Understanding the Consumer Decision-Making Styles for Apparels in Punjab

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Abstract

Apparels are used as symbolic value which reflects the status of the user, personality, education, behavior and the way of thinking of the people. When an individual wear branded and designer apparels, it shows wealthiest of individual. The kind of apparels worn by individual depends on physical, social and geographical considerations. This study tries to understand the consumer decision-making style of Punjab consumers.The research study is based on primary data collected with the help of structured questionnaire. The Data was collected five cities of Punjab and 484 respondents were selected through random sampling technique. The collected data was then analysed using various quantitative tools like Percent, Cumulative Percent, Mean, Standard Deviation, T-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). On the basis of mean, the ranking of Punjab consumer behaviour style is as Price and Value consciousness style at top followed by Perfectionism Consciousness, Brand Consciousness, Novelty and Fashion Consciousness, Impulsiveness and Carelessness, Recreational and Hedonistic Consciousness, Confused by over-choice and Habitual and Brand loyal orientation.

Key Words

Apparels, Decision-Making Styles, Price and Value Consciousness, Brand Consciousness, Novelty and Fashion Consciousness

INTRODUCTION

Bharat is a nation with varied cultures, customs and even in their dressing too i.e. from lungi to dhoti and from salwaar-kameez to sari, the dressing of Indian has been impressive and varied. In 1950s, Liberty was the first company in India to launch the shirt under its brand (Kaur, T. and Ramachandran, S., 2008). After that so many Indian Companies had been entered in the apparel industry under their own brands such as, Raymond, Ventured, Vimal etc. With implementation of LPG policy in 1991 the fashion and apparel industry witnessed great changes. Today apparels industry shift from tailor shops to designer wear boutiques, retailers selling from their shops to the private labels available at shopping malls along with increase in volume, quality and reduction in prices as well.

Since few decades, there is a great change in taste, behavior and the fashion trends of Indian consumers. With the rise in income and salaries, the spending on apparel has increased and becoming more materialistic. Now Indian Consumers prefer to have both local as well as global brands of apparel. The development of Information Technology brings new platform and driving new consumerism in India. The purchasing has shift to online sites, advertisement displays on electronic catalogues, unlimited information and communications through chats and reviews on social media tools have bring drastic changes in taste, habits, behavior and the fashion trends in Indian consumers.

With the relaxation and flexibility in the FDI retailing norms, liberalization policy of the Indian economy by Indian government, increase in consumption of Indian consumer, expansion of urban area, continues growth in the market size of Indian apparel industry all this leads to become a preferred business destination for retailers throughout the world.

Apparel is mainly used for clothing, which mainly includes outerwear garments. Food and shelter are the basic necessities of life, similarly apparels are also a one of the important basic necessities. It's immemorial that, how long, apparels have been necessary part of human lives. Apparels which serve many purposes by covering part of the human body and helps in protecting one's body from harsh weather, insects, harmful ultra violet radiation, etc. it is a social implications to wear apparels and cover the body parts which are socially required to cover.

The main function of apparel is to provide comfort to the wearer. In summer days climate, apparels provides protection from sunburn and winter days apparels become thermal insulation. Apparels also fulfill requirements of social

and cultural functions like, occupational, social status and sexual differentiation. With a change in the purpose, apparels also changes. Now apparels are used to show once lifestyles and also shows the economic and social status. Apparels are used as symbolic value which reflects the status of the user, personality, education, behavior and the way of thinking of the people. And when an individual wear branded and designer apparels, it shows wealthiest of individual. The kind of apparels wear by an individual depends on physical, social and geographical considerations.

From so many centuries, societies have different norms about apparels which shows level of modesty, social status, religion and gender. Apparels also perform the function of embellishment and express the person's taste or style. In designing the apparels, human beings have shown the creativity by developing different types of apparels to protect from environmental hazards such as, Beekeeper gear, Space, Diving, Swim Suits and other protective apparels.

CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING STYLES

The interdisciplinary theories related to consumer decision-making like Economic Man, Emotional Man, Cognitive Man, Irrational and Passive Man says that there is a present of different mental orientations for consumers while making buying decisions. According to Bettman (1979) consumer is not rationally go through a complex process at the time of making purchase decisions and support the consumer decision-making style approach. Sproles (1985) defined consumer decision-making styles as a patterned, mental, cognitive direction that regularly governs a consumer to take decision towards shopping and purchasing. Styles are purchasing strategies and rules which guide consumers in making choices. Sproles and Kendall (1986) provided the Consumer Styles Inventory (CSI), which is an early attempt to systematically measure consumer decision making styles of young consumers in United States. In conceptualizing these styles Sproles and Kendall (1986) postulated particular decision-making styles model which consist of eight mental styles of consumer decision-making. These styles were (1) Perfectionism Consciousness, (2) Brand Consciousness, (3) Novelty and Fashion Consciousness, (4) Recreational and Hedonistic Consciousness, (5) Price and Value Consciousness, (6) Impulsiveness and Carelessness, (7) Confused by Over-choice, and (8) Habitual and Brand Loyal Orientation

Perfectionism consciousness style is fit to those consumers who are searching and preferring for quality products. In this style consumers shop more carefully and more rationally. Impulsive and careless–conscious is opposite to Perfectionism consciousness, in on impulsive and careless orientated consumers

would not plan and shop carefully and give less importance to the price they spend or value for money. Such consumers have regrets after making purchases. In Brand consciousness, consumers prefer to buy more expensive, reputable brands, best-selling, advertised brands. Consumers believe that higher price represents better quality. On another hand, price and value conscious consumers are generally looking for lower prices. They are more focus on comparison shoppers and often aim to get the best value for money.

In novelty and fashion consciousness style consumer like up-to-date styles, more concerned about the fashion and seem to be variety seekers in their buying decisions. While, in habitual and brand loyal consciousness style, consumers are more likely to be non-variety stick with certain brands and stores, when shopping.

Furthermore, consumers in a category of confused by overchoice style are having too much of market information and facing difficulties while making their buying decisions. The last style i.e. recreational and hedonistic consciousness, consumers with this style take pleasure in shopping and enjoy the stimulation of looking and choosing products.

NEED OF THE STUDY

The main challenge in Indian apparel segment is its large size having diversity in consumer's preferences. These challenges provided a great potential and opportunities for the retailers. In the research report of Mc Kinsey, the size of Indian apparel market is approximately Rs 86,000 crore and readymade garments have 23% share. Out of 23%, 21 % is capture by branded apparel market. We can say the out of Rs.19,000 crore, only Rs 3800 crore is capture by branded apparel and still, Rs.15200 crore markets is untapped.

India is a second largest country in terms of population and having a large consumer segment especially for fashion, lifestyle and luxury products. The existence of a large consumer, who continuously demands for fashion apparels, increases the scope for marketers, designers and manufactures, to expand their businesses and generate high revenues and profits. These opportunities will be tapped by those players of apparel market only, who tries to understand the consumer decision-making style of Indian consumers.

The present study analyses that the decision-making style of Indian consumers. It would add useful knowledge to the Indian apparel industry to help the manufacturers, designers, marketer and retailers to satisfy the apparel needs. The study would also add significant input to the field of knowledge and help developing or testing theories of purchase decision-making styles and may

be act as a reference point for future research in fashion design, apparels buying and its related areas.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Dickson and Sawyer (1986) made an attempt to investigate consumers' knowledge and use of price information at the supermarket point of purchase. In this study, Author assesses the time spent by the consumer at the point of purchase. Subjects were observed and interviewed in terms of the number of brands / sizes physically inspected, accuracy of price recall and recall of price specials, comparison shopping, and reasons for price checking. In many cases it was observed that consumers take minimum time for taking decision for selecting the brands. The reason for taking minimum time was found that consumer employing simple rules of thumb, such as 'buy the brand I've heard of'.

