

EXPLORING THE DEMOGRAPHIC DRIVES OF INDIAN FASHION CONSUMPTION

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Abstract

The fashion industry plays a significant role in shaping emotional well-being, intertwined with the broader impact of globalization. Amid this transformative era, the fashion sector faces profound changes, notably propelled by the emergence of fast fashion. This phenomenon redefines success by offering consumers extensive clothing options at affordable prices and facilitating frequent wardrobe updates. This study, employing a sample size of 100 respondents selected through the snowball technique, examines the influence of demographic segmentation on the rationale for clothing purchases. By delving into demographic factors such as age, gender and income, it aims to unravel the complexities of consumer behavior within the dynamic fashion landscape. Understanding the intricate interplay between demographic characteristics and consumer preferences is pivotal for effective market segmentation, empowering corporations to tailor their strategies and offerings to meet diverse customer needs. This research highlights that there is no significant impact of age or income on the reason for buying clothes.

Keywords: Fashion, fast fashion, clothes, wardrobe, consumer behavior

1. Introduction

Fashion in India is greatly influenced by different generations, gender, and cultural values. Unlike the West, where personal style often dominates, Indian consumers balance personal choices with traditional expectations. This creates a vibrant, diverse fashion landscape that blends modern and cultural components.

Age and Fashion Preferences in India:

Age plays a main role in forming the mind set of fashion users. Younger groups, like Millennials and Gen Z, drive the fashion market mainly due to the increased spending power and passion for global trends. The influencing fast fashion brands like Zara, H&M, (A Bhattacharjee, RS Chanda – 2022) offer trendy, affordable options. Many youngsters defy social boundaries and express their individuality via clothes. Teens use distinctive personal style choices, outlandish fashion statements, and imaginative do-it-yourself projects to demonstrate their uniqueness and resistance to conformity. They display their unique likes, choices, and personalities through their attire, accessories, and personal styles. Adolescents who follow fashion trends may feel more confident. Their shallowness may be influenced by their sense of style and trendiness.

Teenagers who dress stylishly and fashionably may feel more confident and good about themselves. People who are happy with their appearance are more likely to be confident and able to express themselves honestly while interacting with others. A good self-image may be fostered by fashion trends that are appropriate for their individual style. Numerous platforms, such as social media, publications, influencers, and celebrities, are used to spread information about fashion and teenagers. These resources have a significant impact on teenagers, who may try to imitate the fashion choices of their favorite role models or idols. Old generations, however are more inclined towards traditional attires like sarees, kurtas, and dhotis. The traditional costumes focus on craftsmanship, durability, and cultural roots. Inspired by these cultural elements there is a blend of Indian Cultural, Cross -Cultural and Contemporary styles called Fashion Fusion (A Shukla, H Park - International Journal of Costume and Fashion, 2023) that is also being preferred by youngsters. This generational choice shows how modern and traditional styles coexist in India, catering to a wide range of preferences.

Gender and Fashion in India

Women are the main fashion consumers in India, and gender has a significant impact on fashion shopping decisions. Women now use fashion as a major means of self-expression, experimenting with fashion fusion and combining ethnic clothing with modern ensembles. Though global fashion trends and the growing availability of Western apparel have inspired women to explore a wider range of designs, traditional ethnic wear is still popular, particularly during festivals and cultural events. As a result of this change, women's wardrobes are now more varied, reflecting their uniqueness by combining traditional and international styles.

Indian men's fashion, which has always been regarded as straightforward and functional, is changing. More and more urban males, especially those from younger generations, are expressing themselves through fashion. Although casual clothing like jeans and t-shirts continues to be popular, luxury menswear, tailoring, and high-end grooming items are becoming more and more popular. The distinction between traditionally masculine and feminine clothing is becoming less clear as fashion-forward metropolitan males embrace gender-neutral trends. Traditional conventions are increasingly giving way to more experimental and fluid fashion choices, and a more inclusive and diversified approach to men's fashion is being fostered by this changing mindset. The fashion industry is changing as a result of this change, giving companies new chances to reach a larger, more diverse clientele.

