



THE ROLE OF PRICE SENSITIVITY, STYLE PREFERENCES AND BRAND ORIENTATION IN APPAREL PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR AMONG YOUNG ADULTS IN HARYANA

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ABSTRACT

The apparel industry is undergoing significant changes in response to changing consumer preferences and influenced by a combination of economic, social, psychological, cultural and digital factors. Apparel purchasing behaviour is transformed due to changing lifestyle, increasing disposable income, rapid fashion cycle, growing brand consciousness and digitalization. The present study aims to examine the role of price sensitivity, style preferences and brand orientation in determining apparel purchasing behaviour among young adults in Haryana. The study focuses on young college students and working professionals residing in Hisar, Gurugram and Faridabad.

A descriptive and analytical research design is proposed for the study. A total sample of 300 respondents were selected from three districts of Haryana, comprising 150 college students and 150 working professionals, with 50 students and 50 working professionals from each selected location. The major constructs include price sensitivity, style preferences, brand orientation and purchasing behaviour. The result showed that affordability and value for money play a significant role in shaping purchasing decisions. The findings indicate that style, price, and brand-related factors collectively contribute to shaping apparel purchasing behaviour.

Keywords: Apparel Purchasing Behaviour, Young Adults, Price Sensitivity, Style Preferences, Brand Orientation

1. INTRODUCTION

Clothing is not only a basic necessity but also an important medium through which consumers show their social status. Clothing choices may effect individual preferences as well as social, cultural and economic influences. A greater number of clothes, particularly the most trending ones, are being purchased by the young generation. Young adults are more aware about changing fashion trend due to digital marketing, peer influence, online shopping platform and availability of more fashion outlets and brands. The global apparel industry is a mix of rapid innovation, shifting customer needs, and growing digital influence.

The processes through which people determine their needs, look for alternatives, assess products, and decide what to buy are referred to as consumer purchasing behavior. Product attributes, cost, brand perception, fit, style, quality, convenience, and social influences can all have an impact on these choices in the clothing industry.

When consumers are evaluating clothing products, price is a significant factor. Customers can look for sales and discounts, compare prices from different brands and merchants, and assess if a garment's perceived quality warrants its cost. Zeithaml's framework emphasizes how consumer evaluation is influenced by perceived value, perceived quality, and price.

At the same time, style preferences are closely linked to clothing purchases. When choosing, young customers may take into account factors like fit, comfort, appearance, fashion trends, cultural identity, and appropriateness for specific social contexts.

Another significant aspect of clothing consumption is brand orientation. Consumers may receive signals about quality, dependability, social recognition, and lower purchasing risk from well-known companies. Brand awareness, perceived quality, associations, and loyalty are significant elements of the value associated with brands, according to Aaker's research on brand equity.

Because Indian customers use both traditional retail settings and quickly growing digital shopping platforms, the Indian apparel market offers an intriguing setting for researching these factors. Price perception in fashion has also been the focus of research on Indian millennials, which has emphasized the importance of individual traits and fashion engagement in comprehending customers' price views.

The present study therefore focuses on three principal explanatory variables—price sensitivity, style preferences and brand orientation—and examines their relationship with apparel purchasing behaviour among young adults in three important locations of Haryana.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Appiadu et.al. (2022) identified the apparel shopping styles of Ghanaian female young adults and to assess the applicability of the consumer styles inventory (CSI) within the Ghanaian context. The results showed that the subjects adopted multiple shopping styles when scouting for stores and selecting apparel for managing their appearance. Seven of the CSI dimensions were confirmed (perfectionism, brand consciousness, novelty-fashion consciousness, confused by over-choice, impulsive carelessness, recreational hedonism and habitual brand loyalty). A new shopping style, indifference shopping orientation was identified.

