

Analysis of Consumer Behavior Towards Branded Apparel

Aadhya Sawhney (MBA, School of Business Management, NMIMS, Mumbai)

Mail id: sawhney.aadhya@gmail.com)

Yash Asrani (MBA, School of Business Management, NMIMS, Mumbai)

Dolly D Mehta (MBA, School of Business Management, NMIMS, Mumbai)

Mail Id: mehtadolly23@gmail.com)

Abstract

The purpose of this research paper is to deliberate upon the buying behavior of consumers towards branded apparel in India and to compare branded apparel with non-branded apparel based on the demographic profile of consumers. This study is descriptive in nature evaluating whether the consumer behavior towards brands is positive or negative. The research involves gathering primary data and secondary data as well. A questionnaire was formulated using different kinds of scales such as the Likert scale, multiple grids, multiple choice questions, etc., and was circulated among consumers of varying ages, profession, gender, income brackets. The results were analysed based on the demographic profile which is one of the objectives of this research paper. Fashion is a fast moving industry with trends changing every second. The audience now-a-days are more brand conscious and more brand aware. There are more than 100 brands in the market and hence this industry has become a competitive one. As a result, the marketer must have a thorough understanding of the customer, including what they anticipate from a brand, the elements that motivate them to buy a specific brand, their entire outlay, shopping frequency etc to attain a competitive edge. The information obtained from the analysis will allow the marketer to get insights and information about the key issues in the market. It provides a depth and breadth of knowledge as well as vital data that cannot be found anywhere else. This crucial information can assist businesses in better understanding client's wants and delivering the best to them. Given the consumer's various and distinct personality qualities in various locations, the marketer should be able to recognise these distinctions and their impact on consumer purchasing behaviour.

I. INTRODUCTION

According to American Marketing Association, consumer behaviour can be defined as "the dynamic interaction of affect and cognition, behaviour, and environmental events by which human beings conduct the exchange aspects of their lives." In a very basic way, we can say that consumer behaviour deals with buying behaviour or patterns of the consumers. Whenever a consumer goes for shopping, he/she does not necessarily buy the same thing every time or spend the same amount of money. For example during festivals like Diwali, the purchases of a consumer may go up as compared to other months or during a friend's birthday, the consumer might buy gifts.

Fashion industry is the fastest growing industry in the world today. The trends change every second. Change has remained constant in the fashion industry since a long time. The fashion industry in India is dynamic in nature. Over the last decade the fashion industry in India has seen a boom because of the increase in brand consciousness. Everyone has a different and elegant fashion perspective which is mainly related to apparels throughout the world. Be it the fancy girl on your block or the

quiet girl next door or the middle-aged housemaker, everyone wants to have a good fashion closet which is distinct and classy. In the coming era, Indian fashion consumers will set global fashion trends. Besides, the varieties, the arrival of new trends, brand awareness are fuelling the demand for branded apparel in metropolitan and suburbs of India. The change of behaviour from buying unbranded products to branded items is also because of the increase in the number of exclusive retail outlets and malls.

A major part of fashion throughout the world are apparels. It is said that a person is judged by the way they dress. Clothes define the personality of an individual. It talks a lot about the person, their education, their style of thinking, their lifestyle, etc. There is a popular saying that 'Clothes make a man'. The growth of the Indian apparel industry is primarily due to factors such as rising Indian income levels, the government's liberal trade policies, and the apparel industry's flexible investment policies. Most multinational brands have now established themselves in some of the country's most prestigious shopping malls. Brands like Mango, Armani, and Diesel were unknown