Cultural and National Influences

With traditional attire deeply rooted in local identities, India's rich cultural legacy greatly influences fashion tastes. The nation is home to a diverse range of ethnic clothing, each of which represents unique cultural and regional narratives. Examples include the Bandhani dupattas from Gujarat, the Chikankari kurtas from Uttar Pradesh, and the Kanjeevaram sarees from the South. These traditional clothes serve as more than just clothes; they are representations of heritage and cultural pride. Famous designers like Sabyasachi Mukherjee and Manish Malhotra, as well as brands like Biba, Libas, Meena Bazar, and FabIndia, have effectively combined these traditional features with contemporary style, making ethnic clothing appealing to all age groups. These businesses have been able to retain cultural significance while drawing in a modern, fashion-conscious clientele thanks to their ability to blend the old with the new. Weddings and other cultural celebrations like Diwali, Raksha Bandhan, Onam, Pongal, and Navratri all have an impact on dress choices. People are keen to dress traditionally to commemorate significant events, which fuels a high demand for ethnic apparel and accessories. These gatherings offer marketers a great chance to satisfy traditional needs while providing new, fusion solutions that suit contemporary preferences. By striking a balance between heritage and contemporary, firms now have the chance to serve a more varied and fashion-forward client base thanks to changing consumer behavior.

E-commerce and Fashion

E-commerce's unmatched flexibility and convenience have drastically changed how consumers behave in the apparel sector. Nowadays, consumers have access to an enormous variety of goods, compare rates across brands, read reviews, and spend whenever they want—all without ever leaving their homes. Customers now have more control and accessibility than ever before because to this change, which has completely changed the way people shop. Online shopping has been a popular alternative for many people due to its convenience in comparing options and accessing global brands, as well as its capacity to be done at any time of day. This has changed how consumers interact with fashion and make decisions about what to buy. Also, E-commerce platforms like Flipkart, Ajio, and Nykaa Fashion are bridging gaps between different consumer groups by offering personalized shopping experiences. These platforms use data analytics to customize proposals for particular categories of users. While adhering to local tastes, promotional campaigns also highlight India's diversity.

Sustainable Fashion

In the current fashion environment, consumer perceptions about sustainable fashion are changing considerably. Customers are becoming major change agents and forcing firms to adopt more sustainable practices as a result of the industry's mounting environmental and social problems. This section examines the various elements that influence consumer perceptions of sustainable fashion, emphasizing how they all work together to form its development. Due to customers' growing emphasis on the ecological impact of their purchases, environmental consciousness is crucial. The need for environmentally friendly products and production techniques has increased as a result of growing awareness of waste, climate change, and resource depletion. Another important motivator is social responsibility, since many consumers support companies that uphold inclusiveness, fair salaries, and ethical work practices. Access to media and information increases these sentiments by bringing more transparency to the activities of the fashion business. Reports on sustainability issues, documentaries, and social media platforms enable customers to make knowledgeable choices and hold companies responsible for their effects. Additionally, as more consumers choose classic, long-lasting designs over rapid fashion, the need for distinctive, high-quality products further influences sustainable choices.

Objectives

- To understand how age and gender shape fashion consumption in India.
- To explore the role of cultural heritage and national identity in fashion choices.
- To study how e-commerce platforms are connecting diverse consumer groups.

Review of Literature

Cherian A.T.(2023): The research explores the rising influence of sustainability and eco-consciousness on consumer behavior within the green cosmetics sector. It highlights how consumer education, demographic factors, and altruistic values shape preferences. Wealth inequality, urban-rural divides, and gender inclusion also impact demand. To meet the growing interest in ethical and environmentally friendly products—reflecting a global shift toward sustainable consumption—the study suggests adopting value-driven business models and sustainability-focused marketing strategies.

