

Determinants of Branding that Influence Purchase Decisions of Youth for Apparels

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to understand the role of branding in influencing consumer purchase decisions among youth in apparel. For this research, primary data was collected through a questionnaire from a sample size of 251 respondents. The result concluded that there are two major branding factors: brand image, which is more concerned with the perceptions of the brand by consumers, and brand features, which are more concerned with expectations from the brand. From the study, it is clear that the role of branding remains the same, irrespective of the stated demographics. Branding plays a general role for all categories of the population. The latest mode through which consumers connect with brands is social media, followed by showrooms, advertisements & banners and emails. It suggests that the brands need to pay attention to establishing contacts and embracing digital technology much more effectively. The majority of respondents preferred branded clothing over local clothing, and thus opportunities are paving way for companies to establish brand identity for their products. Consumers today are brand conscious like never before, and the direction is towards the emergence of much more sophisticated ways of doing business and consumer purchase behaviour through branding. The brands have opportunities to turn occasional buyers into habitual ones by bringing in innovative techniques for fulfilling their needs through branding.

Keywords: Branding, Consumer Buying Behaviour, Apparels, Purchase Decision, Brand Image, Brand Features

INTRODUCTION

A consumer's desire to acquire a good or service is always influenced by their willingness to do so and their financial capacity to do so. The influence of multiple elements, including branding, psychological factors, personal considerations, cultural factors, social factors, the influence of family members, economic issues and social media, among others, causes customers to alter their purchasing decisions even though they are willing and able to pay. Consumer purchasing patterns are a constant reflection of consumer motivations. In order to make the topic more specific, it has been tried to study the variables: brand image and brand features.

Branding

The process of creating a distinct identity for a company in the minds of its target audience and customers is known

as branding. It is essential for consumers to establish an emotional connection with each other. The target audience connects with consumers through the brand message.

Consumer

The "consumer" more generally refers to anyone who is occupied in any of the activities like evaluating, acquiring, using or disposing of goods and services.

Consumer Behaviour

According to the American Marketing Association, consumer behaviour is "the dynamic interaction of affect and cognition, behaviour and environmental events by which humans conduct the exchange facets of their lives." It is the thought process and physical action that consumers take while deciding whether to buy, use or

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discard goods and services. In a typical consumer buying process, the buyer goes through five separate stages: identifying a need or problem, gathering information, assessing alternatives, making a decision and acting upon the purchase. Subsequently, customers do a post-purchase evaluation that can be viewed as the steps taken by consumers to correlate their expectations with perceived value and thus influence their next purchase decision for that good or service.

Purchase Decision

A purchase decision is a series of actions or steps taken in order to achieve a particular end that leads a consumer from identifying a need, generating options and choosing a specific product and brand.

Apparel Industry in India

The Indian garment business, which, after food and grocery, is the second-largest contributor to the retail sector, is undergoing some significant changes. India has become a very profitable market thanks to the entry of foreign brands, shifts in consumer tastes from non-branded to branded goods, the nation's rapidly expanding economy, and its sizable young consumer base. Due to the widespread use of social media and mass media, India has the largest youth population in the world, which is increasingly interested in fashion. Unprecedented retail market potential has resulted from this. The Indian fashion business is well-known in the retail sector thanks to its optimistic growth rate of 9.7%. India has a competitive advantage over the developed economies of the United States, Europe and Japan with a GDP growth rate in the range of 2–3%. Favourable trade rules and growing organised retail penetration, among other things, make the Indian fashion business appealing to investors.

