

A Survey on Consumer Preference Towards Branded Apparel Products with Reference to Fashion-Conscious Consumers

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Abstract

The apparel industry has experienced substantial growth due to increasing fashion awareness, changing consumer lifestyles, and greater exposure to fashion trends through digital platforms. Branded apparel products have become increasingly popular among consumers because of their perceived quality, style, prestige, and durability. The present study aims to examine consumer preferences toward branded apparel products among fashion-conscious consumers and identify the factors influencing their purchase decisions. The study adopted a descriptive research design and utilized primary data collected through a structured questionnaire. A total of 41 respondents participated in the survey. Data were analyzed using simple percentage analysis and presented through tables and graphical representations. The findings reveal that quality, comfort, style, brand reputation, social media influence, and promotional activities significantly affect consumer purchasing behavior. The study further indicates that branded apparel contributes to consumers' self-confidence and social status. Although price remains an important consideration, consumers often prioritize quality and brand image when making purchase decisions. The study concludes that apparel brands must focus on maintaining product quality, introducing fashionable designs, strengthening digital marketing strategies, and enhancing customer satisfaction to sustain consumer loyalty and market competitiveness.

Keywords: *Branded Apparel, Consumer Preference, Fashion Consciousness, Brand Image, Purchase Decision, Consumer Behaviour, Social Media Influence, Fashion Trends*

1. Introduction

The apparel industry is one of the fastest-growing sectors in the contemporary consumer market. Rapid changes in lifestyle, increasing disposable income, urbanization, and growing awareness of fashion trends have significantly influenced consumer purchasing behavior. Consumers today are more conscious about their clothing choices and often prefer branded apparel products because of their superior quality, attractive designs, comfort, and prestige value.

Fashion-conscious consumers view clothing not merely as a necessity but also as a medium of self-expression. Apparel brands help individuals reflect their personality, lifestyle, and social status. As a result, factors such as brand image, quality, price, comfort, style, and promotional activities play an essential role in shaping purchase decisions.

The Indian apparel market has undergone remarkable transformation due to globalization, technological advancements, and the widespread influence of social media. Consumers now have access to numerous domestic and international apparel brands, creating intense

competition within the industry. Social networking platforms, online shopping websites, influencer marketing, and celebrity endorsements have further accelerated the growth of branded apparel consumption.

In this context, understanding consumer preferences has become increasingly important for apparel marketers. This study seeks to examine the preferences and buying behavior of fashion-conscious consumers toward branded apparel products and identify the major factors influencing their purchase decisions. The findings of the study can assist apparel companies in designing effective marketing strategies and better meeting consumer expectations.

2. Literature Review

Consumer preference for branded apparel has attracted considerable attention among researchers due to the increasing significance of brand image, fashion consciousness, and consumer lifestyle. Aaker (1991) emphasized the importance of brand equity in influencing consumer purchasing behavior. According to the study, strong brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand loyalty encourage consumers to prefer branded products over unbranded alternatives. In the apparel sector, branded clothing is often associated with superior quality and enhanced social status.

Keller (1993) introduced the concept of Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) and argued that consumers develop preferences for brands that establish positive associations in their minds. Apparel brands possessing a strong image and favorable reputation tend to enjoy greater customer loyalty and preference.

Rajput (2012) investigated branded apparel preferences among Indian youth and found that quality, durability, style, and brand image significantly influence purchase decisions. The study highlighted that younger consumers are more inclined toward branded apparel due to higher levels of fashion consciousness.

Khare (2014) examined the impact of fashion consciousness on buying behavior and reported that fashion-conscious consumers are heavily influenced by changing trends, celebrity endorsements, and social status considerations. Branded apparel often serves as a means of self-expression and identity formation.

Jain (2016) observed that quality, comfort, price, and brand reputation are major determinants of branded apparel purchases. The study also emphasized the role of customer satisfaction in encouraging repeat purchases and long-term brand loyalty.