Sree,B.,&Kavitha, R.(2024): This study examines how demographic factors such as age, gender, and income influence purchasing decisions in the fashion industry. It notes the dominance of fast fashion, driven by affordability and trend responsiveness. However, recent findings suggest that lifestyle, social identity, and mental well-being are more significant determinants of purchasing behavior than income or age. The research underscores the importance of personalized approaches and advanced market segmentation in targeting consumers effectively.

Mishra, A. K., & Farooqi, R. (2024): Research on green purchasing practices identifies critical psychological factors such as affordability, accessibility, and awareness as key drivers of eco-conscious consumption, particularly among Millennials. Raising awareness and ensuring affordability and availability of sustainable products are essential to encouraging adoption. While gender differences in green purchasing are minimal, factors like occupation, income, and education significantly influence behavior. The findings recommend focusing on value-driven and awareness-based marketing approaches.

Singh, S., & Sharma, D. S.: This study delves into fashion impulse buying, showing how situational, social, and psychological factors combine to drive impulsive purchases. Key motivators include hedonic desires, emotional triggers, and instant gratification. Social influences, such as peer pressure, social media, and FOMO (fear of missing out), amplify impulsive behavior. Retail strategies like scarcity tactics and promotional offers further heighten urgency. The study also notes that individual traits like impulsivity and low self-control often override rational decision-making, emphasizing fashion's emotional appeal.

Sharma, M., Sharma, Y., Chadha, P., & Pandey, A. K.: Through socially and environmentally responsible methods, this study investigates how sustainable fashion might help prevent climate change. Integrating sustainability into design, production, and marketing procedures to reduce environmental effect is one of the primary challenges. The research identifies three new ideas that are propelling innovation in the fashion industry: ethical procurement, circular fashion, and environmentally conscious consumer behavior. By employing bibliometric tools such as Biblioshiny R and VOSviewer, the study identifies influential contributors, research trends, and gaps in the field. In order to increase resource efficiency, scholars encourage the use of circular economy concepts, such as recycling, upcycling, and waste reduction. Furthermore, consumer awareness and preference for eco-friendly products are recognized as critical drivers for sustainable fashion. The review underscores the need for collaboration among designers, manufacturers, and marketers to foster a culture of sustainability. These insights contribute to advancing research and provide actionable strategies for industry stakeholders to achieve long-term environmental goals. Research is furthered by these findings, which also give industry stakeholders practical ways to accomplish long-term environmental objectives.

Aashaadha, B., &Priyaa darshini, R. (2023): The study explores sustainable fashion consumption, emphasizing how behaviors like recycling, reusing, and rethinking contribute to environmental sustainability. Demographic factors such as age and employment significantly affect purchasing and disposal habits, while gender has little impact. Despite awareness of the environmental challenges posed by the fashion industry, many consumers display a gap between their attitudes and actual behavior. This highlights the need for initiatives that promote sustainable habits more effectively.

Rathore, B. (2018): The research highlights the interdependence between evolving consumer behavior and fashion marketing strategies. It discusses the influence of social media, demographic profiling, and global trends on consumer preferences. The study identifies major themes such as the competition between fast and slow fashion, the shift from traditional to digital marketing, and the rise of sustainable consumerism. It also notes a paradox: while marketing strategies cater to consumers' demand for ethical and sustainable fashion, they also shape and drive those preferences.

Jain, S. (2019): This study focuses on luxury consumption, emphasizing the growing importance of Millennials, particularly in emerging markets like India. Key drivers of luxury purchases include perceptions of social, functional, and emotional value. The research also explores gender as a moderating factor, revealing potential differences in how male and female consumers perceive and respond to luxury value. However, the limited focus

on Indian Millennials highlights a gap in understanding this group's unique motivations and behavior in the luxury segment.