Clothing retail has shown a relatively high level of openness to corporatised retail among the retail categories. It has also made it possible to implement more formal and systematic processes and procedures in operations, procurement and distribution because to the high penetration of corporatised retail in the garment industry. As a result, the garment retail sector has been able to take full advantage of the benefits that contemporary management concepts have to offer, resulting in improved

product offerings, better customer management and cutting-edge supply chain management strategies. It is anticipated that corporatised retail will continue to spread farther outside of the big metropolitan clusters and that demand for branded goods will rise.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is ample literature evidence that suggests empirical work has been done on consumer buying behaviour for apparel. Rajput et al. (2012) studied the decision-making styles of consumers and their preference for clothing of domestic or imported brands and concluded that males and females' brand awareness, shopping frequency and spending on shopping are not significantly different. Choi (2014) studied fashion brands to build equity, encourage consumer brand loyalty and increase profitability by employing smart branding methods. In essence, consumers who purchase branded fashion items delight in the products' thrill and other social demands in addition to their practical needs (e.g., self-image projection, showing a desirable lifestyle and social status, etc.). These results in a win-win situation in which consumers are happier and fashion firms also make more money.

The essence of brand identity as a significant component of fashion branding has been proposed by Ridgway (2014). He concluded that colours aid customers in developing a unique brand identity. These colour associations give personality attributes to the brand. Thus, consumers assigned brand logo colours to certain brands. So colours are used to convey the brand's personality attributes. Another study by Sanad (2016) provides a comprehensive analysis of the factors that influence consumer preferences for textile and apparel products. The study includes cultural, social, personal, psychological and environmental factors. The market-related features, that is, the price, promotion, product characteristics and purchase channel, were all mentioned. A new study on similar variables that was conducted by Chakraborty and Sheppard (2016) provided an in-depth understanding of the relationships between interpersonal influence, brand image, brand consciousness and various demographic factors and the luxury brand purchases made by young Indian consumers. They concluded that gender and age have different effects on interpersonal influence, brand consciousness, brand image and luxury consumption.

Except in one instance, where a significant difference was found between Indian young male and female consumers based on inter-personal influence, there was no significant difference found between gender and age groups based on interpersonal influence, brand consciousness, brand image or luxury consumption.

Usman and Victor (2021) conducted research on brands in the garment industry to determine how brand attributes influence consumer behaviour and help create a strong brand identity in the apparel industry. The study concluded five brand attributes: awareness, value, trust, quality and pricing, after conducting a quantitative study.

Consumers connect with brands through various media. An earlier study conducted by Alden et al. (2006) studied the attitudes of consumers towards global brands, which are heavily influenced by media exposure and cultural influences. These influences come from exposure to American lifestyles, and American movies and TV shows. The importance of advertising messages has also been attributed to the literature. Lee et al. (2010) researched apparel habits for Indian consumers and suggested advertising messages that focus on enhancing consumers' social images. The authors' recommended the design of messages that appeal to consumers and develop strong brand associations. The recent emergence of omni-channel shopping has also helped develop consumer brand associations. Ryu Sang (2019) contributed to the area of omni-channel shoppers who shop using multiple channels (physical stores, websites and mobile apps) of the same retailer to develop brand connections. Shopping for high-fashion apparel requires consumers to use different channels (Cho & Workman, 2011), which results in the usage of e-catalogues and mobile applications. Further, retailers also use the PULL strategy through promotional material directed at consumers (Jai & Tung, 2015).

The importance of touch-points in establishing consumer connections has been put forth by Ryu Sang (2019). Since consumers shop across different channels, the authors emphasise the need to integrate various customer touch-points.

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study is

- To analyse the determinants of branding that influence the purchase decisions of youth for branded

apparel. How consumers are motivated by the different brands to buy apparel.

- To study how the purchase decisions of the youth vary with demographic variables—age group, gender, qualification and family background.
- To know the latest mode through which consumers connect with brands.

