

Determinants of Consumer Behaviour in Men's Readymade Apparel

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the extrinsic factors shaping consumer purchase behaviour in the men's readymade apparel segment within Kolkata's organized retail sector. Drawing on existing literature and refined through a pilot survey, twenty retail variables were identified to frame the investigation. Primary data were collected from 362 respondents using structured questionnaires and analysed through Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analyses, which yielded seven significant dimensions of consumer behaviour. Independent t-tests revealed notable gender-based differences, while chi-square tests identified selective inter-variable associations. The findings offer actionable insights for apparel marketers by highlighting key drivers of purchase decisions and contribute to a deeper understanding of consumer behaviour in emerging economies. Situated within the context of India's rapidly expanding organized retail industry, the study advances both academic discourse and managerial practice in apparel marketing.

Keywords: consumer purchase behaviour, men's readymade apparel, organized retail, factor analysis, emerging markets

1. INTRODUCTION

Consumer behaviour has progressed beyond traditional linear models that assume a sequential journey from problem recognition to final purchase (Solomon, Bennett & Previte, 2012). In the contemporary retail landscape, buyers navigate multiple digital and physical touchpoints, creating purchase paths that are fragmented, iterative, and highly personalised. These decisions are shaped by intrinsic influences—such as personal values, emotions, and self-concept—and extrinsic factors, including pricing strategies, promotional activities, and in-store ambience (Jisana, 2014; Bagga & Bhatt, 2013). Increasingly, consumer choices reflect a blend of emotional and rational considerations rather than purely cognitive processes (Stavkova, Stejskal & Toufarova, 2008). This complexity necessitates multidimensional analytical frameworks, with constructs such as perceived value, brand communication, design aesthetics, convenience, and satisfaction serving as measurable indicators (Rayhan, Saha & Hassan, 2014).

India's apparel sector, valued at over USD 101 billion, now exceeds markets like the United Kingdom and Germany (Invest India, 2023). Its expansion is driven by urbanisation, rising disposable incomes, digital penetration, and a youthful demographic profile (Alam, Husain & Maqbool, 2024). While broader national patterns have been extensively documented, region-specific consumer behaviours remain comparatively underexplored. Kolkata—characterised by a distinctive blend of heritage retail and modern organised formats—offers a compelling setting for investigation. Accordingly, this study examines the influence of external marketing stimuli on male consumer purchasing behaviour within the city's organised apparel retail environment.

A review of post-2000 literature identified 29 extrinsic attributes influencing consumer behavior in the apparel sector, which was narrowed down to 24 based on frequency analysis (figure I). A subsequent pilot survey conducted within Kolkata's retail context further refined these, resulting in a final set of 20 core variables that form the empirical foundation of this study.

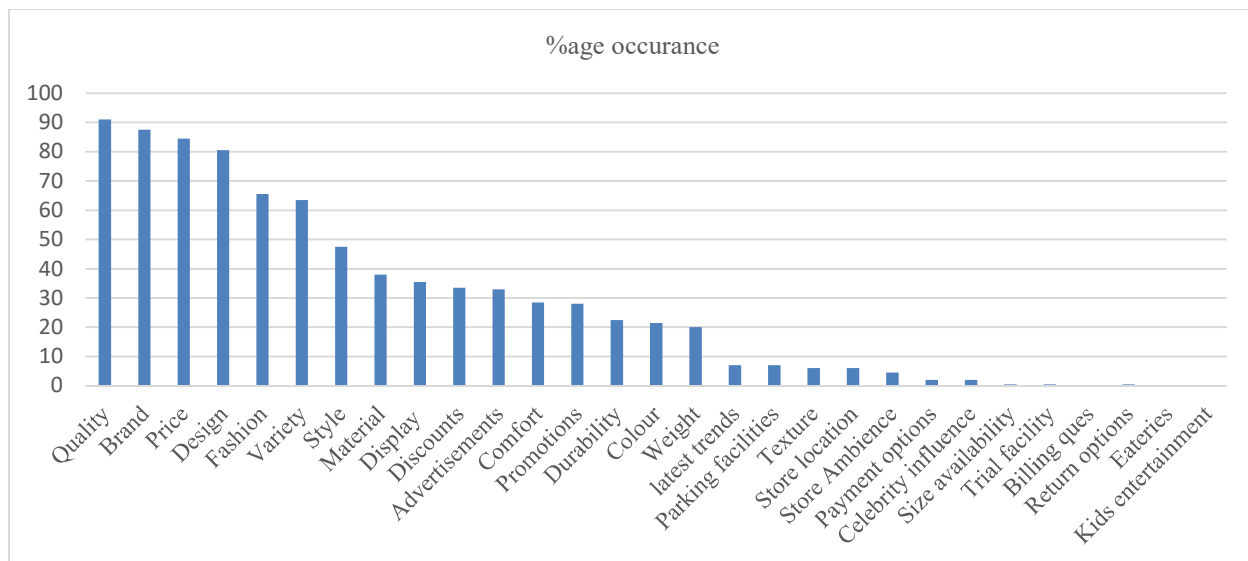


Figure 1: Graphical representation of identified attributes and their percentage occurrence in existing literature

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on apparel consumer behaviour has evolved from examining isolated determinants to employing multidimensional and context-driven approaches. Early investigations identified price as the dominant factor influencing purchase decisions, often outweighing other attributes such as style, comfort, or colour (Etgar & Malhotra, 1981). Subsequent studies expanded this scope to include store image, merchandise assortment, product origin, and service quality as influential variables (Jantan & Kamaruddin, 1999; Beaudoin et al., 2000).