Kaur, H., & Anand, S. (2018): Using the Big Five personality framework, this research examines how personality traits influence fashion consciousness, materialism, and status-driven consumption among Generation Y. Extroverted and conscientious individuals tend to display higher levels of fashion consciousness and status-oriented purchasing. Materialistic tendencies also vary across personality types, emphasizing the need for marketers to align their strategies with personality-driven preferences within this demographic.

Trivedi, V., Joshi, P., Chatterjee, K. N., & Pal Singh, G. (2023): The study on online impulse buying behavior (OIBB) in the apparel segment highlights the role of demographic factors such as age, gender, income, education, and occupation. It finds that while income positively correlates with impulsive purchases, factors like age, education, and occupation exhibit inverse relationships. Popular categories such as T-shirts dominate impulsive purchases. The findings suggest that e-retailers should tailor their strategies to demographic-specific preferences and leverage popular product categories to boost consumer engagement and sales.

Research Methodology

The research is empirical in nature. The relationship between people and objects (clothes) is governed by various reasons that influence consumer purchase behavior. Remember that the purpose of the study is to find out how certain demographic factors affect clothing purchases. The necessary data is gathered for this purpose through primary data collected by using structured questionnaires. The questionnaire and its variables were developed with the assistance of prior literature. The questionnaire is divided into two sections: the first section includes demographic variables, and the second section includes a variety of questions pertaining to the reasons behind wearing more clothes. The questions are posted in a Google form and are only available in English. A variety of publications, including books, magazines, newspapers, and news items, are used to gather secondary data. This study utilized a sample size of 100 respondents selected through the snowball technique.

Results and Discussion

An attempt has been made to know the effect of demographic segmentation on fashion clothes; 100 respondents have been selected for the study through a mail survey. Keeping this in mind, percentage analysis, the chi-square test, and one-way ANOVA have been applied to attain the results. The table indicates that 83 percent of respondents are female. The largest demographic group, comprising 69 percent of respondents, falls within the 18–25 age bracket. Additionally, 65 percent of respondents are unmarried. A majority of 51 percent have attained either a diploma or graduate degree. Furthermore, 37 percent of respondents identify as students. In terms of income, the majority (67 percent) earn less than Rs. 25,000. Similarly, 67 percent of respondents come from nuclear families. Lastly, 47 percent of respondents reside in rural areas.

Research Implications to the Stakeholders:

An important factor in clothing purchases is one's emotional state. It is vital to examine consumerism since it has a significant bearing on economics and how businesses are conducted. From an economic standpoint, widespread consumerism drives people to spend more money on products and services, which boosts demand and propels economic expansion. Mass consumption, according to many critics of consumerism, depletes natural resources, generates a huge quantity of garbage that needs to be disposed of, and exacerbates environmental issues at practically every step of the production process. One of the main causes of consumerism is online buying. These days, regardless of their socioeconomic background, there are those who purchase more garments than they need. Therefore, the study helps society to reduce the excess of buying clothes. Policymakers must develop regulations and policies that promote sustainability while safeguarding the environment and consumers in organic clothing consumption. Furthermore, policymakers must develop policies that address labeling with bar codes, ensuring that all consumers have access to know supply chain transparency through block chain technology. The need for marketers to create awareness campaigns through mass media aimed at distinguishing between sustainable and non-sustainable products/services can be implemented globally to encourage sustainable consumer behavior, thereby contributing to both the company's and the country's achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Conclusion

Consumption permeates every aspect of our life and organizes our daily schedules. Our societal and personal experiences are becoming more and more shaped by the values, meanings, and costs associated with the things we consume. The main factors enforcing our actions are the demographic as well as socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents. Without demographic segmentation, it is impossible to understand what the customers want.

Demographic segmentation helps the corporate for market segmentation and also decide the purchasing attitude of respondents. Therefore, it is concluded that demographic segmentation does not significantly impact the reason for purchasing clothes.

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