Hypothesis Formulation

- H₀1: There is no significant difference in the perception of the different age groups towards the role of branding in influencing consumer purchase decisions in apparel.
- H₀2: There is no significant difference in the perception of the different qualifications towards the role of branding in influencing consumers' purchase decisions in apparel.
- H₀3: There is no significant difference in the perception of the different family backgrounds towards the role of branding in influencing consumer purchase decisions of youths in apparel.
- H₀4: There is no significant difference in the perception of the different genders towards the role of branding in influencing consumer purchase decisions of youths in apparel.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research project, mixed research types have been used. The mixed research type includes both qualitative and quantitative studies on a topic. A descriptive research design has been considered a suitable methodology for the present study and for data analysis. The sampling design used was convenience sampling, which is a non-probability sampling method. The convenience factors were the availability and approachability of the respondents. For this research, primary data is required, which is collected through a questionnaire. Their behaviour and responses were clearly recorded, and suggestions given by them were incorporated. All the responses were taken via email (Google Doc forms). A bunch of questions regarding demographics such as age group, gender, family background, qualification and the rest of the questions are based on Likert scale design. The questions based on the Likert scale are designed to

assess the determinants of branding for youth. The sample population size is 251 respondents.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The collected data is tested for reliability using the SPSS software. After that, certain statistical tools like factor analysis, ANOVA and *t*-tests are applied to the collected data.

Table 1: Level B>Reliability Test

<i>Reliability Statistics</i>		
<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items</i>	<i>N of Items</i>
.933	.933	15

In the above table, the Cronbach's alpha is .933, which represents that the self-developed instrument used for

data collection to measure the determinants of branding that influence the purchase decisions of youth for branded apparel, is highly reliable, as the Cronbach alpha value is very high and is more than 0.6.

Table 2: Factor Analysis

<i>KMO and Bartlett's Test</i>		
<i>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy</i>		.933
<i>Bartlett's Test of Sphericity</i>	<i>Approx. Chi-Square</i>	2410.014
	<i>Df</i>	105
	<i>Sig.</i>	<.001

From our result, we have a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy of 0.933. This shows that the degree of overlap among the variables show the presence of a strong partial correlation. Hence, it is possible to conduct factor analysis. From the results of Bartlett's test of sphericity, we had a significance value .001 which is less than .05, and therefore the results of the data reduction technique are acceptable.

Table 3: Total Variance Explained

<i>Component</i>	<i>Total Variance Explained</i>								
	<i>Initial Eigenvalues</i>			<i>Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings</i>			<i>Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings</i>		
	<i>Total</i>	<i>% of Variance</i>	<i>Cumulative %</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>% of Variance</i>	<i>Cumulative %</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>% of Variance</i>	<i>Cumulative %</i>
1	7.797	51.978	51.978	7.797	51.978	51.978	5.071	33.808	33.808
2	1.671	11.142	63.120	1.671	11.142	63.120	4.397	29.311	63.120
3	.901	6.006	69.126						
4	.645	4.301	73.427						
5	.604	4.027	77.454						
6	.553	3.688	81.142						
7	.431	2.876	84.017						
8	.420	2.802	86.820						
9	.371	2.471	89.291						
10	.350	2.332	91.623						
11	.327	2.180	93.803						
12	.295	1.968	95.771						
13	.263	1.754	97.525						
14	.201	1.343	98.868						
15	.170	1.132	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Only two factors in the initial solution have Eigen values greater than 1. Together, they account for almost 63.120% of the variability in the original variables. The first factor explains 33.81% of the variation in the data, while the

second factor explains 29.31% of the variation in the data. Factor analysis through Varimax rotation allows for data reduction. From this data reduction technique, we see the factors in the Scree Plot. The plot clearly depicts that the

total number of components with Eigen values greater than 1 is two. This clearly leads us to conclude that the data has been reduced to two factors, which is similar to the results obtained from the Rotated Component Matrix table.