Rahman et.al. (2021) investigated the millennial consumers' purchasing behavior of fashion clothing brands in the spectrum of brand awareness, brand schematicity with brand consciousness and brand nationality. This study mainly considered the millennial consumers as they are the most dynamic and discerning segment when choosing a distinct fashion brand. The study uses a well-structured questionnaire developed and distributed to 266 millennial respondents using shopping malls and university campus intercept methods. Data were analyzed by applying the structural equation modeling. The results show that brand awareness has a mediating effect on the millennials' purchasing behavior toward fashion clothing brands. The study also confirms the active moderation role of brand schematicity on the purchasing behavior toward fashion clothing brands.

Tawiah (2021) studied the clothing preference and purchasing behaviour of undergraduate students of Blue Crest University College. The findings show that the physical factors that influence the clothing preference of the students included the fitting nature of the cloth, the ease with which the cloth can be worn, the climatic conditions in the environment, the colour of the cloth and the fabric which the clothing is made up of. The psychological

factors influencing the clothing preference of the students included cultural factors, the role of the students in society, the peer influence around the students and the ability of the cloth to boost their self-confidence and enhance the self-image of the students. Majority of the students noted that they vary their clothing preference depending on the amount of money that they receive.

Opare-Asamoah, E. S. (2014) investigated the buying behavior of fashionable clothing amongst young women in the tertiary institutions. Women are however considered to have a unique self-image and the drivers of fashion in the world. Family and Friends were found to be the major factors that influence a young Ghanaian woman to purchase fashionable clothing. Three most important criteria for these young women in selecting fashionable clothing are Comfort, Style and Price. Findings from this study revealed that though young women are not trendsetters in fashion, they like to buy fashionable clothing.

Grant and Stephen (2005) examined the key communicating factors which influence 12-13 years old girls in their purchasing decisions for fashion clothing. This stage is highly fashion-sensitive. The findings showed the key decision factors when buying are parental and peer group approval. The purchasing of fashion items is strongly influenced by brand name and its associations. The findings revealed the respondents were prepared to pay a premium for branded clothing, placing a high emphasis on the product being deemed *cool*.

