Analysis of Motivators of Luxury Fashion Apparel Purchase

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Abstract: *Customers now prefer branded fashion apparels because now it is associated with trend, social class and status. Customers get attracted to different brands on the basis of quality, style, price, etc. and also buying behaviour differs according to the age, gender, occupation and income. The fashion industry in India is growing as there is a big change in life styles of the people and now customers prefer to purchase branded and quality products. This study determines the important motivation factors of the customers towards luxury fashion apparels. The objective was to analyze the brand preference of customers in buying luxury apparels. From the important motivation variables of customers in buying fashion apparels, we have concluded with the help of factor analysis that there are three important factors, that is, Standard and Diversity, Monetary Value & Stylistic Identity and Recommendations.*

Key Words: *Luxury Consumer, Luxury Fashion, Purchase Motivation.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

India has an advantage in that its domestic consumption share in its GDP was Fifty nine percent in 2018. In comparison China's domestic consumption share to its GDP was thirty nine percent in the same year. High share of private consumption in the GDP not only insulates India from the vagaries of global economy but it also implies that a sustainable high economic growth in India directly translates into a sustained consumer demand for merchandise and services. Similarly, as more people are expected to move beyond sustenance living with rising income levels enabled favourably by demographic advantages, India's household consumption expenditure will continue to get altered in favour of discretionary purchases. Therefore, categories like apparel, jewellery, processed foods and consumer electronics are poised to gain a share of this shift. Fashion represents the consumer's outlook which results in their life style and status. The growing awareness of different brands and the convenience offered by readymade garments were largely responsible for the development of the branded apparel industry in India (Manohari, 2021). The Indian Fashion market has a mix of domestic and international brands. Ezilarasi et. al. (2021) states that the fashion industry is currently considered dynamic in India. According to Manohari (2021) there has been a huge improvement in Indian fashion industry because of the numerous fashion designers and the famous brands that have extended to compete with the world level brands. Nair and Kumar (2020) explain that India is a focal point for the fashion industry because of the rapidly growing middle class and powerful manufacturing sector. The fashion trends have influence even the entertainment industry and also other sectors of the industry. As part of the study, one of the popular international fashion brands is investigated here. The company uses both retail and e-commerce to sell the products to its customers. The company focuses on the "classic cool" looks with a modern touch in the lifestyle looks. The brand awareness is high worldwide. Fashion apparel industry has become more diverse than ever before by different fashion brands, personalization, advertisements and ethnicity in the global marketplace. It is very important for the manufacturers and retailers of fashion apparels to identify the consumer's preferences so that they can better able to attract and maintain their target customer group (Ezilarasi et. al., 2021). Manohari (2021) mentions that factors such as brand popularity, design, price, range, attractiveness, etc. have an influence on consumer preference. It is important for the fashion apparel brands to understand the consumer behaviour which could appeal to a set of different areas of knowledge whether it is about quality, comfort, style, education, income, etc. (Mahipal et. al., 2021). The paper seeks to explore some important factors influencing customer's behaviour within the fashion industry.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

While discussing about fashion sector, fashion brands may be called as consumer brands, they represent products and services used for personal purpose by the buyers or by those who accept them as gifts. No other acts of manufacturing are done using them (Kendall, 2009). Fashion brands have always been a unique way of consumers to convey their personality statements through certain apparels. The different types of modes of this expression associated with the brands include their name, image of the brands which were giving the consumers high level of recognition. The consumer viewpoint of these luxury brands were of utmost importance for these companies.

(Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). Perception refers to the process by which sensations are selected, organized and interpreted. It focuses on what we add to or take away from these raw sensations as we choose which to notice, and then go about assigning meaning to them (Solomon & Rabolt, 2009).

Rajput et. al. (2012) found that the availability of high-quality items and abundance of variety in Indian garment sector was needed to satisfy the customer needs. The results highlighted that the customers had become highly aware of brands present in the sector. Therefore, Brand image alone the needed result of higher purchase. There were other variables like quality, comfort etc. among the list which dominated the purchase decision among both genders. It concluded that gender difference did exist in fashion apparels purchase behaviour.

