

# Factors Affecting Young Consumer Behaviour Towards Branded Apparel In India: A Study

Dr. L.R. Paliwal<sup>1</sup>, Aishvarya Bansal<sup>2</sup>

<sup>\*1</sup> Asstt. Prof, Deptt of Commerce, Swami Shraddhanand College, Delhi University, New Delhi

<sup>2</sup> Research Scholar, Deptt of Commerce, Pacific Academy of Higher Education and Research University, Udaipur

**Abstract - Purpose of this paper is to deliberate upon the young consumer behaviour towards branded apparel in India & to discover significant factors leading to purchase of a brand. A structured questionnaire was formulated using likert scale for young consumers aged 15-35 years. A questionnaire using five point likert scale was administered to 500 young consumers (Age 15-35 Years). Samples were drawn through convenience sampling approach from different places of Delhi and NCR. Marketers use status, quality attributes to communicate with this group i.e. branded apparel. This apparel category purchase frequency and expenditure is increasing day by day at an exponential rate over the last few years in Delhi and NCR. It aims to measure the impact of family, friends, peer group on their purchase behaviour. For further research; it is recommended that the study covers all the four regions (East, West, North, and South) of India with broad range of age of consumers to have the real catch of the situation.**

**Keywords: Apparel, Brand, Consumer Behaviour, Young Consumers.**

## I. INTRODUCTION

We all are consumers, daily we use many products that we buy from the market according to our needs, wants, preferences, and purchasing power. What we buy, how we buy, when we buy, from where we buy, in what quantity we buy depends on various factors like our needs, preferences, beliefs, values, motivation, perception, attitude, personality, age, sex, family, social and cultural background, and many other factors.

As theory suggests that the consumers are usually choosing a brand they recognize. If the consumers do not choose the brand according to traditional theories, then what are the dominant factors that have a greater effect on the buying behavior of a consumer? A lot of controversies are arising while looking into the literature regarding the "consumer choice decision", whether the decisions are based on some attributes of the product like quality, price, brand credibility, or on the basis of consumer attitude and intention, advertising, group influences, innovations, and brand loyalty, or the decisions are made on the ground of brand awareness.

So many important elements might have strong influence on buying decisions which need to be considered to understand the consumer's buying decision making

particularly in low involvement category of the products in an un-awareness situation.

In many studies the marketers and researchers have recognized the effectiveness of the factors those affecting brand choice, moreover Brown (1950) in his study identified that, "physical characteristics of the brand, user's experience with the brand, packaging, price, premiums, guarantees, habit, recommendation by friends, recommendation by experts, convenience of dealer's location, personal salesmanship, dealer services, dealer prestige, advertising and display, special characteristics of the manufacturer, e.g., labor policy, location, etc., novelty, chance, availability, brand prestige or social acceptance".

## II. NEED FOR STUDYING CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

Answer is that no long can we take our customers for granted. Market research is often needed to ensure that; we produce what customers really want; and not what we want. Study of consumer behaviour will help marketers in understanding behaviour of consumers towards branded apparel. Over the last few decades the fashion industry in India is experiencing a boom due to the ever increasing fashion consciousness among Indians. Following the entry of several new brands, the branded segment has grown at 25% annually. This represents a shift from unbranded to the branded segment which is mainly due to factors like, rising incomes levels of Indians, changing demographics, improvements in standard of living and increasing brand consciousness especially for young consumers in Delhi and NCR.

## III. PROBLEM STATEMENT

- ❖ What factors or reasons are there which persuade a consumer to choose any brand among from available brands?
- ❖ How do consumers make the decision to buy the brand and what are the determinants dominating consumers purchase decision making?

The study may contribute and assist local marketers and managers to develop effective strategies regarding

production, managing, and marketing of the products in a given marketplace.

#### IV. OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1. To evaluate the factors affecting consumer choice.
2. To help managers in developing appropriate and effective marketing strategies and to develop the strategies particularly when introducing a new brand in a given market.