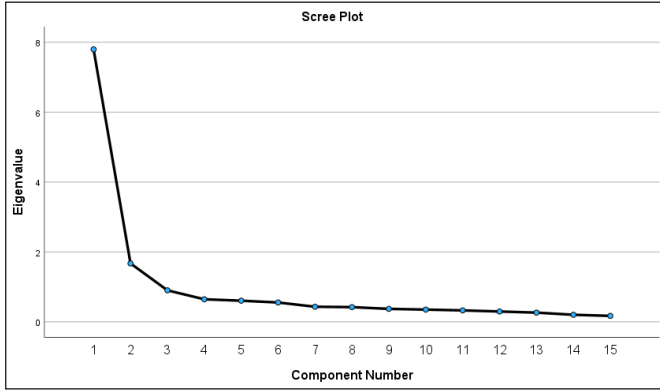


Table 4: Rotated Component Matrix^a

Brand Features	Component	
	1	2
good designs	.876	
Trust	.868	
superior quality.	.803	
trendy Styles	.798	
value and satisfaction	.710	
offers and discounts	.659	
customer reviews	.578	
Brand Image		
brand ambassador is a popular celebrity		.843

Table 5: ANOVA: Effect of Age Group on the determinants of Branding

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Brand Image	Between Groups	1.547	3	.516	.650	.583
	Within Groups	195.825	247	.793		
	Total	197.372	250			
Brand Features	Between Groups	2.005	3	.668	.691	.558
	Within Groups	238.742	247	.967		
	Total	240.747	250			

The value of F is .650 for brand image and .691 for brand feature, which reaches significance with a *p*-value of .583 and .558 (which is greater than the .05 alpha level). This means that the null hypothesis is accepted, and we

Brand Features	Component	
	1	2
social status and acceptance		.714
reputation and legacy		.704
sense of belongingness		.694
appealing ads		.657
premium image		.649
self-confidence		.590
family and friends		.582

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

From the above Table 4 (Rotated Component Matrix Table), we can see the distribution of the different variables into both factors, viz., brand image and brand features. Brand features comprise good designs, trust, superior quality, trendy styles, value and satisfaction, offers and discounts and customer reviews, wherein good designs and trust have the maximum impact. Brand image constitutes popular celebrity, social status, reputation, sense of belongingness, ads, image, self-confidence and family & friends. In the second factor, popular celebrities have the maximum impact.

Effect of the Demographic Variables on the Determinants of Branding: This is achieved through the application of ANOVA analysis and *t*-tests, to study the variation in branding determinants w.r.t. age groups, qualifications, gender and family background.

can conclude that there is no significant difference in the perception of the different age groups towards the role of branding in influencing the purchase decisions of youths in apparel.

Table 6: ANOVA: Effect of Educational Qualification on the Determinants of Branding

<i>ANOVA</i>						
		<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Brand Image	Between Groups	3.171	3	1.057	1.344	.261
	Within Groups	194.201	247	.786		
	Total	197.372	250			
Brand Features	Between Groups	1.625	3	.542	.560	.642
	Within Groups	239.121	247	.968		
	Total	240.747	250			

The value of F is 1.34 for brand image and .560 for brand feature, which reaches significance with a *p*-value of .261 and .642 (which is greater than the .05 alpha level). This means that the null hypothesis is accepted, and we

can conclude that there is no significant difference in the perception of the respondents of different qualifications towards the role of branding in influencing the purchase decisions of youths in apparel.

Table 7: *t*-Test: Effect of Family Background on the Determinants of Branding

<i>Independent Samples Test</i>											
		<i>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</i>		<i>t-test for Equality of Means</i>							
		<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Significance</i>		<i>Mean Difference</i>	<i>Std. Error Difference</i>	<i>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</i>	
						<i>One-Sided p</i>	<i>Two-Sided p</i>			<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>
Brand Image	Equal variances assumed	.847	.358	-.740	249	.230	.460	-.090	.122	-.331	.150
	Equal variances not assumed			-.777	160.558	.219	.438	-.09	.116	-.320	.139
Brand Features	Equal variances assumed	3.36	.068	-1.281	249	.101	.201	-.172	.134	-.438	.092
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.361	164.880	.088	.176	-.172	.127	-.423	.0784

In this case, the *p*-value of 0.460 and 0.201 are greater than .05, so we accept the null hypothesis. This leads us to conclude that there is no significant difference in the perception of the respondents of traditional and modern family backgrounds towards the role of branding in influencing consumer purchase decisions of youths in apparel.