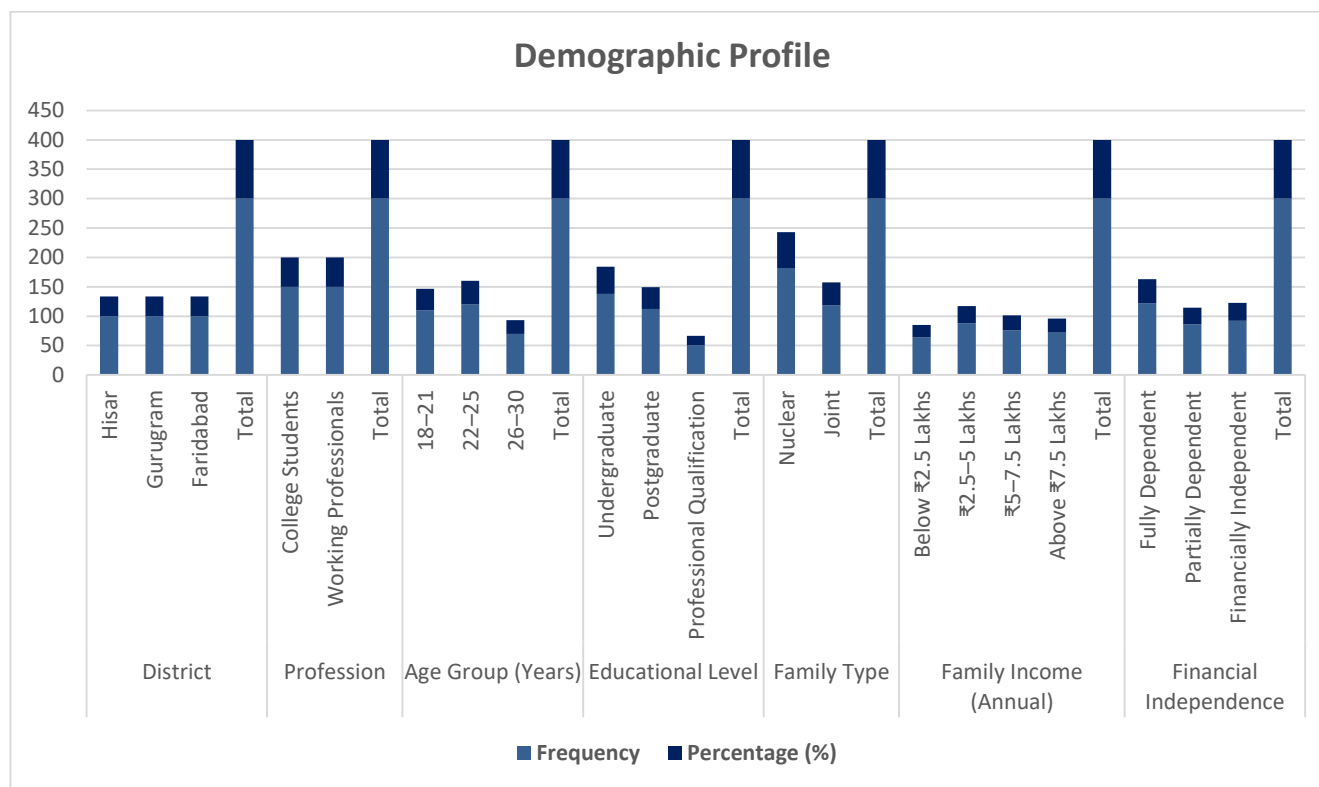
3.METHODOLOGY

The empirical investigation was conducted in selected districts of Haryana, India. The target population comprised young adults aged 18–30 years, representing a key consumer segment in the apparel market. A total sample of 300 respondents was selected, including both college students and working professionals, to ensure heterogeneity in socio-economic and behavioural characteristics. A stratified random sampling technique was adopted to ensure proportional representation of the identified sub-groups. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire designed in accordance with the study objectives and supported by relevant literature. All items were measured using a three-point Likert scale. The collected data were coded and analysed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used to evaluate the level of variables,

4 RESULT AND DISCUSSION:

4.1 Personal and Socioeconomic profile of the respondents

Figure 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 300)



The demographic profile of the respondents indicates a balanced representation across selected districts, with equal participation from Hisar, Gurugram, and Faridabad (33.3% each). The sample is evenly divided between college students (50%) and working professionals (50%). Most respondents fall within the age group of 22–25 years (40%), followed by 18–21 years (36.7%). In terms of education, most are undergraduates (46%). Nuclear families dominate (60.7%), and income distribution is fairly spread across categories. Additionally, a considerable proportion of respondents are either financially dependent or partially independent, reflecting varied economic backgrounds.

4.2 Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Style Preference Orientation among Young Adults in Haryana

S. No.	Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank
1	I prefer clothing styles suitable for both casual and formal occasions	2.54	0.61	3
2	I select apparel styles based on comfort during long hours of wear	2.68	0.55	1

3	I choose apparel that reflects my cultural background or traditions	2.31	0.69	7
4	I choose apparel that aligns with current fashion trends	2.46	0.64	5
5	Fit and appearance are important factors when selecting clothing styles	2.63	0.58	2
6	I prefer clothing styles that are easy to maintain and care for	2.49	0.62	4
7	I choose clothing styles that suit my age and social role	2.38	0.66	6
8	I prefer simple and minimal designs over flashy styles	2.29	0.71	8

Overall Mean = 2.47

The table presents the analysis of style preference orientation among young adults in Haryana based on mean scores and ranking. Comfort during long hours of wear emerges as the most preferred factor (Mean = 2.68), followed by fit and appearance (Mean = 2.63), indicating a strong inclination towards practicality and personal presentation. Versatility in clothing is also moderately preferred. In contrast, cultural reflection and preference for minimal designs receive lower rankings, suggesting lesser emphasis on traditional or simplistic styles. Overall, the findings highlight that functional and appearance-related aspects significantly influence clothing style preferences among respondents.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Price Sensitivity in Apparel Purchasing among Young Adults in Haryana

