

To Study the Factors of Consumer Involvement in Fashion Clothing

Nandini. R¹, Dr S. Jeevananda²

¹Assistant Professor, Bangalore Institute of Management Studies, Bangalore, India

²Associate Professor & Campus Head, Institute of Management, Christ University, Bangalore, India

Abstract: *The today's trend is towards material possessions as criterion of success. Thus they use fashion clothing as a medium of expressing their self and also fit into the social environment. Fashion involvement is a consumer's perceived importance of fashion clothing. It is important to investigate fashion involvement to understand consumer behavior and to develop improved marketing strategies. The purpose of this study is to measure the fashion clothing involvement of teenagers, youth and adults consumers selected in Bangalore city. The research tries to explore the relationship between demographic characteristics and the factors of fashion involvement. The research focuses on fashion clothing because it is closely related to daily life, having essential, communicative, and psychological functions in consumers' lives. The sample size for the study chosen was 301. Samples were selected from schools, colleges, IT companies, government organizations and business establishments in Bangalore city. Factor analysis using principle components with varimax rotation was used. Also, the KMO and Bartlett's test was conducted in order to reveal interactions and relationship between different variables. The study shows, below 30 years customers tend to perform higher fashion clothing involvement. Correlation Analysis showed that there was significant positive correlation between purchase knowledge, confidence, social consciousness, materialism and the factors of fashion clothing involvement.*

Keywords: Fashion clothing involvement, purchase knowledge, confidence, customer's involvement and consumer behaviour

1. Introduction

Clothing, as a form of nonverbal communication, reflects the wearer's identity. On Kivisit and Shaw (1987) found that consumers tend to select products and stores that correspond to their self-concept. In recent years consumers in developing countries have attracted much attention from marketers. Since products mean different things to different people, consumers form differing attachments to them. An individual's attachments may be quite different from their family or friends in intensity and nature. Understanding consumers varying attachments, how they form, are maintained and are influenced is of interest to consumer researchers (academics) and practitioners (managers) alike. In an attempt to more fully understand the behaviour of consumers related to possessions, consumer researchers have often invoked the construct of involvement. Brand awareness and realization about the self have gained importance among consumers. Clothing is one domain that is supposed to fulfill both functional and symbolic needs of the consumers. Growing consciousness about the self and the role of brands in enhancing the consumers' image are being recognized in developing countries.

The choice of products and brands is based upon family and group acceptance. For most Indians, possessions indicate happiness and well-being, and wealth is bestowed from compliance with religious rules and regulations, and material possessions bring prestige to family as well. Clothing may be seen as a symbolizing status not only to the individual but also to the family and social groups.

The products have different meanings to different people. Unique consumer-product relationships develop specific to the individual and the situation, but the nature of the product is also highly relevant. The meaning of products may ultimately depend more on the nature of consumers rather

than the nature of products. Understanding the extent of consumer's involvement in their apparel - that is, their attachments to them- provides a good insight of the dynamics of consumer behavior and the nature and role of the product category of fashion (Martin, 1998).

Research suggests that global brands represent improved social image for customers. Thus brands are no longer viewed as a supportive domain of marketing but may be perceived as the efforts of marketing, as they are viewed as improving the lifestyle of the consumers. The core benefit associated with brands is that it symbolizes a rank, and gives status, value, quality to the consumer and thereby enhances the image of the user. In the same vein, we selected fashion clothing to ascertain the level of involvement consumer had with its purchase decisions.

The need for the study was to determine if purchase knowledge, confidence, social consciousness, materialism, quality-interest and fashion clothing involvement, and demographic characteristics of the teenagers, youths and adults consumers in Bangalore can impact of their fashion involvement and also income and age groups of the consumers. Involvement has been discussed and utilized to examine fashion clothing in a number of prior studies. The importance of involvement in the domain of fashion clothing can be seen via the defining role of fashion clothing in society. Contemporary fashion research would indicate that consumers are often distributed across a wide range of fashion consciousness and behaviors.

Zaichkowsky (1986) defines involvement as "a person's perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values and interests". Therefore values play a significant role in forming a consumer's involvement to specific products and categories of products.