Thomas and Forsythe (1988)in their paper identify the relationship between the apparel fiber preference, consumer perception and demographic factors. Three types of fiber were used in the study i.e. synthetic, natural and blended fiber. The research was conducted on female consumers. The finding of study shows that female prefer selected fiber content for some apparels items and there is no relationship between the fiber preference and demographic factors.

Carter A. Mandrik (1996) made a study titled "Consumer Heuristics : The Tradeoff between Processing Effort and Value in Brand Choice". This paper proposes a conceptual framework for understand consumer's use of simplifying heuristics in making choice between national and private label brands. The study suggests that there is a tradeoff between effort minimization and value maximization, consumer's use of heuristics to simplify the decision process between national and private label brands. Consumers may use heuristic cues like price and brand name to infer higher quality for the national brand.

Laferty and Goldsmith (1999) performed a population-based study titled Corporate Credibility's Role in Consumers Attitudes and Purchase Intentions, When a High versus a Low Credibility Endorser Is Used in the Ad. In the study author investigate the two sources of credibility i.e. corporate credibility and endorser credibility and their influence attitude towards the advertisement, attitude towards the brand and purchase intentions by showing of four mock magazines ads to 100 women students. A 2×2 (low versus high endorser credibility and corporate credibility) between-subjects factorial design was used. The study showed that both credibility types influence attitude towards the advertisement and attitude towards the brand, but corporate credibility has a

significant influence on purchase intentions and endorser credibility seems to have a great influence on attitude towards the advertisement.

Hsin Kuang Chi (2009) conducted a study to examine the impact of Brand Awareness on Consumer Purchase Intention. 267 cellular phone users living in Chiyi, were selected with the help of convenience sampling method. From the findings, it was clear that while buying a cellular phone, if consumers recognize brand name then that cellular phone brand holds higher brand awareness. Brand awareness, perceived quality and brand loyalty important for increasing purchase intention. The study suggested that manufacturers of cellular should increase brand awareness through sales promotion, advertising, and other marketing activities. As when a product has a well known brand name, it can win consumer's preferences and increase their purchase intention.

W. Glynn Mangold *et al.* (2009) in their study "Social Media : The New Hybrid Element of the Promotion Mix" argues that, Social Media is a hybrid element of the promotion mix because in a traditional sense, it enables companies to talk to their customers, while in a non-traditional sense it enables customers to talk directly to one another. The writers feel that, Social Media being a hybrid element of the promotional mix, should be incorporated as an integral part of the company's Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC). When Procter and Gamble (P & G) or General Electric (GE) entered the arena of Social Media, they carefully framed their communications with the market place in order to consistently reflect their organizational values and they acknowledge the value of incorporating Social Media into their IMC strategies and promotional efforts.

Mustafa Tumer & Milad Dehghani (2015) performed a population-based study, to examine the effectiveness of facebook advertisements. Questionnaire were distributed among 100 students of Cypriot universities. Samples were selected by using a simple random sampling scheme. The study showed that facebook users willingness to buy brands has increased by seeing the most like's and share's for the brands. Facebook advertisement increases the brand image and brand equity, thereby increases consumer's intention to purchase a particular brand.

Mohamed Dawood Shamout (2016) sought to ascertain the impact of the commonly used tools of sales promotion on consumer buying behavior in retail sector. Theoretical model was developed to meet the research question. The model shows the impact of sales promotion tools; coupons, price discount, sample and buy one get one free on consumer buying behavior. Even in the previous studies mention in this research, show the relationship between sales promotion tools and consumer buying behavior. The study revealed that

promotional tools such as sample, price discount and buy one get one free from two had significant relationship found between buy one get one free and consumer buying behavior. Where else, in case of coupon there is no significant relationship found with consumer buying behavior.