in India until recently, but they can now be available in practically every Indian city. Branded apparels have captured the menswear and womenswear markets, and are steadily catching up in the childrenswear industry. The sole sources of brand exposure and consciousness among Generation Z have been through media and promotions. This is the current trend, in which an increasing number of young people purchase clothing from a well-known brand. When they go shopping in a mall, they will undoubtedly stop by one of the major labels to get a pair of jeans or a shirt.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Clothing is a significant non-verbal communication channel and plays a vital role in the enactment of social encounters (Noesjirwan & Crawford, 1982). They established that brand users' opinions differ for identical brands within a product category. One of the most important aspects of brand knowledge is brand awareness, which is defined as a potential buyer's ability to recognise or recall that a brand belongs to a specific product category (Rossiter & Percy, 1987 and Aaker, 1991). It is characterised by a growth in brand recognition as a result of repeated exposure, strong linkages, and consumption cues (Keller, 2003). Brand knowledge is defined as information about a brand that is stored in a consumer's memory. There are two types of brand knowledge: brand awareness and brand image (Keller, 2004). Brand awareness is the strength of a brand as measured by the ability to recognise it in a variety of situations. It is the result of a mix of recognition and recall abilities. Consumer perception of a brand is referred to as brand image. As a result, a consumer's decision to purchase a product or service is the outcome of a complex interaction of forces and cues (Kotler & Armstrong, 2006). A sample of Indian consumers is used to study the association between customers' decision-making styles and their choice of native and imported brand clothes. The goal of this research is to determine the elements that influence purchase decisions from a gender viewpoint. With a sample of 320 participants in Delhi and NCR, empirical findings are calculated using survey technique and chi square test. The purpose of this paper is to examine the impact of a consumer's demographic profile on their decision to purchase branded apparel, as well as to look at consumer awareness of different apparel brands available in the Indian market from a gender perspective, and to see if there is a significant difference in total expenditure on branded apparels between males and females. There are no significant differences in brand awareness, shopping frequency, or spending between males and females, according to the findings (Namita Rajput, Subodh Kesharwani, Akanksha Khanna, 2012).

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The prime purpose of the research is to understand consumers' behaviours towards branded apparel and the factors which affect this decision.

1. To analyse consumer behaviour with respect to age, income, gender and lifestyle.
2. To understand preference of consumers regarding branded and non-branded products.

IV. SAMPLE SELECTION

In order to study the consumer behaviour towards branded apparel, the sample size selected for the research was 101 people. The selection was carried out using stratified random sampling. The survey was circulated through WhatsApp medium.

V. DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Data collection for analysis was done through survey. Since our research is qualitative in nature, we circulated a primarily nominal questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. A self-designed structured questionnaire consisting of 15 questions was used. A few of the questions had subparts. It even included ranking scale questions, few questions using the nominal scale and few dichotomous questions.

VI. HYPOTHESIS

H1: There is a significant relationship between high income earning consumers and their preference towards branded products.

H2: External influence greatly affects a consumers' behaviour of buying branded products.

H3: People who only buy branded products from one brand will not switch to buying unbranded products or products from another brand

VII. DATA ANALYSIS

A. DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Table I

FREQUANCY DISTRIBUTION OF GENDER

	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
MALE	44	43.56%
FEMALE	57	56.44%
TOTAL	101	