#### V. METHODOLOGY

The research shall involve gathering Primary as well as Secondary data:

Primary research - A survey is conducted by a carefully developed questionnaire, to investigate the brand awareness and attitude of the consumers towards selected brands of apparel industry existing in India. To test consumer perception of various brands, a rating question is incorporated wherein the consumers are required to rate each mentioned brand and their attributes. A well structured questionnaire was used to obtain data from respondents under study.

Secondary research - secondary research often refers to relying on information which has been collected by others at some point of time such as web, research articles printed by various financial institutions, referred publications, journals and magazines. Secondary sources were used for collecting various tables, diagrams, figures in the research along with review of literature.

Sample collection: Random sampling and convenience sampling technique are used for collecting consumer sample of 500 respondents.

Sample Range: Respondents between the age group of 15-35 including both males and females, varying from student to professional or job seekers are included for the purpose of study.

Hypotheses:

H1: Uniqueness/Innovation is the dominant reason for choice of a brand.

H2: Quality is the dominant reason for choice of a brand.

H3: Price is the dominant reason for choice of a brand.

H4: Group Influences is the dominant reason for choice of a brand.

#### VI. LITERATURE REVIEW

Clothing is to form an integral part in the enactment of social encounters and also seen as a very important

channel of non-verbal communication (noesjirwan & crawford, 1982). Clothing issued as a code, which allows messages to create an understanding, selectively (auty & elliott, 1998). They also define that opinions of brand users have difference for identical brands within a product category. In accordance with assorted definitions of brands, two approaches of defining a brand are derived. The traditional one (brand as a product identifier), "A brand is a distinguishing name and/or symbol which intended to identify the goods, services of either one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate those goods or services from those of competitors" by Aaker, 1991. Holistic view (brand is more than just the product) defines brand as, "the promise of the bundles of attributes that someone buys which provides satisfaction and attributes that make up a brand" by Ambler, 1992. One of the major components of brand knowledge is brand awareness, which is taken as the ability of a potential buyer to recognize or recall that a brand is a member of a certain product category (rossiter & percy, 1987 and aaker, 1991). It is created by an increase in the acquaintance of the brands through repeated exposure, strong associations and consumption cues (keller, 2003). Brand knowledge defined as brand information that relates with the brand stored in a consumer memory. Brand knowledge can be categorized in two aspects: brand awareness and brand image (keller, 2004). Brand awareness is the strength of brand which is reflected by the identification of that brand under several conditions. It is a combination of recognition and recall performance. Brand image is consumer's perception about the brand.

#### VII. FACTORS AFFECTING CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR

A. Psychological factors

a) Motivation

A need becomes a motive when it is aroused to a sufficient level of intensity. A motive is a need that is sufficiently pressing to drive the person to act. There can be 2 types of needs:

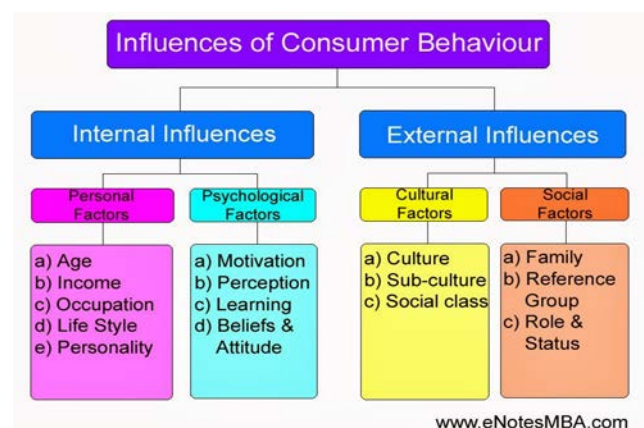


Fig 6.1 Factors affecting consumer behaviour

1. Biogenic needs:

They arise from physiological states of tension such as thirst, hunger

2. Psychogenic needs:

They arise from psychological states of tension such as needs for recognition, esteem.