Zaeema Asrar Mohiuddin (2018) in their research paper have mentioned about the effect of lifestyle on the buying behavior of the customers. The authors have made close ended questionnaires to examine, how female buying decisions effected by lifestyle. While going through the research paper, it was noted that most of the respondents preferred imported clothes or newly launched brand. According to this study demographic, religion and cultural are the three elements of lifestyle and all elements are important factors, that affect the buying behavior of the respondents. Therefore, the producers must understand the lifestyle of the consumers. The study also stated that the majority of respondents prefer to have branded articles and attires and fall in the category of brand conscious people and very few respondents prefer to purchase clothes from sales on discounted prices.

Sunetra Saha & Ashok Sharma (2020) conducted a research, to study the impact of consumer buying decision model on online purchase intention of branded apparels. For the study author collected data through well drafted questionnaire. Regression Analysis was conducted considering how often do the consumer buy branded apparels online and the decision making styles namely, Careless/Impulsive, Perfectionist or Quality Consciousness, Consciousness, Confused by Overchoice Consciousness, Novelty/Fashion Conscious, Recreational Shopping/Hedonistic Shopping Conscious, Price Equals Quality, Price Conscious, Value-for-Money, Brand Consciousand Habitual, Brand-Loyal Consciousness as independent variables. The result showed that all the factors except Novelty/Fashion Conscious are significantly impact purchase intention for branded apparels online.

Bo Zhang *et al.* (2021) have also talked about the consumer's attitude towards sustainability of fast fashion products. The authors have studied wide set of predictors of attitude such as income, culture, price, religion, gender and age etc. Based on this conceptual framework, the authors had designed an online questionnaire and applied descriptive statistics and regression analysis as to compare predictors of attitude. The study stated that, age was never a significant factor, in contrast employment status was significant factor in differentiating the attitude towards sustainability of fast fashion products. Moreover, behavioural

and cognitive components tend to same across religions and cultures, but the affective component is still disparate.

Jung, H. J. *et al.* (2021)in their study had explored predictors of behavioral intention towards sustainable apparel products and also focused to examine both consumer characteristics and marketing perspective for encouraging sustainable apparel consumption behaviors. Results indicate that there was no significant effect of social and differential values on behavioral intention, hedonic, utilitarian values strongly affected behavioral intention for sustainable apparel consumption.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the consumer decision-making style for apparel
2. To study the important socio-economic factors influence on the consumer decision-making style for apparel.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

H_{01} : There is no significant difference between consumer decision making style and gender

H_{02} : There is no significant difference between consumer decision making style and age

H_{03} : There is no significant difference between consumer decision making style and education

H_{04} : There is no significant difference between consumer decision making style and family income

H_{05} : There is no significant difference between consumer decision making style and marital status

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research study is based on primary data collected with the help of structured questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of two section related to respondent socio-economic information and 35 statements representing different various consumer decision-making style. The Data was collected five cities of Punjab, 484 respondents were selected through random sampling technique. The collected data was then analysed using various quantitative tools like Percent, Cumulative Percent, Mean, Standard Deviation, T-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

Data Analysis

Socio-Economic Profile of Respondents

Table

Socio-Economic Profile of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Male	274	56.6	56.6
	Female	210	43.4	100.0
Age	25 to 30 years	204	42.1	42.1
	30 to 35 years	176	36.4	78.5
	35 to 40 years	104	21.5	100.0
Qualification	High Secondary School	34	7.0	7.0
	Graduate	278	57.4	64.5
	Postgraduate	172	35.5	100.0
Month Family Income	20000 to 50000	116	24.0	24.0
	50000 to 80000	262	54.1	78.1
	80000 to 110000	86	17.8	95.9
	Above 1.1 lakh	20	4.1	100.0
Marital Status	Unmarried	228	47.1	47.1
	Married	256	52.9	100

Computer from Primary Data

Above Table shows that from the total 484 respondents, 274 were males 56.6% of the total respondents and 210 were females, 43.4% of the total respondents. The age profile of the respondents was divided into three categories, 25-30 years, 30-35 years, and 35-40 years. Nearly 7% of the respondents had completed only high secondary school, nearly 57% of the respondents graduates and 36% were post graduates. 54 % of the respondents were belonging to Rs 50,000-80000. Above 1.1 lakh category had the lowest percentage of respondents, i.e., nearly 4%. 24% and 18% respondents belong to Rs. 20000-50000 and Rs. 80000 to 1.1 lakh respectively. As per marital status of the respondents were concerned, findings show that total 228 (47.1%) of respondents belong to unmarried category and 256 (52.9%) lie under married category.