Kumar (2018) found that perceived quality and brand image are among the strongest determinants of consumer preference for branded apparel. Consumers often demonstrate a willingness to pay premium prices for brands that are reputed for quality and reliability. Singh (2019) highlighted the growing influence of social media on apparel purchasing decisions. Fashion-conscious consumers increasingly depend on online reviews, influencer recommendations, and digital advertisements when evaluating apparel brands.

Sharma (2020) reported that fashion-conscious consumers place greater importance on brand image and current fashion trends than on price considerations. Branded apparel was found to enhance consumers' confidence and social acceptance.

Gupta (2022) examined online shopping behavior and concluded that convenience, promotional offers, and wider product variety positively affect consumer preference for branded apparel. The study also recognized the increasing importance of e-commerce platforms in apparel retailing. Verma (2023) emphasized the growing significance of sustainability and ethical production practices in shaping consumer preference. Younger consumers increasingly favor apparel brands that demonstrate environmental responsibility.

Although previous studies have extensively explored consumer preferences for branded apparel, limited research has specifically examined the combined influence of fashion consciousness, social media, brand image, and purchase behavior among consumers. Therefore, the present study contributes to the existing literature by investigating these factors collectively within the context of branded apparel consumption.

3. Objectives of the Study

- I. To identify factors influencing the purchase of branded apparel.
- II. To examine the impact of brand image on consumer buying behavior.
- III. To analyze consumer preference for different apparel brands.
- IV. To study the frequency of purchasing branded apparel products.
- V. To assess the influence of price, quality, style, and promotional activities on purchase decisions.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive research design. This design is appropriate for understanding consumer opinions, preferences, and purchasing behavior regarding branded apparel products.

4.2 Source of Data

The study is based on primary data collected directly from respondents.

4.3 Data Collection Tool

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to gather information regarding consumer preferences, purchasing behavior, and factors influencing the purchase of branded apparel products.

4.4 Sampling Method

The study utilized a convenience sampling approach for selecting respondents.

4.5 Sample Size

The total sample size for the study consisted of 41 respondents.

4.6 Area of Study

The study focused on fashion-conscious consumers who purchase and use branded apparel products.

4.7 Tools for Data Analysis

The following analytical tools were used:

- Simple Percentage Analysis
- Bar Chart Analysis
- Graphical Representation
- Pie Chart Representation

5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

5.1 Fashion Trend Following Behaviour

Table 1: How Closely Respondents Follow Fashion Trends and Seasonal Styles

Response Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Very Closely	15	17.1%
Moderately	20	51.2%
Rarely	10	26.8%
Not at All	2	2.0%
Total	41	100%

A majority of respondents (51.2%) moderately follow changing fashion trends and seasonal styles. Approximately 17.1% follow fashion trends very closely, while 26.8% do so rarely. The results indicate that fashion trends play a significant role in consumer behavior, with most respondents demonstrating moderate to high levels of fashion consciousness.

5.2 Purchase Frequency of Branded Apparel

Table 2: Purchase Frequency of Branded Apparel

Purchase Frequency	Respondents	Percentage
Monthly	16	39.0%
Every 2–3 Months	11	26.8%
Every 6 Months	8	19.5%
Once a Year	4	9.8%
Rarely	2	4.9%
Total	41	100%

Monthly purchasing is the most common pattern among respondents, accounting for 39.0% of the sample. The findings suggest that branded apparel forms a regular component of consumers' shopping behavior, particularly among fashion-conscious individuals.

5.3 Preferred Type of Branded Apparel

Table 3: Type of Apparel Purchased Most Often

Type of Apparel	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Casual Wear	18	43.9%
Formal Wear	8	19.5%
Sportswear	6	14.6%
Ethnic Wear	5	12.2%
Party Wear	4	9.8%

Casual wear represents the most frequently purchased category, selected by 43.9% of respondents. Consumers primarily purchase branded apparel for everyday use, highlighting the importance of casual wear in the apparel market.