2. Review of Literature

The purpose of this study was to examine whether female consumers ranging in age from 30 to 59 prefer fashion advertising models more closely resembling their age. The sample for this study consisted of 182 women. Stimuli included full-colored photographs of current fashion models. A questionnaire designed to explore participants' responses to the stimuli included scales measuring participants' beliefs about the stimulus models' appearances and attractiveness, participants' purchase intentions and perceived similarity with the models and participants' perceived fashion ability of the model's clothing. Participants rated models appearing older in age significantly higher than younger models on the characteristics related to appearance and attractiveness. Advertisements with older models also had a significant positive relationship to participants' purchase intentions as compared to younger-age models. Participants who perceived more similarity to the models were found to have more positive beliefs about the model's appearance and attractiveness and the fashion ability of the model's clothing. Perceived similarity also had a significant positive relationship to participants' purchase intentions. Researcher finds in this study, suggest that marketers and retailers should consider the age of the model used in their promotional materials. Specifically, it is possible that female consumers either transitioning into, or currently in, the middle adulthood life stages may have a preference for fashion models more closely resembling their age group. (Kozar 2010)

The importance of the symbolic properties of goods has been explored in depth among adult consumers, but there has been less attention given to the symbolic consumption of young people as revealed by the study conducted by Piacentini and Mailer (2009). This study explores the subject of symbolic consumption with specific reference to clothing in the teenage market. Thirty-eight young people were interviewed, and age, sex and social position variations were considered. The results of this study suggest that conspicuous consumption is relevant for young people, and that they are a group which is adept at reading the signals represented in clothing choices. The researcher found that the clothes choices made by young people are closely bound to their self-concept, and are used both as a means of self-expression and as a way of judging the people and situations they face. Evidence was also found in this study that clothing has a function in role fulfillment, making the wearer more confident and capable. Overall, clothing can be viewed as an essential social tool in the lives of teenagers.

The impact of internal factors such as variety-seeking drive, loyalty, involvement, perceived risk, pleasure and similarity perceptions on brand-switching propensity in clothing purchases using multiple regression. The model derived shows that five internal factors including involvement, perceived risk, loyalty and variety-seeking drive have an impact on brand switching propensity. Researcher finds the results that highly involved and loyal consumers are likely to show brand-switching propensities in their clothing purchases, thus buying from a repertoire of brands and stores. These findings imply that retailers should ensure that their clothing brands or stores are among those in the

multiband repertoire of the consumer. (Michaelidou and Dibb 2009)

McFatter (2005) carried a study on fashion involvement to understand consumer purchase behaviour and to develop improved marketing strategies. The purpose of this study was to determine if media usage, personality traits, price perceptions, and selected demographic characteristics of affluent female consumers can predict their fashion involvement. Involvement explains how consumers behave in the marketplace. If consumers are highly involved with a product, such as a fashion product, they are more likely to relate to the product and purchase it. Conclusions are based on the results obtained from statistical analysis of survey results. Relationships to fashion involvement are discussed including the following variables: media usage, personality traits (self-confidence and public self-consciousness), price perceptions (price/quality and prestige sensitivity), and selected demographic characteristics. After controlling for selected demographic characteristics, finally the researcher finds that, media usage, price perceptions and personality traits. Hypothesis one was partially supported and it can be concluded that consumers' media usage and price perceptions were significant predictors of fashion involvement, while personality traits were not.

The study by Grant & Stephen, (2005), examines younger teenage girls purchasing decisions for fashion clothing and the impact of brands on their behaviour. This group is highly fashion-sensitive. The study utilises purely qualitative methods to explore the role of branding and purchasing influences from the perspective of these young people in order to gain a richer and deeper understanding of their behaviour. The findings, based on four focus groups, show that the key decision factors when buying are parental and peer group approval, together with the fact that purchasing of fashion items is strongly influenced by the brand name and its associations. Further, the findings revealed that the respondents were prepared to pay a premium for a branded product and placed a high emphasis on the product being deemed 'cool'. The findings of this study provide the basis for further research into older children's and their parents' buying behaviour. In particular, future research will seek to examine the influence of such issues on the complete purchasing process, from problem recognition to post-purchase evaluation in order to ascertain whether age and experience change the buying process and perceptions.