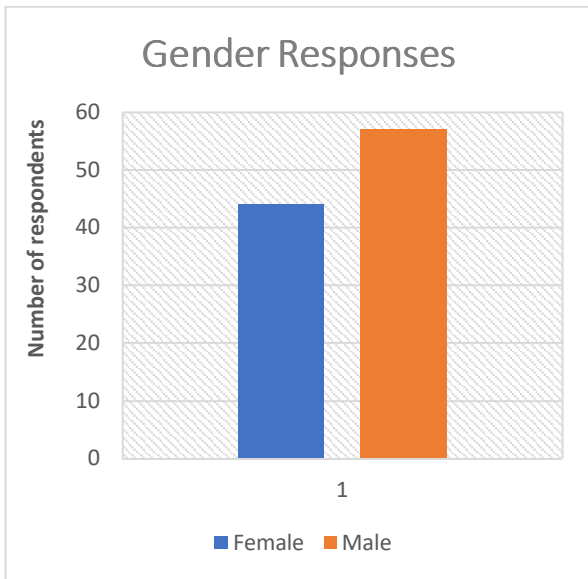


Fig. 1 Gender Responses

Table II

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF AGE

Range	Frequency
11-20	53
21-30	21
31-40	12
41-50	10
51-60	7
Total	101

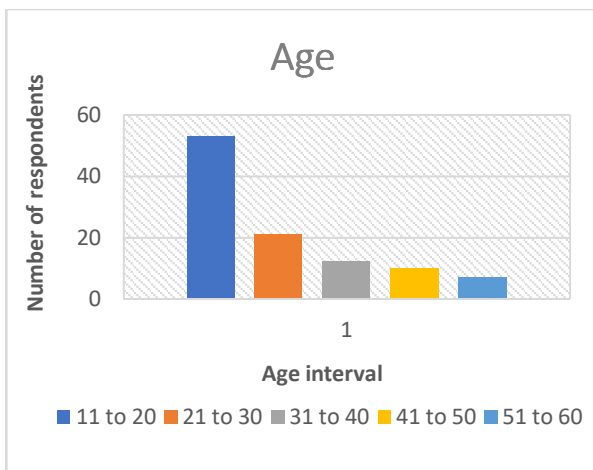


Fig. 2 Age Responses

TABLE III

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME

	Frequency
Less than 10,000	4
10,000 to 25,000	4
25,000 to 50,000	6
50,000 to 75,000	9
75,000 to 1 Lakh	9
More than 1 Lakh	60
Prefer not to say	9
Total	101



Fig. 3 Income Analysis

B. Analysis of data

Before understanding the effects of the power of branding on individuals and the extent of the influence, it was necessary to know if our target audience actually preferred branded apparels over unbranded ones. Our respondents were given the options of always, often and never. From these, the answer that was most selected was “Not always, but often” with a staggering 61.5 % votes. It was interesting to see that 26% of the respondents voted for “yes , always “. This is a prime example of Veblen effect. Veblen effect is when customers purchase expensive or high ended products just because they do not want to feel left out or it gives them a sense of superiority. 12.5% of the respondents chose that they “Never” purchase branded apparels.

Do you buy only branded apparel?
 104 responses

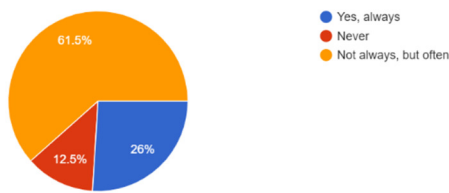


Fig. 4 Type of Apparel

For those people who selected that they do purchase branded apparels (always or often), another question was asked that what do they prefer more? To this question, 77.9% respondents replied that they buy branded apparels more whereas 22.1% respondents prefer unbranded over branded clothing. This can again be attributed to Veblen effect and demonstration effect. Demonstration effect is when the middle class people tend to imitate the lifestyle of the upper class people. A major reason for all of these effects is FOMO, which is the “Fear Of Missing Out”.

What do you buy more?
 104 responses

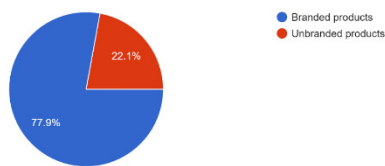


Fig. 5

Place of purchase plays an important role in this research as it may reveal that what marketing techniques urge people to buy clothes and help us to understand the consumer psychology better. When we asked the respondents about their place of purchase, malls had a major share of the location with 70.2% people purchasing from malls. This was followed closely by outlet with 58.7% people shopping from outlets. Streets, which may be a major source of unbranded apparels sees a significant purchase proportion of 25%. What was astonishing was that 50% of people also buy from online websites. This number is assumed to have increased over lockdown and with the rising availability of internet at cheap rates, and is expected to grow more over time.

Where do you prefer shopping from?
 104 responses

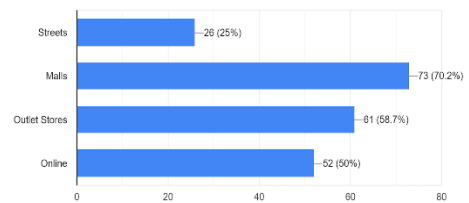


Fig. 6 Shopping Preference

We then asked about their brand preferences and here is what we found.

