
Yet by 2005, Birtwistle and Tsim's study into the UK mature women's clothing market highlighted the lack of apparel choice available to mature women in comparison to their younger counterparts. Holmlund et al. (2011) corroborated these findings in their research in Finland which confirmed the dissatisfaction of mature women with ready-to-wear ranges. Coupled with the findings of the JD Williams research in the UK (Smithers, 2014) which revealed that 61% of female consumers aged 50 plus feel underserved and forgotten by fashion retailers, these studies would suggest that while

academics are aware of and have been advocating the need for greater understanding of the complex and dynamic nature of the mature female fashion consumer, fashion retail practitioners are still practising an "only youth = fashion" approach (Jackson and Shaw, 2009). This would suggest a rather ironic twist on the academic / practitioner divide where, in this case, theory would appear to be in tune with market and wider environmental and demographic developments, while retail practitioners lag very much behind.

Toward a Conceptual Framework

Having reviewed the academic literature on segmentation and segmenting mature markets, the secondary objective here is to investigate whether there is a gap between the theory and practice of market segmentation and the extent to which this may impact on how well served the mature female consumer is by the fashion retail sector. To direct future primary research into this question, the following conceptual framework is suggested:

Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework – Force-field Analysis



The force-field framework has been identified as appropriate as it allows for an analysis of the wider demographic and societal forces which have contributed to the growth of the mature population groups and markets, and also for accommodates an analysis of the push and pull factors which impact on retailers in dealing with the impact of these forces, particularly in relation to the mature female consumer of apparel. Furthermore, the identified double divide between theory and practice is reflected.

Conclusion:

Despite evidence to suggest that ‘younger and older women have similar attitudes towards apparel’ (Belleau *et al*., 2007) the fashion industry continues to assume “only youth = fashion” (Jackson and Shaw, 2009) and this potentially lucrative segment continues to be overlooked.

In order for retailers and marketers to avoid loss of potential additional revenue and dissatisfied customers they need to understand the factors which influence this growing cohort and identify effective and meaningful segments within this diversified group and develop successful strategies to target those segments (Simcock et al, 2009; Moschis et al, 2007).

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Appendix 1

Fig 1. Evolution of Over 60s share of Income

Country	Age 60+ share of income (2005)	Age 60+ share of income (2020e)
Belgium	26.6%	32.3%
Brazil	9.7%	15.4%
Bulgaria	14.8%	19.2%
China	11.2%	17.4%
Denmark	18.9%	23.5%
Finland	23.9%	34.1%
France	24.8%	31.6%
Germany	27.1%	29.7%
India	8.4%	10.3%
Indonesia	8.6%	12.0%
Italy	24.0%	24.1%
Japan	26.2%	31.4%
Mexico	9.0%	13.1%
Netherlands	20.9%	27.8%
Norway	22.2%	28.8%
Romania	14.4%	20.8%
Russia	18.4%	26.7%
South Africa	11.7%	16.5%
Spain	21.6%	24.4%
Sweden	30.2%	34.3%
Turkey	11.6%	15.7%
United Kingdom	23.4%	29.2%
United States	15.7%	23.6%

A.T. Kearney, 2011

Appendix 2

Table 1: Bases for Retail Segmentation (Omar, 1999, p. 81)

Segmentation Criteria	Examples of Use
Demographics	
• Age	• Teenage market; elderly market
• Income	• High income market; low-income market
• Education and occupation	• Highly educated sophisticates
• Sex	• Male or female consumers
Sociological	
• Subcultures	• Yuppies, Wasps
• Racial differences	• Black, Oriental
Behavioural	
• Psychographics	• Extroverted yuppies or narcissistic jocks
• Life cycle	• Empty-nesters, young married couples
• Lifestyles	• Jet setters
• Innovativeness	• People who try products early
Store Loyalty	
• Heavy users	• People who buy products often
• Regulars	• Those who come to the store regularly
Benefit	
• Direct benefit	• Satisfaction from the store or products directly
Indirect benefit	
• Greater vs lesser benefit	• Satisfaction delayed as in gifts, health foods
•	• Those who experience greatly improved health from attending a health spa
Geography	
• Distances	• Those who live nearby vs those who live far away
Reputation of the location	
• Urban vs rural	• Fashionable area
•	• Those who live in the country

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