The research done by Srinivasan et. al. (2014), was trying to focus on the Indian customers who showed interest to buy luxury brands because of quality and brand image. This study was able to give some facts on the features that customers expected from these luxury brands and the way it was perceived by this group. The social image of these brands among different generations, among people with different occupation and gender were brought out with this research. Anand and Kheterpal (2014) tried to study the diffusion into the apparel industry which was growing due to increased demand and consumption. Retailer and supplier have to play a key role to understand customer needs and generate better profits from this sector.

Sheek Meeran (2016) focused on understanding the preferred brands by respondents in retail garment showrooms and also the factors for selection of these retail showrooms in Tirunelveli hub. The output of the study identified 3 brands were more preferred among the list of others. Some of the factors that led to purchase of these brands is price range, celebrity endorsement, quality etc. Kumar (2017) found that the consumers of Ludhiana district are more interested towards fashion branded apparels. Even though they were constrained by certain income issues, this did not hinder their affinity towards branded apparels. They also had high brand awareness. Ajitha and Sivakumar (2019) found that age and gender had an association between attitude towards luxury fashion brands.

From the India Fashion Market Private and Confidential (2020), we can see that the overall apparel segment size in financial year 2020 was estimated to be USD Sixty seven billion. This projection was driven by factors such as more purchasing power driving growth in primary discretionary spend, better access and availability of products, acute brand consciousness, increasing urbanization and increasing digitization. The apparel market in India is dominated by the western wear market and it is expected to grow and contribute 72 percent by FY 2025. Increasing number of working women, a shift towards aspiration rather than need based buying is expected to drive the western wear market in India.

There are various studies exploring the different factors affecting the luxury fashion apparels such as quality, confidence on wearing, brand popularity, pride and professional image, ease of purchase, customer loyalty, fitting, offers, outlook and comfortability, price, status symbol, official purpose, varieties, occasional purpose, availability of different colours and designs, appearance, stitching, durability, ease of care, fabric, need for uniqueness and clothing interest (Akinyotu & Alao, 2020; Cham et. al., 2018; Dutra & Karam, 2021; Ezilarasi et. al., 2021; Kalinkara et. al., 2020; Karunaratne & Withanage, 2020; Manohari, 2021; Nair & Kumar, 2020; Showrav et. al., 2020; Ting et. al., 2020; Xu et. al., 2020; Yeo et. al., 2020).

The variables considered in this study are Quality (Akinyotu & Alao, 2020; Ezilarasi et. al., 2021; Kalinkara et. al., 2020; Manohari, 2021; Yeo et. al., 2020), Life of Product (Xu et. al., 2020), Range of Merchandise (Dutra & Karam, 2021), Varieties (Manohari, 2021), Price (Akinyotu & Alao, 2020; Cham et. al., 2018; Ezilarasi et. al., 2021; Kalinkara et. al., 2020; Karunaratne & Withanage, 2020; Ting et. al., 2020), Offers (Cham et. al., 2018; Manohari, 2021; Ting et. al., 2020), Value for Money (Manohari, 2021; Ting et. al., 2020), Recommendation from Family and Friends (Cham et. al., 2018; Mahipal et. al., 2021; Yeo et. al., 2020), Brand (Akinyotu & Alao, 2020; Cham et. al., 2018; Kalinkara et. al., 2020; Manohari, 2021; Yeo et. al., 2020) and Style (Kalinkara et. al., 2020; Manohari, 2021).
Ezilarasi et. al. (2021) has identified that quality of fashion apparel is ranked more important compared to other features such as colour, design, comfort, style and price. Xu et. al. (2020) claims that the life of fashion apparels are tend to be less mainly because of trendiness of the garments and fast production practices. By presenting the consumption profile of fashion customers, brands can better adjust their merchandise (Dutra & Karam, 2021). Consumers consider the attributes such as quality and price as important in making their decisions (Ezilarasi et. al., 2021). Manohari (2021) states that consumers tend to buy luxury fashion apparels during the offseason sales, offers and discounts during the offseason can attract more consumers to luxury fashion apparels. Mahipal et. al. (2021) has found that consumers are influenced by recommendations from family and friends when it comes to purchase decision of fashion products compared to TV Shows, Fashion Bloggers, Celebrities and Other Perceptions. Brand image and word of mouth plays a major role in predictors of clothing interest (Cham et. al., 2018). Manohari (2021) concludes that brand enhances the personality of the consumer as the branded products provide more satisfaction, value for money and social class. The readymade apparel of brands has not only become a status symbol but also the latest style in the society (Manohari, 2021).