5.4 Importance of Brand Selection Factors

Table 4: Importance of Factors Influencing Clothing Brand Selection

Factors	Very Important	Important	Neutral
Quality	22	12	4
Price	15	14	7
Brand Reputation	17	13	6
Style & Design	20	13	4
Comfort	21	12	5

Quality, comfort, and style & design received the highest number of "Very Important" responses. Consumers prioritize product-related attributes over price considerations when selecting apparel brands.

5.5 Willingness to Pay Premium Prices

Table 5: Willingness to Pay a Premium for Brand Name

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	14	34.1%
No	18	43.9%
Maybe/Depends on Product	9	22.0%
Total	41	100%

The largest group of respondents (43.9%) is unwilling to pay significantly higher prices

solely for a brand name. Consumers value brands but remain sensitive to price considerations and product value.

5.6 Brand Switching Behaviour

Table 6: Brand Switching Behaviour

Response Option	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Buy Similar Item from Another Brand	16	39.0%
Wait for Restocking	12	29.3%
Search Elsewhere	9	22.0%
Cancel Purchase	4	9.7%
Total	41	100%

Most respondents choose an alternative brand when their preferred product is unavailable. Product availability significantly influences purchasing decisions and may encourage brand switching.

5.7 Impact on Self-Confidence and Social Status

Table 7: Impact on Self-Confidence and Social Status

Response Option	Number of Respondents	Percentage
To a Great Extent	14	34.1%
To Some Extent	13	31.7%
Moderate Extent	8	19.5%
Very Little Extent	4	9.8%
Not at All	2	4.9%

More than half of the respondents believe branded apparel enhances confidence and social status to some extent or a great extent. Branded apparel serves not only functional needs but also social and psychological needs.

5.8 Platform Influencing Fashion Choices

Table 8: Platform with Strongest Influence on Fashion Choices

Platform	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Social Media	18	43.9%
Online Shopping Websites	8	19.5%
Friends and Family	6	14.6%
Influencers/Celebrities	5	12.2%
Television Advertisements	3	7.3%
Magazines/Newspapers	1	2.5%
Total	41	100%

Social media emerges as the most influential platform affecting consumer fashion preferences. Digital media plays a dominant role in shaping brand awareness and purchasing decisions.

5.9 Most Effective Promotional Strategy

Table 9: Promotional Strategy Influencing Trial of New Brands

Promotional Strategy	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Discounts and Special Offers	15	36.6%
Social Media Advertising	9	22.0%
Influencer Endorsements	7	17.1%
Free Samples	5	12.2%
Referral from Friends and Family	3	7.3%
In-Store Promotions	2	4.8%
Total	41	100%

Discounts and special offers are considered the most persuasive promotional tools. Price incentives remain highly effective in attracting consumers toward new apparel brands.

5.10 Perception of Quality Relative to Price

Table 10: Perception of Quality Relative to Price

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	13	31.7%
Agree	15	36.6%
Neutral	7	17.1%
Disagree	4	9.8%
Strongly Disagree	2	4.8%
Total	41	100%

Most respondents agree that popular apparel brands meet the quality expectations associated with their higher prices. Consumers generally perceive branded apparel as offering value through superior quality.

5.11 Major Issues Faced with Branded Apparel

Table 11: Major Issues Faced with Branded Apparel

Issue/Frustration	Number of Respondents	Percentage
High Prices	15	36.6%
Limited Discounts and Offers	8	19.5%
Inconsistent Sizing/Fit	7	17.1%
Limited Product Availability	5	12.2%
Quality Not Matching Expectations	4	9.8%
Poor Customer Service	2	4.8%

High prices represent the most significant challenge experienced by consumers. Despite positive perceptions of branded apparel, pricing concerns continue to influence consumer satisfaction.