A motive is an inner urge (or need) that moves a person to take purchase action to satisfy two kinds of wants viz. core wants and secondary wants. Let us take an example:

Products	Core want	Secondary want
Pizza	Feeling hungry and wants to eat something (hunger)	Craving for taste
Branded clothes	Quality and comfort	Others to look up (status symbol).

Motivation acts as a driving force that impels an individual to take action to satisfy his needs.



Fig 6.2 Maslow hierarchy of needs: Motivation

b) Perception

What an individual thinks about a particular product or service is his/her perception towards the same. Individuals with the same needs might not purchase similar products due to difference in perception. Individuals think differently and their perceptions do not match. Example:

Consumer 1	Consumer 2
<i>(had a hectic day at work and wanted to have something while returning from work)</i>	
Ordered a large chicken pizza	
Ordered baked vegetable sandwich	

Both had the same motivation (hunger), but the products they purchased were entirely different as Consumer 2 perceived pizza to be a calorie laden food.

c) Learning

Learning comes only through experience. An individual comes to know about a product and service only after he/she uses the same. An individual who is satisfied with a particular product/service will show a strong inclination towards buying the same product again.

d) Beliefs and attitude

Individuals create a certain image of every product or service available in the market. Every brand has an image attached to it, also called its brand image. Consumers purchase products/services based on their opinions which they form towards a particular product or service. A product might be really good but if the consumer feels it is useless, he would never buy it.

B. Personal factors

Consumer behaviour helps us understand the buying tendencies and spending patterns of consumers. Not all individuals would prefer to buy similar products. Consumer behaviour deals with as to why and why not an individual purchases particular products and services. Personal factors play an important role in affecting consumer buying behaviour.

a) Occupation

An individual's nature of job has a direct influence on the products and brands he picks for himself/herself. Such as businessman, job holder, service sector, etc. Example:

	Consumer 1	Consumer 2
Occupation	CEO of company	Retired professor
Buying Decision	Premium brands	Brand which were not very expensive

Consumer 1 is really conscious about the clothes he wore, the perfume he used, the watch he wore whereas jack never really bothered about all this. As a CEO of an organization, it was really essential for Consumer 1 to wear something really elegant and unique for others to look up to him.

Example:

	Consumer A	Consumer B
Occupation	College goers and students	professionals
Buying Decision	casuals	formal shirts and trousers.

b) Age

Age and human lifecycle also influence the buying behaviour of consumers.

Example:

	Consumer A	Consumer B
Age	Teenagers	Middle aged or elderly
Buying Decision		
<i>Clothes</i>	Bright and loud colours	Prefer decent & subtle designs
<i>Diet</i>	Unhealthy products (fast food) to avoid	Healthier diet (low cholesterol diet to health problems)

- A bachelor - prefer spending lavishly on items like beer, bikes, music, clothes, parties, clubs and so on.
- A young single would hardly be interested in buying a house, property, insurance policies, gold etc.
- An individual who has a family- more interested in buying something which would benefit his family and make their future secure.

c) Economic condition

The buying tendency of an individual is directly proportional to his income/earnings per month. How much an individual brings home decides how much he spends and on which products? Example:

	Consumer A	Consumer B
Income	High income	Middle and lower income group
Buying Decision		
	Expensive & premium products (designer clothes and watches)	Necessary items (grocery or products necessary for Survival)

d) Lifestyle

Lifestyle refers to the way an individual stays in the society. It is really important for some people to wear branded clothes whereas some individuals are really not brand conscious. An individual staying in a posh locality needs to maintain his status and image. An individual's lifestyle is something to do with his style, attitude, his social relations and immediate surroundings. Example:

Consumer A

Consumer B

Lifestyle	Healthy & Balanced Lifestyle	Unhealthy Lifestyle
Buying Decision		
<i>Diet</i>	Organic products	Fast food
<i>Behaviour</i>	jogging regularly	Watching TV, sleeping
<i>Products Preferred</i>	shoes, clothes	Video games

e) Personality

Every individual has his/her own characteristic personality traits which reflect in his/her buying behaviour. Example:

Consumer A

Consumer B

Personality	Fitness Freak	music lover
Buying Decision	fitness equipments	musical instruments

For example, since its launch, apple cultivates an image of innovation, creativity, boldness and singularity which is able to attract consumers who feel valued by buying a product from apple.