The most common brands were Nike, Zara, Adidas, H&M, Reebok, Forever New, Tommy Hilfiger, Mango and Urbanic with brands like Vera Moda, Armani exchange, Westside and diesel having little preference from customers. The customer choices can also be directly attributed to the amount of advertisement undertaken by the brands. Nike, reebok and H&M undertake huge marketing campaigns and it shows in the consumer buying patterns.

Which brands do you prefer for shopping?
 104 responses

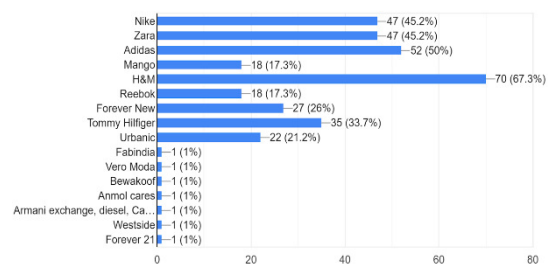


Fig. 7 Brand Preference

The time cycle of consumer purchases is also very important as it helps us understand the consumer buying pattern. In the responses collected, the majority of respondents, precisely 40.7%, said that they buy new clothes every 3 months. This can be attributed to the fashion purchase due to change in seasons. 22.1% of the respondents replied that they purchase new products every month. This can also be attributed to the growing trend of fast fashion. Other time frames like “weekly” and “yearly” take up small proportions of the remaining pie chart.

How often you purchase products from brands like H&M, Zara, etc?
 104 responses

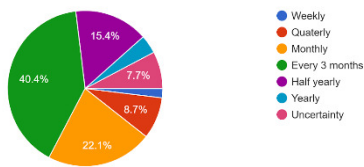


Fig. 8 Specific Brand Preferences

While analysing the effects of brands on a consumer’s fashion choices, it is very important to evaluate that who is influencing the individual to buy from the places that he buys from. With the responses, it can be deduced that a majority of respondents have some sort of peer or social influence in their choices. Social media, which is a big part of our lives today accounts for 55.8% of the respondent votes and other social circles like family and peer groups have a large involvement in the influencing part with their proportions being 37.5% and 50% respectively. Co-workers and other social groups also hold a significant chunk of the proportion. What was surprising to see was that attributes like “quality” and “feel happy “ have almost no involvement in the influencing part. This is a huge insight in today’s consumer psychology .

Who influences you most in buying branded products?
 104 responses

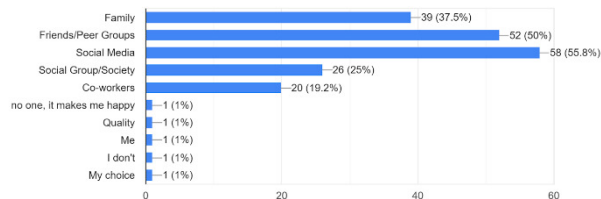


Fig. 9 Influencing Factors

Now , we wanted to know what factors amongst “price”, “Brand name”, “Quality”, “Maintain status” and “Availability of options” do people feel is more important to them . Thus , we asked our respondents to rank these factors. The results were as follows :

Price is the most important for the respondents as it has been ranked with a clear majority vote. Quality comes second and has a significant majority when it comes to the votes. Brand name has again been voted third with a clear majority vote. Maintain status is ranked fourth most important factor and has secured the rank barely as it has almost the same amount of votes to be the fifth most important factor too. Lastly, availability of options has been ranked last , again with a majority of votes. Thus, since most of the ranks were achieved with majority votes ,it can be commented that the consumers

are clear while ranking as to what is it that they look for in a fashion purchase.