Respondent's Consumer Decision-Making Style for Apparels

For analyzing the concerned topic, t-test (Univariate Analysis) was used to measure Consumer Decision-Making Style for Apparels among the respondents from various Punjab cities. Eight style were identified from the review of literature, i.e., (1) Perfectionism Consciousness, (2) Brand Consciousness, (3) Novelty and Fashion Consciousness, (4) Recreational and Hedonistic Consciousness, (5) Price and Value Consciousness, (6) Impulsiveness and Carelessness, (7) Confused by Over-choice, and (8) Habitual and Brand Loyal Orientation. To know the Consumer Decision-Making Style for Apparels, 32 statements extracted from previous research and respondent response to agreement or disagreement, on each statement was measured.

Table 2
Means and Test Values for Respondent's Consumer Decision-Making Style for Apparels

S. No.	Item	Mean	Proportional Mean (%)	Test Value	P-value (Sig.)	Rank
1.	Perfectionism Consciousness	4.45	89	4.92	0.000	2
2.	Brand Consciousness	4.25	85	1.49	0.000	3
3.	Novelty And Fashion Consciousness	4.15	83	8.01	0.000	4
4.	Recreational And Hedonistic Consciousness	3.75	75	12.19	0.000	6
5.	Price And Value Consciousness	4.79	95.8	10.28	0.000	1
6.	Impulsiveness And Carelessness	4.00	80	11.94	0.000	5
7.	Confused By Over-Choice	3.42	68.4	12.71	0.000	7
8.	Habitual And Brand Loyal Orientation	3.25	65	8.14	0.000	8

Computer from Primary Data : The Mean is Significantly Different from 3

In the above Table 2 the mean of all consumer decision-making style is above 3, which shows all consumer decision-making style were found among respondents. Price and Value consciousness style had highest mean value i.e. 4.79 followed by perfectionism consciousness, brand consciousness, novelty and fashion consciousness, impulsiveness and carelessness, recreational and hedonistic consciousness, confused by over-choice and habitual and brand loyal orientation with means score 4.45, 4.25, 4.15, 4.00, 3.75, 3.42 and 3.25.

Socio-Economic Factors and Consumer Decision-Making Style for Apparel

Table 3

Socio-Economic Factors and Consumer Decision-Making Style for Apparel

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation		
Gender				**T**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**
Male	274	12.372	4.4492	4.122	.000
Female	210	10.705	4.3615		
Marital Status				**T**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**
Single	228	13.316	4.0792	8.236	.000
Married	256	10.164	4.3092		
Age				**F**	**Sig.**
25 to 30 years	204	14.853	3.3956	19.943	.000
30 to 35 years	176	8.207	3.5971		
35 to 40 years	104	11.587	4.4923		
Family Monthly Income				**F**	**Sig.**
20000 to 50000	116	12.379	3.9949	5.722	.001
50000 to 80000	262	11.947	4.5255		
80000 to 110000	86	10.093	4.4501		
Above 1.1 lakh	20	10.200	5.1870		
Educational Qualification				**F**	**Sig.**
Secondary School	34	11.765	4.6779	1.436	.239
Graduate	278	11.360	4.5648		
Postgraduate	172	12.093	4.2978		

Computer from Primary Data

The above Table shows the outcomes of analysis of variance (ANOVA) and T-test. The test was conducted to explore the difference of Consumer decision-making style among gender, marital status, age, family monthly income and educational qualification. The findings shows that in case of gender, there is a difference in consumer decision-making style between male and

female as p value is less than .05, i.e., .000. Similar difference in consumer decision-making style between single and married is found as p-value is less than .05, i.e., .000.

