4. An Exploratory Study of Young Female Consumers Buying Behavior Toward Branded Apparels

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Abstract:

Lifestyle of the larger section of the society is experiencing a change. The market trend is changing accordingly for apparels which is considered as the flag bearer of lifestyle element. Consumers' choice, selection for products especially for apparels is in a process of changing every then and now. Corporate are facing the greatest challenge of exploring and understanding the modern consumers and continuously trying to create a powerful brand as a means of overcoming this challenge. Indian consumers are in transition phase due to penetration of several multinational brands in Indian apparel market after globalization. Buying behavior of female consumer precisely young ones for branded apparels is a noticeable one. While visiting the showroom, the vast majority of young consumers who have purchase intentions already have a brand in mind. This is due to the numerous elements linked with that brand that are suitable for them. This study tries to understand and study this buying behavior of young female consumers. The study below explores the different factors which influence purchase decision and buying behavior of consumers toward branded apparels among young female ones using exploratory factor analysis.

Keywords:

Apparels, Brand, Buying behavior, Female consumer, Young.

4.1 Introduction:

During the most recent period in the history of marketing, the brand has emerged as the central component for all corporations in every industry across the globe. Brand management and exploitation are absolutely essential to achieving success in the market. This holds true for the ever-shifting conditions of the Indian market. The fact that India is a culturally diverse nation with a great deal of variety in terms of lifestyle brand gives it a

significant role to play in this aspect. Corporate entities are confronted with a significant obstacle in the process of developing and managing powerful brands by striking a balance between developing markets and fickle customers. Because customers are becoming more and more brand conscious, it will be difficult for corporations to maintain their presence in the market until and unless they are able to create a powerful brand for their company. The consumer is the source of a company's true profit in almost all cases. When a consumer purchases a product, the company will have made revenue, but in order for them to do so, the company will have had to pay expenditures in the form of manufacturing, promotion, distribution, and so on. As a result, it is of the utmost importance for every marketer to make an effort to comprehend the requirements of the target audience by conducting thorough research.

This research might look into not only the goods and services which consumer intend to purchase, but also the methods by which they make those purchases, the locations and times at which they make those purchases, the quantity of those purchases, and the length of time over which they will continue to purchase a particular brand (Vikkraman & Sumathi, 2012). Consumers' purchase decisions are influenced by a wide range of internal and external influences, including their perceptions of the world, their self-concepts, their social and cultural backgrounds, their ages and stages in the family life cycle, their attitudes, beliefs, and values, their levels of motivation, their personalities, their social classes and many others. In order to build and successfully employ effective marketing strategies, it is imperative to perform a significant amount of research with the objective to understand the purchasing behaviors of the target market. In this age of dynamism, businesses have a responsibility to acknowledge the intricacies of the customers who are distributed across the market. Companies are engaged in an ongoing search mode in order to investigate the behavior of all different types of consumer demographics. Young consumers are the most notable category that contributes considerable effect on the buying pattern towards branded apparel. This influence comes primarily from the fact that they buy more branded apparel. In this study, the researchers attempted to study the purchasing patterns of young female consumers with regard to branded apparel in the city of Kolkata, which is a cosmopolitan city that is home to people from all over the country that make significant purchases of branded apparel.

4.2 Research Objectives:

Following are the objectives of this research:

- To study the buying behavior of young female consumers toward branded apparels.
- To explore the various factors those, influence the particular buying behavior of young female consumer toward branded apparels.

4.3 Literature Review:

The modern-day female customer is more interested in living a life that is comfortable and requires little effort. They are willing to spend more money on brands that they believe are worth the investment. They believe that purchasing branded products not only gives them value for their money but also serves as a status symbol.

Despite the fact that branded products are more expensive, consumers continue to choose them. Because of this, the current generation of customers has been given the moniker of "the brand savvy generation" (Sherlaker, 1995).

According to the findings of several studies, customer buying behavior can be influenced by brand consciousness due to the influence of a variety of other factors. Through a survey in Delhi, India, Saluja (2016) was able to demonstrate how characteristics such as monthly income, gender, and the influence of peers all have a role in determining how consumers behave with regard to clothes purchases. She also got to the conclusion that people like to shop the majority of the time with their closest companions like family members, friends, colleagues etc. Consumer purchase behaviour with regard to fashion attire is influenced by a variety of factors, including comfort, brand image, monthly income, gender, and peer influence. Other factors include decisions made by friends, family members, celebrities, and periodicals (Mishra & Agrawal, 2017; Saluja, 2016).