Kawabata and Rabolt, (1999), compared the clothing purchase behaviour of US and Japanese female university students. Evaluative criteria when buying clothing, an interest in clothing and fashion and source of fashion information were studied. Relationships between variables were investigated and the difference and similarity between the two countries were discussed. For evaluative criteria, fit and style/design were ranked the most important in both countries. US students tended to give higher scores for fit, quality, fashion and brand/designer name than Japanese students. Japanese students were more economical, and color and style/design were important. We found differences in the meaning of fashion between the two countries by cluster analysis. Interest in clothing was almost at the same level in the two countries. But interest in fashion was

different; Japanese students were more interested in fashion when they spent more money on clothing. The fashion information sources most frequently used were fashion magazines, store displays, friends and TV. US students were more active in collecting information about fashion and used family members and non-personal sources, such as catalogues, the cinema, newspapers and electronic sources. Japanese students used more retail-oriented sources such as store displays and sales people. In both countries, students who were information search oriented tended to rank evaluative criteria highly and to have more interest in clothing/fashion.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Statement of the Problem

To know the Fashion clothing involvement among consumers in Bangalore city i.e. to investigate the fashion involvement of different age groups and genders (Teenagers, youth, adults and genders between males & females) from Bangalore. To identify the significant factors which are important to understand the involvement of customers in fashion clothing.

3.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present study are,

1. To identify the demography of customers who prefer fashion clothing.
2. To identify the factors of fashion clothing involvement.

3.3 Sampling Technique

The sample for the present study data was collected with the help of structured questionnaire from 301 consumers in Bangalore city. Samples were drawn from schools, colleges, IT companies, government organizations and business establishments in Bangalore city.

3.4 Method of Data Collection

The primary data was collected directly from the field by administering the questionnaire to the respondents by explaining in detail. Secondary data as collected by internet, news papers, books and articles.

4. Analysis

4.1 Factor analysis and reliability tests

This study consists of five dimensions: purchase-knowledge, confidence, social consciousness, materialism and quality-interest in fashion involvement. To verify the dimensions and reliability of these constructs, purification process including principal components factor analysis, items to total correlation analysis, and Cronbach's alpha analysis were conducted. Questionnaire items with higher factor loadings were selected. Coefficient alpha (Cronbach's alpha) measured the internal consistency of each of the identified factors.

Table 4.6a: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.785
	Approx. Chi-Square	387.75
	df	105
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		Sig. 0

The Bartlett test of Sphericity was significant at 105 degrees of freedom ($\chi^2 = 387.75, p < 0.01$), which also showed the presence of significant correlations among variables. Another index of the appropriateness of factor analysis is the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sample adequacy, which measures whether the distribution of values is adequate for conducting factor analysis. In this case, KMO was as high as 0.785, which is meritorious.

Table 4.6b: Rotated Component Matrix

Sl. No.	Statements	Component				
		F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
12	Knowledge concerning the new fashion trends is important	0.688				
3	Wearing fashion clothing is one of the most satisfying and enjoyable thing to me	0.626				
9	I purchase things of new fashion clothing only when they are well accepted	0.589				
4	I think ads about fashion clothing are important to me to buy	0.541				
13	Fashion clothing gives me a sense of self fulfillment	0.471				0.429
14	Consuming the latest fashion clothes increases my self confidence		0.667			
10	I like to purchase things of fashion clothing to impress other people		0.646			
15	I am more confident that I buy good quality of product		0.504			
2	Fashion clothing is a medium to fit into the social environment			0.703		
1	Fashion clothing is central to my identity as a person			0.685		
11	Color is very important influential on my choice of things				0.706	
7	My social status makes me think of buying materials of fashion clothing				0.625	
6	I like being involved in making buying things of fashion clothing				0.524	
8	People notice when you purchase materials most expensive brand of product					0.769
5	I read the fashion news regularly and try to keep		0.482			0.488

wardrobe up to date with the fashion trends					
Total	2.056	1.498	1.358	1.327	1.271
% of Variance	13.704	9.986	9.057	8.849	8.475
Cumulative %	13.704	23.691	32.747	41.596	50.071

There are five factors extracted from the exploratory factor analysis, each having Eigen values exceeding one. Eigen values for five factors are 2.056, 1.498, 1.358, 1.327, and 1.271. The index for the present solution accounts for 50.071 percent of the total variations for the customers. It is reasonably a good extraction based on the select choice factors (from 15 to 5 underlying factors). Around 49.929 percent of information content is lost for choice of variables. The percentages of variance explained by the factors one to five are 13.704, 9.986, 9.057, 8.849, and 8.475 respectively.