C. SOCIAL FACTORS

Human beings are social animals. We need people around to talk to and discuss various issues to reach to better solutions and ideas. We all live in a society and it is really important for individuals to adhere to the laws and regulations of society. Social factors influencing consumer buying decision can be classified as under:

a) Reference groups

Every individual has some people around who influence him/her in any way. Reference groups comprise of people that individuals compare themselves with. Every individual knows some people in the society who become their idols in due course of time. Co workers, family members, relatives, neighbours, friends, seniors at workplace often form reference groups.

All the above influence the buying decisions of consumers due to following reasons:

- They have used the product or brand earlier.
- They know what the product is all about.
- They have complete knowledge about the features and specifications of the product.

Example:

Consumer wanted to purchase a laptop for himself. He went to the nearby store and purchased a dell laptop. The reason why he purchased a dell laptop was because all his friends were using the same model and were quite satisfied with the product. We tend to pick up products our friends recommend.

Reference groups are generally of two types:

- i. Secondary groups - secondary groups share indirect relationship with the consumer. These groups are more formal and individuals do not interact with them on a regular basis, example - religious associations, political parties, clubs etc.
- ii. Primary group - consists of individuals one interacts with on a regular basis. Primary groups include:
  - a) Friends
  - b) Family members
  - c) Relatives
  - d) Co workers

Every individual goes through the following stages and shows a different buying need in each stage:

Bachelorhood: purchases alcohol, beer, bike, mobile handsets (spends lavishly)

Newly married: tend to purchase a new house, car, household furnishings. (spends sensibly)

Family with children: purchases products to secure his as well as his family's future.

Empty nest (children getting married)/retirement/old age: medicines, health products, and necessary items.

An individual entering into marriage would be more interested in buying a house, car, household items, furniture and so on. A married individual would show strong inclination towards buying products which would benefit not only him but also his family members as compared to a bachelor. Marital status plays an important role in influencing the buying decisions of individuals. A consumer who has a wife and child at home would buy for them rather than spending on himself.

#### b) Role in the society

Each individual plays a dual role in the society depending on the group he belongs to. An individual working as chief executive officer with a reputed firm is also someone's husband and father at home. The buying tendency of individuals depends on the role he plays in the society.

#### c) Social status

An individual from an upper middle class would spend on luxurious items whereas an individual from middle to lower income group would buy items required for his/her survival.

For example:

A consumer may buy a ferrari or a porsche for the quality of the car but also for the external signs of social status it represents.

Also, it is likely that a CEO driving a small car like a Alto K10 or Santro would be taken less seriously by its customers and business partners than if he is driving a Mercedes and BMW.

#### d) Family

Social influences are quite diverse and can include a person's family, social interaction, work or school communities, or any group of people a person affiliates with. It can also include a person's social class, which involves income, living conditions and education level. The social factors are very diverse and can be difficult to analyze when developing marketing plans.

For example:

If you have never drunk coke during your childhood and your parents have described it as a product "full of sugar and not good for health". There is far less chance that you are going to buy it when you will grow up than someone who drinks coke since childhood.

#### D. Cultural factors

Cultural factors comprise of set of values and ideologies of a particular community or group of individuals. It is the culture of an individual which decides the way he/she behaves. In simpler words, culture is nothing but values of an individual. What an individual learns from his parents and relatives as a child becomes his culture.

For instance, In India, people still value joint family system and family ties. Children in India are conditioned to stay with their parents till they get married as compared to foreign countries where children are more independent and leave their parents once they start earning a living for themselves.