S. No.	Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank
1	Price is important when deciding to buy new clothes	2.71	0.53	1
2	I am willing to pay more for high-quality or branded apparel	2.42	0.66	5
3	I often wait for discounts or end-of-season sales	2.63	0.59	2
4	I keep track of how much I spend on clothes	2.39	0.68	6

5	I compare prices across brands before purchasing apparel	2.56	0.61	3
6	Price differences influence my choice between similar products	2.51	0.63	4
7	I prefer affordable clothing even if premium options exist	2.34	0.70	7
8	I reconsider purchase if the price exceeds expectation	2.30	0.71	8

Overall Mean = 2.48

The table illustrates the level of price sensitivity among young adults in Haryana based on mean scores and ranking. Price emerges as the most influential factor in apparel purchasing decisions (Mean = 2.71), followed by a tendency to wait for discounts or sales (Mean = 2.63), indicating cost-conscious behaviour. Respondents also compare prices across brands and consider price differences before making purchases. However, willingness to pay a premium for branded or high-quality apparel ranks lower, suggesting a limited inclination towards higher expenditure. Overall, the findings reflect that affordability and value for money play a significant role in shaping purchasing decisions.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Brand-Oriented Buying Behaviour among Young Adults in Haryana

S. No.	Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank
1	I feel more assured when the apparel brand is well-established	2.55	0.62	3
2	I associate branded clothing with reliability	2.47	0.66	5
3	I prefer brands with a good reputation among peers	2.59	0.60	2
4	Branded apparel reflects professionalism and good taste	2.41	0.68	6
5	Wearing branded clothing improves confidence	2.36	0.70	7
6	Brands reduce the risk of poor-quality purchases	2.62	0.57	1
7	Branded clothing is suitable for social occasions	2.50	0.64	4

Overall Mean = 2.50

The table presents the analysis of brand-oriented buying behaviour among young adults in Haryana. The highest ranked factor is the perception that brands reduce the risk of poor-quality purchases (Mean = 2.62), followed by preference for brands with good peer reputation (Mean = 2.59). Assurance from well-established brands and suitability for social occasions also influence purchasing decisions to a moderate extent. However, factors such as confidence enhancement and association with professionalism receive relatively lower rankings. Overall, the results indicate that reliability and social perception are key drivers of brand preference, while symbolic aspects like status and confidence are comparatively less influential.

Table 4: Interrelationship among Style Preference, Price Sensitivity, Brand Perception and Apparel Purchasing Behaviour

Variables	Style Preference	Price Sensitivity	Brand Perception	Apparel Purchasing Behaviour
Style Preference	1.000			
Price Sensitivity	0.412**	1.000		
Brand Perception	0.486**	0.365**	1.000	
Apparel Purchasing Behaviour	0.521**	0.398**	0.563**	1.000

Note: $p < 0.01$

The table presents the correlation among style preference, price sensitivity, brand perception, and apparel purchasing behaviour among young adults in Haryana. All variables exhibit positive and significant relationships. Apparel purchasing behaviour shows the strongest association with brand perception ($r = 0.563$), followed by style preference ($r = 0.521$), indicating their substantial influence on purchase decisions. Price sensitivity also demonstrates a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.398$). Additionally, interrelationships among independent variables are positive, suggesting that these factors are interconnected. Overall, the findings indicate that style, price, and brand-related factors collectively contribute to shaping apparel purchasing behaviour.

5. CONCLUSION

The present study proposes an integrated examination of apparel purchasing behaviour among young adults in Haryana by focusing on price sensitivity, style preferences and brand orientation. The study recognizes that apparel purchasing is a multidimensional decision influenced by economic considerations, aesthetic preferences, brand perceptions, product quality and purchasing channels.

The inclusion of both college students and working professionals from Hisar, Gurugram and Faridabad provides an opportunity to examine differences across respondent categories and locations. The proposed statistical framework will allow the researcher to identify individual and combined predictors of apparel purchasing behaviour.

The study is expected to contribute to the academic understanding of young consumers' apparel purchasing decisions while also providing practical implications for apparel marketers, retailers and fashion brands.

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