Maran et. al. (2018) examined the consumer's behavior towards branded readymade garments with respect to their age and income level. And found that quality is the most prominent factor affecting the consumer buying behavior followed by other factors like attractive designs, convenience, uniqueness, brand image, offers, advertisement and status symbol respectively (Doley, et. al. 2021). Many other factors are also involved in the female buying behavior towards branded apparel such as comfort, size, availability and choice of colors etc (Sujatha & Maneka, 2018).

According to Sanad (2016), a purchaser's choice of clothing and fabric goods, including clothing as well as fashion products, was influenced by a variety of factors. These components and qualities associated to the market encompassed a variety of socioeconomic, personal, psychological as well as environmental aspects and characteristics. The product's attributes, as well as the buying channel, pricing, and promotion, were among these features. According to research conducted by Lakshminarayana and Sreenivas (2017), point-of-purchase (POP) displays, advertisements, promotional schemes, and other promotional measures all have an impact on the consumer purchase decision, which in turn encourages consumers to make purchases of branded apparel.

According to research by Hassan et al. (2014), consumers chose branded clothing over non-branded clothing regardless of price not only because they want to appear attractive and impress other people, but also because the brand provides them with comfort and recognition. Sreerekha & Kumar (2018) explored the relationship between numerous aspects that drive consumer purchase behaviour pattern towards branded apparels, as well as the influence of various demographic, psychological, social and economic variables on the Indian apparel industry and revealed that the consumers give crucial importance to quality, price, promotional activities, gender and peer influence while making a decision.

The growing consciousness and understanding of fashion as a form of self-expression among consumers as a marketable trend has resulted in an increased desire for more choices and goods that serve the needs of both the fashion industry and the performance industry. According to a study, factors such as brand consciousness, the availability of multi-branded shops, income level, lifestyle, the price of the clothing, one's level of contentment with it,

and one's level of expectations for it all have an influence on young female consumer buying behavior and their preferred option from among the many available dress collections (Mythili & Abisheka, 2020; Jadhav & Patil, 2020; Joshi & Khatri, 2020).

A growing number of categories of products are seeing female customers exert a substantial amount of impact over the distribution of purchasing power. (Gregan-Paxton and John, 1995). Female shoppers have a considerable impact on the way spending money is dispersed over a wide variety of product categories, including the clothing industry.

According to a survey that was conducted some time ago, college students have a unique self-image in which they see themselves as the pioneers of fashion and believe they are more interesting, dominant, and colorful than older generations (Goldsmith et al., 2000; Kaiser, 1990).

There is an ever-increasing demand for an analysis of the factors that influence shopping behavior in the Indian setting (Sinha & Banerjee, 2004). Customers are more likely to stick to their tried-and-true purchasing routines when they go to clothing stores that offer a high level of individualized care.

One of the most difficult challenges that a corporation must face in today's environment is developing and maintaining a strong brand name. Establishing 'brand equity' through the utilization of powerful brand and associated tactics that can assist businesses in a number of ways to manage competition and to maintain market share is one strategy for building a successful business. This approach can assist businesses in a number of ways to control competition and maintain market dominance.

4.4 Methodology:

This study is exploratory in nature and conducted in Kolkata, West Bengal, India. A sample size of 360 (i.e., n = 360) data was collected using non-probability sampling method from different parts of the Kolkata metropolitan area.

The demographic that served as the sample consisted of young female consumers in the age bracket of 18 to 30 years who have a sense of buying branded apparel. Data was collected through face-to-face survey interview.

Five-point Likert scale was being used to measure and analyze the data where 5 denotes 'Strongly Agree' or 'Very Important' and 1 denotes 'Strongly Disagree' or 'Least Important'.

Descriptive Statistics were utilized in order to conduct an analysis on the gathered data to study the buying behavior of young female consumers toward branded apparel. Exploratory Factor Analysis, often known as EFA, was utilized in order to investigate the factors that influence the purchasing behaviour of young female customers with regard to branded apparel. Cronbach's Alpha Test and the KMO & Bartletts Test were utilized in order to determine the reliability and validity of the data before doing the study.