Rank the basis on which you purchase branded apparel? (1 being the most important and 5 the least important)

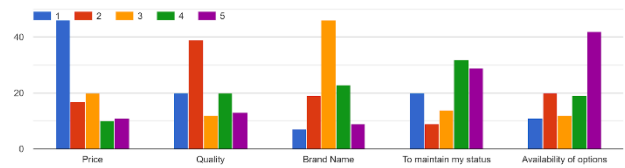


Fig. 10 Ranking preference for Brand Apparel

Brands are a work in progress and do require additional inputs from time to time so as to provide a better consumer experience. We asked our respondents that what do the feel should brands improve on. To this, 63.5% respondents felt that the brands charge too much and they should charge less for their products. 48% feel that the brands should include more variety in their catalogues and 45.2 % respondents feel that brands should improve their quality. Lastly , 40.4% respondents feel that the brands should provide better services than their current offerings.

Which part should be improved by brands, in your opinion?
 104 responses

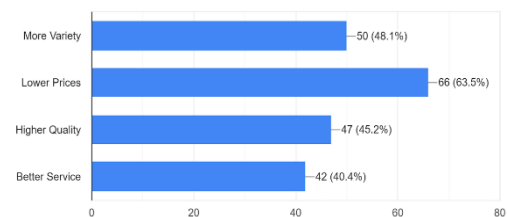


Fig. 11 Improvements expectation

When asked about their loyalty towards a brand, we provided the respondents with three options, namely, “Yes, I stick to the same brands”, “Never, I keep experimenting with new brands” and “Maybe, I choose the least priced products”. The responses were surprising as they were divided amongst the three options in almost equal proportions. 42.3% respondents were not loyal . 36.5% were loyal and 21.2% respondents did not care and chose the least priced option.

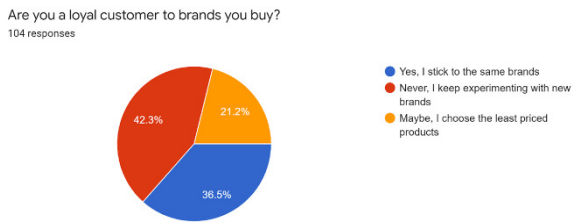


Fig. 12 Brand Loyalty

Before understanding the various buying behaviour towards unbranded products it was necessary to analyse customer's loyalty towards their preferred brand, for which various questions were asked keeping their trust and price of the product in mind.

On Asking Questions on Brand Loyalty, it was noticed that –

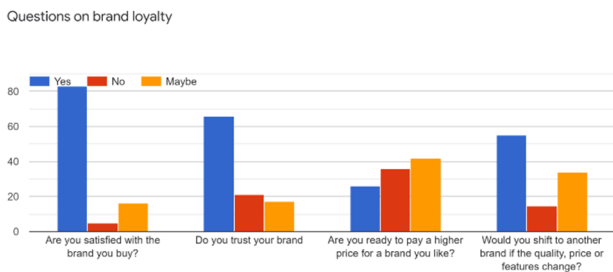


Fig. 13 Brand Loyalty Survey

Majority (79.8%) of the total respondents are satisfied with the brand they buy, almost 5% of them were not satisfied and rest were not sure about their satisfaction with the brand they use. Here there is a high chance that respondents who were satisfied with what they buy might be resistant to change the product if provided a change in price or quality whereas 5% of the total are likely to change their buying behaviour as customer satisfaction plays an important role, metrics such as sales and shares provide important information about how well a company is performing at any given time, customer satisfaction scores are one of the best predictors of how a company will perform in the future. A similar response was seen when asked if the customers trust their brand but when asked if they were ready to pay a higher price for a brand they like it was seen that almost 40 % of them were not ready to pay extra for the same brand whereas only 25% of them were still loyal to their brand.

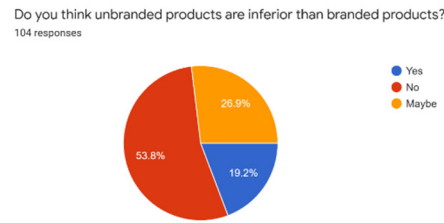


Fig. 14 Unbranded products inferiority than branded products

Now after understanding brand loyalty we tried analysing buying behaviour towards unbranded products, for which we asked if they think unbranded products are inferior than branded products, and it was seen that 53.8 % of them believed that unbranded products are inferior whereas almost 20% of them believed that unbranded products does not mean they are inferior than branded products.