Table 4.6c: Naming of Factors

Fas	Statements	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha
Purchase knowledge	Knowledge concerning the new fashion trends is important	0.688	0.796
	Wearing fashion clothing is one of the most satisfying and enjoyable thing to me	0.626	
	I purchase things of new fashion clothing only when they are well accepted	0.589	
	I think ads about fashion clothing are important to me to buy	0.541	
	Fashion clothing gives me a sense of self fulfillment	0.471	
Confidence	Consuming the latest fashion clothes increases my self confidence	0.667	0.518
	I like to purchase things of fashion clothing to impress other people	0.646	
	I am more confident that I buy good quality of product	0.504	
Social consciousness	Fashion clothing is a medium to fit into the social environment	0.703	0.625
	Fashion clothing is central to my identity as a person	0.685	
Materialism	Color is very important influential on my choice of things	0.706	0.539
	My social status makes me think of buying materials of fashion clothing	0.625	
	I like being involved in making buying things of fashion clothing	0.524	
Quality-Interest	People notice when you purchase materials most expensive brand of product	0.769	0.564
	I read the fashion news regularly and try to keep wardrobe up to date with the fashion trends	0.488	

Source: Field Survey

Table 4.6c gives the names of all the factors of fashion clothing involvement. The above table also gives the values of loadings for the respective variables. The last column shows the Cronbach's Alpha values for each of the factors. The Cronbach's alpha values represent the reliability of the factors. If their values are more than 0.5, then the factors are assumed to be more reliable.

The major factors of fashion clothing involvement are

- 1) **Purchase knowledge** (Cronbach's Alpha=0.796)
Purchase knowledge is the most dominant factor. After rotation, first factor with Eigen value of 2.056 explained 13.704% of the total variance. The consumers, who are highly involved with fashion clothing, feel that they should have sufficient level of purchase knowledge concerning the product and the new trends. Furthermore they consider fashion clothing as a central activity to their lives, and appear to be innovators and opinion leaders.
- 2) **Confidence** (Cronbach's Alpha=0.518)
Factor 2 i.e. confidence is the second dominant factor. "Consuming the latest fashion clothes increases my self confidence" and includes items such as the use of fashion clothing to impress other people, and also reveals that the consumers feel more confident when they buy good quality products. This factor with eigen value 1.498 explained 9.986% of the total variance. Consumers that are involved with fashion clothing in this study believe that the stability of preference is well defined in fashion clothing segment and therefore could expose the basis of confidence, leaving to the fact that involvement is related to consumers' confidence.
- 3) **Social consciousness** (Cronbach's Alpha=0.625)
Factor 3 i.e. Social consciousness is the third dominant factor. "Fashion clothing is a medium to fit into the social environment" and central to the consumer's identity as a person. This factor with Eigen value 1.358 explained 9.057% of the total variance. Consumers use apparel products and special clothing in order to fill in the gap between themselves and their concept of who they would like to be. Furthermore clothes are accepted as means that help to fit into their social surrounding and be accepted by their environment.
- 4) **Materialism** (Cronbach's Alpha=0.539)
The fourth dominant factor is called "Materialism" and is related to possessions such as defining status, color, acquisition centrality and acquisition as the pursuit of happiness. This factor with eigenvalue 1.327 explained 8.849% of the total variance. Materialism can lead to the purchasing as a means to indicate status, color or even happiness. Hence because apparel products especially clothing are products, which are often used by people to show off, therefore, people that have Materialism values are more prone to be highly involved to fashion clothing.
- 5) **Quality-Interest** (Cronbach's Alpha=0.564)
The fifth factor is called Quality-Interest. "People notice when you purchase materials most expensive brand of product" and also includes items the fashion news regularly and try to keep wardrobe up to date with the fashion trends. This factor with eigen value 1.271 explained 8.475% of the total variance. Young consumers' that are highly involved with fashion

clothing, behavior reveals more interest on fashion clothing and also the quality of product.

knowing what to consider when pricing products and promoting to consumers.