This could possibly be due to the smaller sample size of

251 respondents, that we do not observe any variation in the determinants of branding w.r.t the demographic variables.

In this case, the *p*-value .701 and .788 is greater than .05, so we accept the null hypothesis. There is no significant difference in the perception of the different genders towards the role of branding in influencing consumer purchase decisions in apparel.

Table 8: *t*-Test: Effect of Gender on the Determinants of Branding

		<i>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</i>		<i>t-test for Equality of Means</i>							
		<i>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</i>		<i>t-test for Equality of Means</i>							
		<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Significance</i>		<i>Mean Difference</i>	<i>Std. Error Difference</i>	<i>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</i>	
						<i>One-Side p</i>	<i>Two-Sided p</i>			<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>
Brand Image	Equal variances assumed	.000	.990	.385	249	.350	.701	.047225	.122734	-.194503	.288954
	Equal variances not assumed			.383	138.230	.351	.702	.047225	.123343	-.1966	.291108
Brand Features	Equal variances assumed	.005	.944	.269	249	.394	.788	.0365151	.135571067173	-.2304	.303527366
	Equal variances not assumed			.269	138.999	.394	.789	.03651515	.1359063	-.23219	.3052262

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In today's highly competitive scenario, the youth are influenced in their purchase decisions for apparel. It is important to understand their preference for branded clothing. Through this study, two major factors have emerged: brand image and brand features. Brand Image which is more concerned with the perceptions of brand by consumers, like the brand ambassador being a popular celebrity, social acceptance, belongingness, self-confidence, reputation and legacy, appealing ads and premium image created by the company over the years. Theoretical evidence also reiterates the importance of celebrity endorsement and social acceptance as prominent components of creation of brand image.

Brand features are more about expectations from the brand, like, good designs, trust, trendy styles, superior quality, offers and discounts, positive customer reviews, value and satisfaction. In this factor, good design and trust are integral components of the brand's features. Both factors together give a clear picture of the motivation behind the consumer's purchasing decision for apparel from a particular brand. From the evidence, it is clear

that the role of branding in influencing consumer purchase decisions of youth in apparel remains the same irrespective of gender, age group, qualification and family background. Unique branding plays a general role for all categories of the population.

The latest mode through which youth establish connections with brands turns out to be social media, followed by showrooms, advertisements & banners and emails. It suggests that the brands need to focus prominently on establishing contacts with the youth consumer by embracing digital technology much more effectively. The brands must utilise all digital and social media tools to clearly position their image. This will aid the youth in high brand recall and boost sales.

The majority of respondents preferred branded clothing over local clothing, which indicates that the trend of branded wear is in full swing and the opportunities are paving the way for companies to establish brand identity for their products. Consumers today are brand conscious like never before, and the direction is towards the emergence of much more sophisticated ways of doing business and consumer purchase behaviour through branding. The majority of respondents were occasional

buyers; the brands have opportunities to turn them into habitual buyers by bringing in innovative techniques for fulfilling their needs through branding.

LIMITATIONS

In this research, there were 251 respondents, which is a small sample size the results could vary to an extent for larger groups. In the respondents, there were mostly college-going people and fewer service people, which could bring in some differences. If the sample size is increased, then we can see a significant difference in the demographic data variation. Time was a challenge in the research, it requires a lot of time to understand the population and sampling, and the research was conducted in a short period of time.

Scope for Further Research

The results of the research provide insights into the purchase behaviour of the young generation, mostly college-going youth, which can be further extended to larger groups of population. In this research, two factors were identified: brand image and brand features. There is scope for research to determine the magnitude of the effect of the factors of branding. Further research can also be extended to cover other segments of the population, including all age groups. The study can also be extended to other geographical parts of India since the present study covers only the youth of Indore. The effectiveness of the digital presence of brands in promoting messages to the public can also be studied. A study can also be conducted to compare the branding strategies of different brands, considering brand image, brand features and newer factors.

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