The respondents of age group 25 to 30 years, 30 to 35 years and 35 to 40 years also have difference in consumer decision-making style as p-value is less than .05, i.e., .001. The difference in consumer decision-making style also found among different family monthly income. But in case of educational qualification no difference in consumer decision-making style among the respondent as p-value is more than .05, i.e., 0.239.

FINDINGS

From the above study findings are as follows :

- The respondents of the study have Price and Value Consciousness Decision-Making Style. Respondents are generally looking for lower prices apparels. They are more focus on comparison shoppers and often aim to get the best value for money.

- The second Decision-Making Style determined among respondents is Perfectionism Consciousness. Respondents consumers are search and prefer for a quality apparels and consumers shop more carefully and more rationally.

- Brand Consciousness is the third Decision-Making Style that found among the Respondents consumers while purchasing apparels. These respondents consumers prefer to buy more expensive, reputable brands, best-selling, advertised brands.

- Habitual And Brand Loyal Orientation Decision-Making Style is found very less among Respondents consumers.They are more likely to be variety seeker and never prefer certain brands and stores while shopping.

- The Respondents consumers belonging to different Gender group, Marital Status, Age group and Family Monthly Income have different Decision-Making Style while purchasing apparels

- The Respondents consumers belonging to different Educational Qualification group have same Decision-Making Style while purchasing apparels.

Following Hypothesis of the Study were rejected :

I. H_{01} : There is no significant difference between consumer decision making style and gender

II. H_{02} : There is no significant difference between consumer decision making style and age

III. H_{04} : There is no significant difference between consumer decision making style and family income

IV. H_{05} : There is no significant difference between consumer decision making style and marital status

Following Hypothesis of the Study was accepted :

I. H_{03} : There is no significant difference between consumer decision making style and education

CONCLUSION

All the eight styles of consumer behavior, brand awareness, perception for brand apparels, effectiveness of marketing strategies and role of social media were studied across demographic variables namely gender, age, education, marital status, and annual family income to find out socio-economic factors impact on consumer buying behavior. On the basis of mean, the ranking of Punjab consumer behaviour style is as price and value consciousness style at top followed by perfectionism consciousness, brand consciousness, novelty and fashion consciousness, impulsiveness and carelessness, recreational and hedonistic consciousness, confused by over-choice and habitual and brand loyal orientation. Marketers should do efforts to understand the consumer behavior. They should have dynamic and flexible approach for understanding the buying behavior of the consumer because trend and fashion cycles changes very fast. The main suggest for marketer is that they should adopt a new business model in which males have equal importance as females i.e. introduction of latest trends, wide range of variety and colours etc. for males also. Males become more conscious for their style, looks and are equally experimental as females.

Thus, it can be concluded that the current study has arrived at a better understanding of Indian consumers make branded apparels buying decisions and what factors influence them.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The research provide valuable suggestion for apparels marketers related to consumer buying decision making process in terms of branded apparels. This study provides severely contributions and implications for theory as well as for practice aspects. The finding of the study contributes to the literature related to consumer buying decision making process, by studying the influence of socio-

economic factors on consumer decision-making upon purchase. From a marketing perspective, the study helps the marketers to reach the target consumers more effectively by segmenting the market using eight different consumer buying behaviour styles. Marketers can fulfil the consumer's demands by understanding the profile and characteristics of every consumer buying behaviour styles and enables them to design better marketing mix.

LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This paper of course has some limitations for future studies to overcome. The first is the data coverage, which is limited to five cities and further research can be conduct including more cites.The size of sample was small as compared to the universe size, but enough to draw statistically meaningful conclusions and future study can be made with large number of sample size. Second, while uploading the data, there is a probability of wrong uploading of responses of respondents. The future research on consumer buying behaviour style can consider contingency variables, such as situation and time variables which may or may not affect the consumer buying behaviour style.

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