5. Findings

1. From the Table 4.1, analysis of Demographic variable showed the homogeneity and heterogeneity between different age groups of the research constructs. Age has also been identified as an important dimension in fashion clothing. It showed that obvious unlikeness existed between different age groups in the purchase-knowledge, confidence, social consciousness, materialism, and quality-interest sensitivity the different age groups of customers. In fact teenagers and young adults below 30 years place more weight on their fashion clothing involvement because teens want to be accepted by their reference group, to imitate their aspiration group, or to gain some measure of social approval.
2. From the Table 4.2, this implies that maximum numbers of respondents are in the age group of <30 and the least are the people aged above thirty.
3. From the Table 4.3, maximum responses were given by those who had annual income between Rs. 3-8 lakhs per years, constituting to 62.1%. 32.2% of the respondents had an annual income of above Rs. 8 lakhs per years.
4. From the Table 4.4, in marital status, maximum respondents were by those who were unmarried, constituting to 61%.
5. From the Table 4.5, maximum responses were given by those who had expenditure between less than Rs.3000/month, constituting to 67% and other 33% of the respondents had an expenditure of Rs.3000-Rs.8000/month.
6. Additionally all the factors of fashion clothing involvement assumed to be more reliable. The Cronbach's alpha values represent the reliability of the factors. Since the Cronbach's alpha values for all the extracted factors are more than 0.5, all the factors are reliable. Purchase knowledge is the most dominant factor. Next are confidence, social consciousness, materialism and quality interest.

6. Conclusion

It can be concluded that this study can be useful to marketers trying to promote products to consumers, because it adds to the knowledge base. This research focused on consumers in Bangalore city. The researchers ascertained that the selected demographic characteristics, descriptive analyses showed female consumers involved more when compare to men were found. The confidence could be credited to the fact that most of the respondents were teenagers, young adults aged (below 30 years) and employed and had education. Although the literature indicated that confidence might have some relationship to fashion involvement, they were significant in this study. The majority of the respondents had education this could have contributed to confidence. The homogeneity and heterogeneity of the sample implies that the results are reliable and could be generalized to a broader population of consumers. Marketers can benefit from this information by developing pricing and promotional tactics to appeal to this market. Retailers can also benefit from this study by

References

- [1] Aron O'cass, (2005), "Exploring purchase decision involvement's influence on product knowledge and confidence". International journal of consumer studies vol41, pp 225-234.
- [2] Beverly A. Browne, Dennis O. Kaldenberg, (1997) "Conceptualizing self-monitoring: links to materialism and product involvement", Journal of Consumer Marketing, Vol. 14 Iss: 1, pp.31 – 44
- [3] Hiroko Kawabata and Nancy J. Rabolt, (1999), "Comparison of clothing purchases behavior between us and Japanese female university students". Consumer studies & home economics, volume 23; 4, pp 213-223.
- [4] Isabel J. Grant, Graeme R. Stephen, (2005) "Communicating culture: an examination of the buying behaviour of 'tweenage' girls and the key societal communicating factors influencing the buying process of fashion clothing". Journal of targeting, measurement and analysis for marketing, vol. 14; 2, pp 101–114.
- [5] Joy M. Kozar, (2010), "Women's responses to fashion media images: a study of female consumers aged 30–59". International journal of consumer studies vol34, 272–278.
- [6] Maria Piacentini, Greig Mailer, (2009), "Symbolic consumption in Teenagers' clothing choices". Journal of consumer behavior vol. 3, pp 251–262.
- [7] Mittal, B, (1989), "Measuring purchase decision involvement". Psychology and Marketing, Vol. 6 No 2, pp147-62.
- [8] O'Cass, A, (2000), "An assessment of consumers product, purchase decision, advertising and consumption involvement in fashion clothing". Journal of Economic Psychology, vol.21, pp.545-576.
- [9] Rajagopal, (2010), "Consumer culture and purchase intentions towards fashion apparel". International journal of consumer studies vol41, pp381-392.
- [10] Research Methodology text books: Krishnaswami. O.R, Ranganathan.M,,Kothhari C.
- [11] Robin Danielle Mcfatter, (2005), "Fashion involvement of affluent female consumers". International journal of consumer studies vol21, pp 226-238.
- [12] Sak Onkvisit, John Shaw, (1987) "Self-concept and image congruence: some research and managerial implications"
- [13] Zaichkowsky, J, (1986), "Conceptualizing involvement". Journal of advertising Vol.15 No.2, pp. 4-34.

Author Profile

Ms Nandini. R received her MBA specialized in Finance & Marketing, P G Diploma in HRM & M Phil in Management. She has over 4 years of industry experience prior to joining Bangalore Institute of Management Studies as an Assistant Professor.

Dr S Jeevananda received his MBA specialized in Marketing, M F T in International Trade, M Phil in Management, and Ph. D in Management. He has over 13 years of industry experience prior to joining Christ University Institute of Management as an Associate Professor and Campus Coordinator.