

Impact of Demographic Factors on the Determinants of Purchase Intention toward Fashion Apparels among College Students

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Introduction

Globalization has changed the consumer perspective especially for fashion apparels all over the world. Over the last 20 years and so, fashion apparel industry has witnessed a significant change, which has compelled the fashion apparels marketers to design and implement cost effective flexible strategies to retain a profitable position in the increasingly demanding market (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010). Today's fashion apparel market is highly competitive and it is changing constantly at par with consumers' changing desire. Exploring the consumer's likings towards fashion apparels is the most critical decision which guiding the revenue generation. Understanding the needs of customers by exploring their pattern of buying a particular fashion apparel brand is the objective of every firm (Vikkraman and Sumathi, 2012). Fashion

apparel retailers are using their capability of forecasting consumer demand and fashion trends in order to compete in the market (Guercini, 2001). Hence it is very critical to understand the behavior of the consumer in the changing fashion apparel industry to retain the competitive position in the market. On this background this study tried to find out the potential solutions for the following research questions:

- What are the possible determinants which influence the purchase intention toward fashion apparels?
- What can be the prospective impact of determinants on purchase intention toward fashion apparels?
- Is there any moderating effect of demographic factors (gender and marital status) on the relationship between the determinants and fashion apparel

purchase intention?

Literature Review

Globalization has accelerated the expansion in the fashion apparel industry over the last decade and also cross-cultural attributes has significantly influenced the fashion apparel market space. In these backdrop, change in consumer preferences, values, beliefs and purchase intentions toward fashion products is becoming the marketer's real and most critical concern (Rajagopal, 2011).

Globalization has increased the behavioral heterogeneity among the consumer within the same country (Cleveland and Laroche, 2007), while fashion apparel manufacturers are continuously trying to narrow down the intercultural gap to accelerate interest in fashion apparel. Also consumers' self-esteem and social segregation of products has become the platform to develop customer-centric market strategy to enhance consumer preference, which in turn influence purchase intentions toward fashion apparel (Moon, Chadee and Tikoo, 2008). Fashion apparel purchase intention is motivated among consumers in social contexts. The variations in features such as brand, celebrity endorsement and promotions with emotional expressions of fashion products are catalyzing and influencing consumers' purchasing intention

(Calvo and Marrero, 2009).

Perceived leadership and role models, blending apparel status with employment and workplace ambience, socialization, self-esteem and respectful handling in society are the major factors in building perceptions on buying fashion apparel (Stanforth, 2009). Dominance of socialinteractions is another key driver of consumer behavior toward fashion apparel. Consumers' involvement in fashion apparel depends on their own perception and peers' reaction to their persona (Pinheiro, 2008).

Researchers observed that purchase intentions of fashion apparel are affected by cultural values. Increase in disposable income by facilitating credit through promotional programs is induced by manufacturers to promote fashion apparel (Venkatesh, Joy, Sherry & Deschenes, 2010). Using both push and pull promotion strategies in fashion retailing firms excite fashion-oriented attitudes and consumers' fashion apparel purchasing pattern (Martin-Herran, Sigue and Zaccour, 2010).

Consumers perceive fashion apparel brands as a blend of several perceived values such as conspicuous value, unique value, social value, hedonic value and quality value (Prendergast and Wong, 2003). Gender, attitudes and impulse buying behavior are

the prominent demographic and psychographic factors which influencing frequency of and expenditure on purchasing fashion apparel. Also consumer values like utility, fitness for use and effectiveness influence in positioning fashion into today's lifestyles as fashion clothing symbolizes individual's identity, an image for the 'passionate', 'erotically charged shoppers of both genders (Hunt and Miller, 1997; Narumi, 2000; Banister and Hogg, 2004; Hartley and Montgomery, 2009).

Consumer purchase attitudes toward fashion apparel and other fashion products may be considerably influenced by celebrity endorsement directly or indirectly through product-attribute construct (Treme, 2010; Sheu, 2010). Uniqueness, price level and offering price discounts with cross-promotions and credit facilities are the three economic stimuli for purchasing fashion products (Rajagopal, 2011). Study of Boguslaw (2015) reveals that three most common factors which influence purchasing decision positively or negatively are price, quality and relationship between price and quality. The study of Sarmad (2015) reflects that variables like normative influence, confidence, brand consciousness, emotional value and perceived quality affect purchase intention indirectly or directly.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this research study are -

- To explore the determinants which influence the purchase intention toward fashion apparels
- To measure the impact of the determinants on purchase intention toward fashion apparels
- To find out the moderating effect of demographic factors (gender and marital status) on the relationship between the determinants and fashion apparel purchase intention

Research Methodology

The study was conducted in different colleges of the Kolkata metropolitan area. The sample population was 237 which were constituted by the college students in the age group of 18 to 26 years studying both graduate and post graduate level. Non-probability judgmental sampling was used to collect data through a seven point Likert scale.

The research process was carried out in three stages. In the first stage, a well structured questionnaire comprises of 26 variables was developed based on extant literature study to collect data. Collected data were analyzed through exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to extract the influential factors (determinants) that influence the purchase intention of college

students toward fashion apparel. In the second stage, determinants extracted through EFA then analysed using Multiple Regression Analysis to find out the impact on the purchase intention toward fashion apparel considering purchase intention as dependent variable and extracted determinants as independent variables. In the third stage, Hierarchical Regression

Analysis (HRA) was used to find out the moderating effect of demographic factors like gender and marital status on independent variables (determinants).