Example: Our culture says that we need to wear traditional attire on marriages and this is what we have been following since years-

West Bengal /Assam (Eastern India)	South India	North India
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Buying Decision			
<i>Females</i>	Sarees	Skirt & Blouse	Salwar kameez
<i>Males</i>	Dhoti Kurta on auspicious occasion		Shirt and Trousers
<i>Food</i>	Rice	Rice	Wheat



Mc Donald's

McDonald's is a brilliant example of adaptation to the specificities of each culture and each market. Well aware of the importance to have an offer with specific products to meet the needs and tastes of consumers from different cultures, the fast-food giant has for example:

In FRANCE a mcbaguette (with french baguette and dijon mustard),

In INDIA a chicken maharaja mac and a masala grill chicken (with indian spices),

In JAPAN mega teriyaki burger (with teriyaki sauce) or gurakoro (with macaroni gratin and croquettes)

In ARABIAN & MUSLIM countries all the ingredients used by mcdonald's are certified halal. The fast food chain not offering, of course, any product with bacon or pork.

a) *Sub-cultures:*

Each culture further comprises of various subcultures such as religion, age, geographical location, gender (male/female), status etc.

b) Status (upper class, middle class and lower class)

People from upper class generally have a tendency to spend on luxurious items such as expensive gadgets, cars, dresses etc. We would hardly find an individual from a lower class spending money on high-end products. A person who finds it difficult to meet ends would rather prefer spending on items necessary for survival. Individuals from middle class segment generally are more interested in buying products which would make their future secure.

For example:

Consumers from the middle class and upper class generally consume more balanced and healthy food

products than those from the lower class. They don't go in the same stores either. While others, such as discount supermarkets, attract more consumers from the lower class. A consumer from the lower class will be more focused on price. A shopper from the upper class will be more attracted to elements such as quality, innovation, features, or even the "social benefit" that he obtains from the product.

c) Cultural trends

Cultural trends or "bandwagon effect" are defined as trends widely followed by people and which are amplified by their mere popularity and by conformity or by social pressure. The more people follow a trend, the more others will want to follow it. They affect behavior and shopping habits of consumers and may be related to the release of new products or become a source of innovation for brands. By social pressure, desire to conformity or belonging to a group, desire to "follow fashion trends" or simply due to the high visibility provided by media, consumers will be influenced, consciously or unconsciously, by these trends.

For example:

Facebook has become a cultural trend. The social network has widely grew to the point of becoming a must have, especially among young people.

For a brand, to create a new cultural trend from scratch is not easy. Apple did it with the tablets with its I-pad. But this is an exception. However, brands must remain attentive to the new trends and "bandwagon effects". Whether to accompany it (create a page on facebook) or to take part in the newly created market (create its own tablet).

d) Gender (male/female)

People generally make fun of males buying fairness creams as in our culture only females are expected to buy and use beauty products. Males are perceived to be strong and tough who look good just the way they are.

Other influences

Consumer behaviour is influenced by internal conditions such as demographics, psychographics (lifestyle), personality, motivation, knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and feelings. Psychological factors include an individual's motivation, perception, attitude and belief, while personal factors include income level, personality, age, occupation and lifestyle.

Congruence between personality and the way a persuasive message is framed (i.e., aligning the message framing with the recipient's personality profile) may play an important role in ensuring the success of that message. In a recent

experiment, five advertisements (each designed to target one of the five major trait domains of human personality) were constructed for a single product. The results demonstrated that advertisements were evaluated more positively the more they cohered with participants' dispositional motives. Tailoring persuasive messages to the personality traits of the targeted audience can be an effective way of enhancing the messages' impact.

Behaviour can also be affected by external influences, such as culture, sub-culture, social class, past experience reference groups, family and situational determinants. Culture is the broadest and most abstract of the external factors, they are the complexity of learning, values, norms, and customs shared by members of a society.