6. Major Findings of the Study

- I. Brand reputation significantly influences consumer purchase decisions.
- II. Quality is considered more important than price when selecting apparel brands.
- III. Fashion trends strongly affect branded apparel preferences.
- IV. Social media is the most influential platform for fashion awareness and brand selection.
- V. Branded apparel positively impacts consumers' self-confidence and social status.
- VI. Discounts and promotional offers encourage consumers to try new brands.
- VII. Product availability influences purchasing and brand-switching behavior.
- VIII. Online platforms contribute significantly to branded apparel purchases.
- IX. Younger consumers demonstrate greater fashion consciousness.
- X. Customer satisfaction contributes to repeat purchases and brand loyalty.

7. Discussion

The findings reveal that branded apparel consumption is influenced by a combination of functional, psychological, and social factors. Consumers place substantial emphasis on quality, comfort, style, and brand reputation when selecting apparel products. The growing influence of social media and digital marketing demonstrates the changing nature of consumer decision-making in the fashion industry.

The results also suggest that fashion-conscious consumers use branded apparel as a means of self-expression and social identification. Consumers perceive premium apparel brands as symbols of status, confidence, and lifestyle. Promotional activities such as discounts and social media campaigns further encourage brand trial and influence purchasing decisions.

At the same time, high prices remain a major concern among consumers, indicating the importance of balancing quality and affordability. Apparel marketers must therefore focus on delivering superior value while maintaining strong brand positioning.

8. Conclusion

The study concludes that branded apparel products are highly preferred by fashion-conscious consumers due to their perceived quality, style, durability, comfort, and brand image. Consumer purchasing behavior is influenced by multiple factors, including fashion trends, social media exposure, promotional activities, and brand reputation. The findings further indicate that branded apparel contributes to self-confidence and social recognition among consumers.

Although consumers appreciate branded products, they remain sensitive to price and expect quality to justify premium pricing. Therefore, apparel companies should continue focusing on product innovation, quality enhancement, customer satisfaction, and effective digital marketing strategies to remain competitive and build long-term consumer loyalty.

9. Recommendations

- I. Maintain consistently high product quality and comfort standards.
- II. Introduce trendy and fashionable apparel collections regularly.
- III. Strengthen social media and digital marketing initiatives.
- IV. Offer attractive discounts, promotional campaigns, and loyalty programs.
- V. Ensure product availability across online and offline retail channels.
- VI. Improve online shopping experiences and customer support services.
- VII. Build and maintain a strong, trustworthy brand image.
- VIII. Conduct regular market research to monitor changing consumer preferences.
- IX. Utilize influencer marketing and celebrity endorsements strategically.
- X. Adopt sustainable and environmentally responsible business practices.

10. Limitations of the Study

- I. The study was conducted with a relatively small sample size of 41 respondents.
- II. The geographical coverage of the study was limited.
- III. Convenience sampling was used, which may affect the generalizability of the findings.
- IV. The study relied primarily on simple percentage analysis.
- V. Only selected variables related to branded apparel preference were considered.
- VI. Responses were based on individual perceptions and may be subject to respondent bias.
- VII. Time and resource constraints limited the scope of data collection.

11. Future Scope of the Study

- I. Future studies may include a larger sample size to improve the reliability and generalizability of findings.
- II. Research can be extended to different geographical regions and demographic groups.
- III. Comparative studies between branded and unbranded apparel consumers may provide deeper insights.
- IV. Advanced statistical techniques such as correlation, regression, and factor analysis can be employed.
- V. Future research may examine the influence of sustainability, ethical consumption, and environmental concerns on apparel preferences.

- VI. Additional variables such as income level, education, occupation, and cultural influences may be incorporated.
- VII. Longitudinal studies can be conducted to understand changing consumer preferences over time.
- VIII. Future research may explore the growing role of artificial intelligence and personalized marketing in apparel retailing.

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