Empirical Results

Respondent Profile

The demographic profiles of the 237 (n) respondents are exhibited by Table I below:

Table 1. Demographic Profile

Demographic Profile	Descriptions	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	126	53.16
	Female	111	46.84
Age (Years)	18 - 21	48	20.25
	> 21- 23	127	53.59
	> 23 - 26	62	26.16
Level of Education	Studying Under Graduation	149	62.87
	Studying Post Graduation	88	37.13
Stream of Study	General Stream (Humanities, Science & Commerce)	124	52.32
	Professional Stream (Management, Technology, Medicine etc)	113	47.68
Marital Status	Single	207	87.34
	Married	30	12.66
Purchase Intention	Positive	222	93.67
	Negative	15	6.33

Source: Primary survey

Reliability Test

The variables used in the questionnaire exhibits a relatively high internal

consistency by inter-item consistency reliability test (Cronbach's Alpha coefficient = .896), which is more than 0.70.

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

Results of Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) which is carried out to explore the determinants influence the fashion apparel purchase intention of the college students has reduced initial twenty-six (26) items to a small number of six (6) components. The components are considered as determinants of fashion apparel purchase intention.

The result of *KMO and Bartlett's Test* indicates the appropriateness of the factor analysis as *KMO* value is .834 which is greater than acceptable limit of 0.5 (Field, 2009) Chi-square (χ^2) value 2946.637 with 325 degrees of freedom at a significance level of 0.000 specifies that correlations between items were sufficiently large for Principle Component Analysis (PCA) (Field, 2009). The present study indicates that only six components have Eigen values greater than 1 and in combination explained about 62.492 % of the total variance.

The extracted components are termed as determinants of fashion apparel purchase intention in this study. The first determinant (component 1) has been named as "*Product Attributes*" which comprises of seven items.

Second determinant (component 2) named "*Social Image*" consists of five items. Six items constitute third determinant (component 3) which is named as "*Demonstration effect*". The fourth determinant (component 4) encompasses four items and termed as "*Motivation of Purchasing*". The fifth determinant (component 5) formed by the two items is named as "*Worth of purchasing*", while the sixth determinant (component 6) constituted by two items is termed as "*Ease of Purchasing*".

Multiple Regression Analysis

Result of multiple regression analysis (as shown in Table 2) shows the impact of six determinants on fashion apparel purchase intention, with the significant level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). Three determinants namely 'Social Image', 'Worth of Purchasing' and 'Ease of Purchasing' exhibits relatively strongly positive relationship with fashion apparel purchase intention with standardized Beta of 0.288, 0.253 and 0.296 respectively while the other three determinants namely 'Product Attributes', 'Demonstration Effect' and 'Motivation of Purchasing' indicates a weak but positive relationship having standardized Beta of 0.051, 0.069 and 0.060 respectively.

Table 2. Model summary of fashion apparel purchase intention

Mode			Adjusted R	R Square	F	Sig. F
1	R	R Square	Square	Change	Change	Change
1	.846 ^a	0.715	0.708	0.715	96.261	0

a. Predictors: (Constant), ‘Product Attributes’, ‘Social Image’, ‘Demonstration Effect’, ‘Motivation of Purchasing’, ‘Worth of Purchasing’ and ‘Ease of Purchasing’
b. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

“Status” has minor moderating effect on the relationship between ‘Product Attributes’, ‘Social Image’, ‘Demonstration Effect’, ‘Motivation of Purchasing’, ‘Worth of Purchasing’ and ‘Ease of Purchasing’ with fashion apparel purchase intention among college students with standardized Beta value of Gender and Marital Status is 0.006 and - 0.064 respectively.

Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Result shows that “Gender” as the demographic variable has no moderating effect on the relationship while “Marital

	Step I		Step II		Step III	
	Std. Beta	Sig	Std. Beta	Sig	Std. Beta	Sig
Independent Variables						
Model Variables						
Product Attributes	0.051	0.293	0.051	0.292	0.058	0.228
Social Image	0.288	0	0.287	0	0.282	0
Demonstration Effect	0.069	0.227	0.071	0.223	0.071	0.212
Motivation of Purchasing	0.06	0.292	0.059	0.301	0.06	0.289
Worth of Purchasing	0.253	0	0.253	0	0.271	0
Ease of Purchasing	0.296	0	0.297	0	0.276	0

Table 3. Hierarchical regression results using gender and marital status as moderator in the relationship between the determinants and the purchase intention

Moderating Variable				
Gender		0.006	0.869	
Marital Status			-0.064	0.079
Regression Data				
R	0.846	0.846	0.848	
R2	0.715	0.715	0.719	

R2 Change	0.715	0	0.004	
Sig. F Change	0	0.869	0.079	

Implications for theory and practice

This study provides a new perspective to consider the various determinants of fashion apparel purchasing intention. Firms must consider all these determinants while constructing marketing strategies for fashion apparel to achieve a favorable response from the target consumers. In view of increasing competition among fashion apparel, marketers must put emphasis on the price-value relationship while formulating strategies to affirm their purchase intentions. Today fashion apparel is embraced by the Indian youth as a means of “social image”. As ease of purchasing is becoming major prime mover for fashion apparel purchasing, both online and offline selling with user friendly mobile technology to be adopted by the marketers in their policies. Firms may also need to think about formulating an integrated promotion strategy to motivate consumers in purchasing fashion apparel. Fashion apparel marketers must develop aggressiveness in improving product line. This study exhibits the purchasing pattern for the students who are young. Hence Indian firms can replicate these determinants in the market for kids and

experienced consumers.

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