It is important to study the impact of culture on consumer behavior as marketers expand their marketing efforts. Social class refers to relatively homogenous divisions in a society into which people sharing similar lifestyles and interests can be grouped. These social classes are important to marketers because these consumers have similar buying habits. Reference group is defined as "a group whose presumed perspectives or values are being used by an individual as the basis for his or her judgment, opinions, and actions." as consumers we use three different types of reference groups including, associative, aspirational and dissociative as a guide to specific behaviors. Marketers uses these groups to create advertisements.

The background and family status of an individual also influence his/her buying behaviour. For example, selling a laptop to an individual who is not much educated would be pointless. Remember consumers would show interest in your products only if they are of any use to them or their immediate family members. A low grade worker would never be interested in purchasing business suits or formal shirts. Canned juices are a hit among middle and higher income group where individuals are really conscious about their health and fitness. Individuals who live hand to mouth would never spend on sugar free tablets, health supplements, or for that matter "diet coke".

It is also important to give complete information to end-users. Do not hide anything from them. It is not ethical. All tobacco products come with a warning. Individuals should be familiar with not only the benefits but also the side effects of the products.

Marketers must also take into account age group of consumers, Geographical location, Lifestyle, Social status of consumers. Individuals from posh localities and good jobs would show keen interest towards buying exclusive and unique products as compared to individuals who do not come from an affluent background.

There are several factors which influence buying decision of a consumer ranging from psychological, social, economic, etc. Buying decisions of consumers also depend on the following factors:

- **SELECTIVE EXPOSURE-** Messages, advertisements, promotional materials, a consumer goes through also called selective exposure.
- **SELECTIVE ATTENTION-** Not all promotional materials and advertisements excite a consumer. A consumer does not pay attention to everything he sees. He is interested in only what he wants to see. Such behaviour is called selective attention. Selective attention refers to the process where individuals pay attention to information that is of use to them or their immediate family members.

Example:

An individual in a single day is exposed to numerous advertisements, billboards, hoardings etc but he is interested in only those which would benefit him in any way. He would not be interested in information which is not relevant at the moment.

- **SELECTIVE DISTORTION-** refers to how an individual perceives a particular message. Consumers tend to perceive information in a way which would be in line to their existing thoughts and beliefs.
- **SELECTIVE RETENTION-** A consumer would certainly buy something which appeals him the most. He would remember the most relevant and meaningful message also called as selective retention. Consumers remember information which would be useful to them, rest all they forget in due course of time. Michael wanted to purchase a watch for his wife and thus he remembered the Rado advertisement which he had seen several days ago.

Thus, consumer behaviour has two aspects - final purchase behaviour and decision making process. Purchase behaviour is visible to us, but the decision making process involves number of complex variables which are not visible to us. Purchase behaviour is the end result of long decision making process. Study of consumer behaviour attempt to understand the decision making processes of buyers.

## VIII. OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSION

It was found that group influence is the dominant factor in influencing young consumer purchase decision followed by price, quality and innovation. Peer group seems to have maximum impact on choice, frequency and amount of expenditure spent on a brand by a consumer. Young consumers are mostly affected by word of mouth publicity.

Price though is important factor in choice of a brand but is outcasted due to peer influence. It was observed that majority of young consumers buy those brands which their friends, colleagues are using specially for casuals and formal branded apparel segment. Since young consumers do not think much before making a purchase decision of a product they like, as such price is not a dominant factor affecting their choice of branded apparel. Quality is another factor affecting consumer buying behaviour, but majorly in age group of late 20s or in 30s. Innovation as a factor doesn't play an important role in affecting consumer behaviour towards a brand, it was majorly fashion and latest style statement which played significant role in attracting young consumers and influencing their purchase decision. Several brands come up with innovative styles but the one which is popular is most sought out brand among young consumers. Thus, marketers should focus on brand image of their product followed by pricing to attract and influence young consumer buying behaviour to reap maximum profit. To, conclude various factors play an important role which influences consumer buying decision and for majority of young consumers it is the peer group which influences them the most out of 4 variables which were taken in study.

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