4.5 Empirical Analysis:

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n=360)

The respondents' (i.e., young female consumers considered for this study) demographic information is shown in the following table (Table 4.I):

Table 4.1: Demographic Profile

Demographic Characteristics	Descriptions	Frequency	Percentage
Age (Years)	18 – 21	86	23.9
	>21 – 25	139	38.6
	> 25 – 30	135	37.5
Education Profile	Undergraduate	95	26.4
	Graduate	148	41.1
	Post Graduate & Above	117	32.5
Marital Status	Single	198	55.0
	Married	162	45.0
Profession	Student	102	28.3
	Service	141	39.2
	Self Employed/Business	58	16.1
	Homemaker	59	16.4
Household Income (Rs/month)	Upto 50000	52	14.4
	50001 - 75000	96	26.7
	75001-100000	101	28.1
	More Than 100000	111	30.8

4.6 Reliability Test:

The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which is the most common and widely used test of inter-item consistency reliability, was applied to the questionnaire in order to evaluate the items' level of internal consistency.

The value of Cronbach's Alpha is displayed as 0.820 in the following table, which can be found below. It is possible to deduce from the fact that the value of the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient is greater than 0.70 that the items have a relatively good level of internal consistency, which justifies the acceptance of the study.

Table 4.2: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.820	33

4.7 Analysis of Buying Behavior:

The purchasing patterns of young female customers with regard to branded clothing are outlined in Table 4.3, which may be found here.

Table 4.3: Buying Behavior of The Young Female Consumers Towards Branded Apparel

Items describing young female on summers buying behavior towards branded apparel	Mean	Interpretation
Purchasing branded apparels can be noticed and admired by others.	4.35	Consumers are in **strongly agreement** with this item
Many people buy branded apparels to show off.	3.54	Consumers are in agreement with this item
Branded apparels are a symbol of social status.	4.07	Consumers are in **strongly agreement** with this item
Purchasing branded apparels makes one feel superior and unique.	4.03	Consumers are in **strongly agreement** with this item
I stop being interested in branded clothing that is worn by the broader public.	3.87	Consumers are in agreement with this item
I like those branded apparels with unique style.	4.16	Consumers are in **strongly agreement** with this item
Purchasing branded apparels can help enhance one's image.	3.89	Consumers are in agreement with this item
Consumption of branded apparels is a symbol of successful people.	3.81	Consumers are in agreement with this item
Consumption of branded apparels reflects an affluent lifestyle.	3.34	Consumers are in agreement with this item
My main justification for purchasing branded clothing is the improved quality of the goods.	3.60	Consumers are in agreement with this item
My decision to buy branded clothing is influenced by whether the products fulfill my quality requirements rather than by how popular they are.	3.90	Consumers are in agreement with this item
I will buy branded apparels because I appreciate the brand's designer's sense of style.	4.12	Consumers are in **strongly agreement** with this item
Purchasing branded apparels can satisfy my own pleasures.	3.68	Consumers are in agreement with this item
Branded apparels can provide sensory beauty and pleasure.	3.56	Consumers are in agreement with this item
The act of acquiring branded clothing can bring consumers satisfaction and pleasure.	3.60	Consumers are in agreement with this item

4.8 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA):

Using the Principal Component Analysis Method, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to investigate the variables influencing young female customers' purchasing decisions regarding branded apparel.

This was conducted for 18 variables (as displayed in Table 4.4) which affect young female consumers' purchasing decisions regarding branded clothing using Principal Component Analysis Method.

Table 4.4: List of Variables for Factor Analysis

Sr. No.	Variables	Sr. No.	Variables
1	Quality	10	Style
2	Status symbol	11	Color & Design
3	Price	12	Comfort
4	Longevity	13	Fashionable
5	Reliability	14	Others Opinion
6	Fit	15	Official Purpose
7	Attractiveness	16	Brand Image
8	Uniqueness	17	Advertisements
9	Pride	18	Celebrity Endorsement

The results of KMO and Bartlett's Test, which are provided below in Table 5, suggested that factor analysis is adequate because the KMO value is.656, which is higher than the acceptable limit of 0.5 (Field, 2009). Bartlett's Test also indicated that the factor analysis was appropriate. A Chi-square (2) value of 5819.649 at a significance level of 0.000 indicates that the correlations between items were sufficiently large for Principal Component Analysis (PCA) (Field, 2009). There were 153 degrees of freedom.

Table 4.5: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		656
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	5819.649
	Df	153
	Sig.	.000

Result of rotated component matrix have revealed that five major component emerges from initial eighteen (18) variables as major influencers of the brand-related apparel purchases made by young female consumers. These components can be considered as **Five Factors** which affect how young female shoppers choose to purchase branded clothing. The present study indicates that only five factors (components) have Eigen values greater than 1 and in combination explained about 77.629 % of the total variance. Table 4.6 summarizes the exploratory factor analysis where the components are shown.