3. METHODOLOGY:

The type of research was descriptive and based on a survey conducted using a structured questionnaire. The respondents were from different parts of Kerala, India. Likert Scale was used for questionnaire framing. The data collected included the demographics of the respondents. The factors influencing the purchase of luxury fashion apparel was studied. The reliability test resulted in a Cronbach's Alpha greater than .7, which showed that the items in the constructs were adequate to generate a good result. According to (Griethuijsen et al., 2014), any value greater than or equal to 0.7 was adequate to show the reliability of the questionnaire.

Sampling method: The sampling method used was convenience sampling. Primary data was collected through an online questionnaire. Secondary data was collected from journals and websites/related reports.

Sample Size: The sample size was 200 respondents from different parts of Kerala.

Data Collection method: A structured questionnaire designed using Google forms was used for executing this survey.

Data Analysis: IBM SPSS Statistics 23 was used to perform the data analysis.

4. ANALYSIS & FINDINGS:

Table 1. Summary of Demographic profile of the respondents

Demographic characteristic	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Age Group	
20 -30	28.4
31- 40	35.1
41 – 50	25.3
51 and above	11.2
Gender	
Male	70.7
Female	29.3
Level of Education	
Schooling	3.5
Under Graduate	37.3
Post Graduate	59.2
Occupation	
Student	31.7
Self Employed	21.1
Salaried	39
Homemaker	3.4
Retired	4.8
Monthly Family Income	
Below Rs 20000	6.4
Rs 20001 – Rs 35000	14.4
Rs 35001 – Rs 50000	34.8
Rs 50001 and above	44.4

A majority of the respondents (35.1 %) are between ages of 31 and 40 years old. The sample is comprised primarily of male respondents (70.7 %). More than half (59.2 %) of the respondents are post-graduates. Salaried individuals make up 39 % of the sample while 44.4 % of the sample is comprised of individuals who have a monthly family income above Rs. 50001. In order to ascertain the factors which influence the purchase of luxury fashion apparel, a facto analysis was conducted. The KMO value is .779 and Bartlett's test is significant (Table 2). This indicates that factor analysis can be performed on the given data. A total of 10 variables have been reduced to 3 factors which account for 66.19 % of the variance in the data (Table 3).

Table 2. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.779
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	**Approx. Chi-square**	450.645
	Df	45
	Sig.	.000

Table 3. Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues				Extracted Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	
1	4.134	41.343	41.343	4.134	41.343	41.343	
2	1.400	14.003	55.347	1.400	14.003	55.347	
3	1.084	10.839	66.186	1.084	10.839	66.186	
4	.783	7.833	74.020				
5	.677	6.765	80.785				
6	.524	5.242	86.027				
7	.494	4.942	90.969				
8	.392	3.921	94.890				
9	.281	2.812	97.702				
10	.230	2.298	100.000				

Table 4. Rotated Component Matrix

Variables	1	2	3
Quality	.854	.078	.099
Life of Product	.735	.331	.110
Range of Merchandise	.646	.001	.238
Varieties	.570	.329	.358
Price	.261	.847	.022
Offers	-.051	.721	.519
Value for Money	.564	.635	.047
Recommendation from Family & Friends	.095	.215	.802
Brand	.397	-.367	.608
Style	.435	.188	.539

The first factor consists of quality, life of product, range of merchandise and varieties. The second factor consists of price, offers and value for money. The third factor consists of recommendation from family and friends, brand and style. We have termed the first factor 'Standard and Diversity'. The second factor has been termed 'Monetary Value' and the third factor has been termed 'Stylistic Identity and Recommendations'.

5. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION:

Quality ranks the most important feature in the decision making of the customers towards fashion apparels. Ezilarasi et. al. (2021) has stated that customers from high income group can afford branded apparel products; offers and discounts can attract customers which are not from high income group; which is similar to our 2nd factor that is Monetary Value. Mahipal et. al. (2021) has concluded in their study that recommendations from family and friends, quality, style and brands have a huge impact on what the customers must buy; which is similar to our third factor that is Stylistic Identity and Recommendations. As a conclusion, we all know that fashion industry is growing year by year; apparel manufacturers and retailers have to identify the key factors which impacts on the customer perceptions towards fashion apparels (Cham et. al., 2018). The buying behaviour of the customers differs according to age, gender, occupation and income.

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