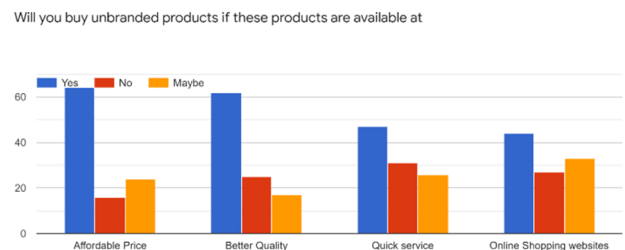


Fig. 15 Factors influencing unbranded products

Lastly to finally understand if their behaviour would change if there was change in features like price, quality etc. the respondents were asked if they would buy unbranded products if they were more affordable and it was seen that 61% of them were ready to switch to unbranded products if they were more affordable.

After this they were asked if they would switch if the quality was better, surprisingly only 59% of them were still willing to switch, which was less than the percent of respondent who were switching due to cheaper price, this shows our respondents were more sensitive to change in price than quality.

VIII. CONCLUSION

After analysing the data, let's relate our findings to the hypothesis of the study.

H1: There is a significant relationship between high income earning consumers and their preference towards branded products.

About 60% of our respondents were high earning consumers (More than 1 lakh per month). 77.9% of all respondents prefer branded products. So, it is safe to assume that a majority of high

earning consumers prefer buying branded products only. We accept the hypothesis.

H2: External influence greatly affects a consumers' behaviour of buying branded products.

About 95% of responses claimed that they purchased branded products based on external influence. Social media influence ranked the highest in this regard, followed by friends and family influence.

So, we accept the hypothesis.

H3: People who only buy branded products from one brand will not switch to buying unbranded products or products from another brand

About 55% responses claimed that they would consider shifting to other brands if the quality, price and feature change.

So, we reject this hypothesis.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed to the successful completion of this study. First and foremost, I would like to thank my academic advisors and professors for their continuous support, valuable guidance, and insightful feedback, which were instrumental in shaping the direction of this research.

I am also deeply appreciative of the participants who took the time to respond to the survey. Their input provided valuable insights that were essential for the data analysis and overall conclusions drawn from the study.

Additionally, I would like to thank the authors and researchers whose work is referenced in this paper. Their studies on consumer behavior, brand preferences, and external influences provided a strong foundation for this research.

Lastly, I would like to thank my family and friends for their encouragement and unwavering support throughout this project. Their belief in my capabilities gave me the motivation to persevere.

This research would not have been possible without the contributions of all the aforementioned individuals and organizations, and I extend my deepest appreciation to them.

REFERENCING

[1] Paliwal, L.R. & Bansal, A. (2017). *A Study of Young Consumer Behaviour Towards Branded Apparel*. International Journal of Scientific Progress and Research.

[2] Vida, I. (2007). *Determinants of Consumer Willingness to Purchase Non-Deceptive Counterfeit Products*.

[3] Furnham, A. & Valgeirsson H. (2007). *The Effect of Life Values and Materialism on Buying Counterfeit Products*. The Journal of Socio-Economics

[4] Ajitha, S. & Sivakumar V.J. (2019). *The Moderating Role of Age and Gender on the Attitude Towards New Luxury Fashion Brands*. Emerald Publishing Limited. <https://www.emerald.com/insight/publication/issn/1361-2026>

[5] Bhatia, V. (2017). *Examining Consumers' Attitude Towards Purchase of Counterfeit Fashion Products*. Emerald Publishing Limited. <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/1755-4195.htm>

[6] Ahmad, N., Shamsi, A.F. & Hussain, S. (2016). *Impact of Counterfeit Products on Consumer Buying Behavior: Empirical Investigation form Karachiites*. SSRN. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2866354>