Table 4.6: Summary of Exploratory Factor Analysis Results (N = 360)

Variables	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Component 4	Component 5
Pride	0.794				
Style	0.715				
Uniqueness	0.477				
Fashionable	0.775				
Official purpose	0.865				
Status Symbol	0.774				
Brand Image	0.76				
Longevity	0.763				
Reliability	0.724				
Color & Design		0.829			
Fit		0.874			
Attractiveness		0.824			
Comfort		0.505			
Advertisement			0.579		
Celebrity Endorsement			0.818		
Others Opinion			0.652		
Price				0.815	
Quality					0.902
Eigen values	5.915	4.044	1.559	1.334	1.121
% of Variance	29.879	20.046	10.529	9.458	7.716
Cumulative %	29.879	49.925	60.455	69.913	77.629

All the explored components are termed as factors which influence buying behavior toward branded apparel in this study.

The first factor (component 1) has been named as *"Psychological factor"* which comprises of nine variables. Second factor (component 2) named "*Utility factor*" consists of four variables.

Three variables constitute third factor (component 3) which is named as "*Promotional factor*". The fourth factor (component 4) encompasses one variable and termed as "*Economic factor*", while the fifth factors (component 5) also formed by one variable is named as "*Quality factor*".

Table 4.7 summarizes the result of exploratory factor analysis where the explored factors with loading for each variable are shown.

Table 4.7: Result of Exploratory Factor Analysis

Explored Factors	Variables	Loading
First Component: Termed as Factor I and named as Psychological Factor	Pride	0.794
	Style	0.715
	Uniqueness	0.477
	Fashionable	0.775
	Official purpose	0.865
	Status Symbol	0.774
	Brand Image	0.76
	Longevity	0.763
	Reliability	0.724
Second Component: Termed as Factor II and named as Utility Factor	Color & Design	0.829
	Fit	0.874
	Attractiveness	0.824
	Comfort	0.505
Third Component: Termed as Factor III and named as Promotional Factor	Advertisement	0.579
	Celebrity Endorsement	0.818
	Others Opinion	0.652
Fourth Component: Termed as Factor IV and named as Economic Factor	Price	0.815
Fifth Component: Termed as Factor V and named as Quality Factor	Quality	0.902

4.9 Discussion & Conclusion:

Many people, especially among younger female consumers, think that a person's brand is one of the key elements in determining their social status. Consumers are able to demonstrate their individuality in terms of their sense of style and experience a sense of superiority, both of which are observed and respected by the general populace when they wear branded apparel.

The purchasing of branded clothing by young women is quite dependent on a number of elements, the most important of which are the psychological factor, the utility factor, the promotional factors, the economic factor, and the quality factor.

The purchasing decisions of young female customers with regard to branded apparel are heavily influenced by these five key criteria. The results of the survey make it abundantly evident that price and quality are the two factors that matter the most.

Younger female consumers have a strong conviction that the brand is seen as a method by which one can achieve admiration from others. It is projected and measured as a symbol of social status and distinctiveness, which in turn provides the consumer with a feeling of superiority in social strata. Branded apparel is worn by people who want to feel superior in social strata.

4.10 Future Research Scope:

In the course of this research, a total of 360 customers participated in a questionnaire. The greater number of respondents would increase with more regional market penetration for the purpose of data collecting, which would produce a better presentation from an Indian perspective. In this particular research project, only young female consumers are taken into consideration. It is likely that a more accurate and definitive analysis and result may be obtained by taking into account female consumers of all ages. Additionally, the participation of male customers would reflect a market that is more inclusive of the result. There is room for additional study in the development of a mathematical model to relate the numerous socio-economic characteristics with the purchasing behavior of young female consumers with regard to branded apparel. If this model is established and proven, it has the potential to be extended to cover other product categories that are branded.

4.11 Implications:

There is no room for argument regarding the assertion that the consumer places an increasing amount of importance on the brand as a selection factor. Therefore, brand management and branding strategies have become the most sought-after tactic for marketers, as they offer the most potential to positively affect the decision-making process of consumers. The younger generations are the customer demographic that is most brand conscious, particularly when it comes to fashion. They have a strong interest in following the current pattern of brand users in the market. Companies that deal in branded apparel are required to take into consideration the elements that impact customer purchases.

The exploration of buying behavioral variables will assist marketers in strategizing their operations linked to brand management. Marketers need to have an understanding of their customers' shopping habits in order to create consistent marketing efforts that will increase the frequency of their customers' purchasing behaviour from infrequent to frequent. The results of this study have the potential to significantly advance this field.

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