Over time, demographic and psychographic perspectives gained prominence, with findings indicating that female shoppers often prioritise style over price (North et al., 2003). Promotional activities—particularly advertising—have been shown to significantly shape purchase intention and brand recall (Ayanwale et al., 2005; Lowe, 2010). Parallel research has highlighted perceived quality, customer satisfaction, and sustainability as important considerations in apparel purchasing (Tsiotsou, 2006). Regional studies further underscore the role of store-related attributes such as ambience and service delivery (Seock, 2009; Fall Diallo et al., 2013). Cross-cultural examinations in emerging markets reveal the importance of local context. In Bangladesh and Iran, factors such as comfort, product availability, quality, and brand communication are central to consumer choice (Mirabi et al., 2015). In Malaysia, brand image and word-of-mouth exert notable influence on Generation Y buyers (Cham et al., 2018). Research in Jakarta shows that young consumers are particularly responsive to store attributes and hedonic motivations (Iqbal & Halim, 2019). Broader analyses point to price sensitivity (Hustic & Gregurec, 2015), brand loyalty (Tekin et al., 2016), and perceived product value (Asshidin et al., 2016) as key drivers of purchase behaviour. Lawan and Zanna (2013) advocate for a comprehensive framework integrating economic, psychological, and sociological perspectives in retail decision-making. In the Indian context, comparable patterns emerge. Prior studies have identified fashion consciousness, peer influence, brand familiarity, and pricing tactics as major determinants (Rishi, 2011; Gurunathan & Krishnakumar, 2013; Kanthi & Kumar, 2013). Research in Bangalore and the National Capital Region highlights the influence of reference groups, product features, and celebrity endorsements (Shafi & Madhavaiah, 2014; Gupta & Nair, 2021). Despite Kolkata's economic and cultural prominence, empirical investigations of its apparel market remain scarce. The limited available studies point to store location, retailer reputation, service quality, and socio-cultural preferences as important considerations (Das, 2014; Basu et al., 2014; Guha, 2013; Datta & Sarkar, 2022).

This study seeks to address this research gap by empirically examining how extrinsic factors shape male consumers' apparel purchasing behaviour within Kolkata's organised retail sector. The findings aim to contribute to both theoretical discourse and practical retail strategies, particularly in culturally diverse and economically dynamic urban markets.

3. MATERIALS & METHODS

This study aims to identify and validate key extrinsic factors—such as price, brand image, store ambience, and promotions—shaping male consumers' readymade apparel purchases in Kolkata's organised retail sector. Using Principal Component Analysis, the research classifies dominant behavioural dimensions within the city's unique socio-economic and

cultural context. A descriptive research design was adopted to assess external factors influencing male consumer behaviour in Kolkata's readymade garment sector. Convenience sampling targeted shoppers in high-footfall malls during Durga Puja, a peak apparel-buying season. This setting enabled observation of purchasing behaviour amid prominent extrinsic cues such as pricing, branding, and store ambience, providing rich, context-specific insights despite limited generalizability.

A pilot study was conducted in two high-traffic organised malls in Kolkata—Acropolis and Metropolis—to refine the research instrument and validate 24 extrinsic attributes drawn from literature. A structured questionnaire, administered to 110 respondents across ten apparel outlets, led to the removal of attributes with mean scores below 2.0, resulting in 20 retained variables.

The main survey, conducted in five purposively selected malls (City Centre Salt Lake, Axis Mall, Forum Courtyard, South City Mall, and Quest Mall) to ensure demographic and geographic diversity, yielded 362 valid responses from male consumers (65.8% response rate) out of 550 distributed questionnaires. Demographic data were also collected for subgroup analysis. The instrument, comprising 20 extrinsic attributes rated on a five-point Likert scale, achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.841, surpassing the 0.70 threshold (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Content, construct, and face validity were ensured via literature review, expert input, and pilot testing, with PCA applied to identify underlying behavioural dimensions.

Following standard practice (Hair et al., 2019), a random subsample of 253 responses was used for Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and the remaining 109 for Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The EFA sample (49.8% male, 50.2% female) showed no significant gender differences ($p > 0.05$). The KMO value was 0.592—slightly below the 0.60 benchmark (Kaiser, 1974) yet acceptable for exploratory research with sample sizes of 100–300 (Hadi et al., 2016; Latif et al., 2019; Shrestha, 2021). Bartlett's test ($\chi^2 = 1690.663$, $df = 190$, $p < .001$) confirmed the suitability of the dataset for factor analysis.

4. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Exploratory Factor Analysis using Principal Component Analysis extracted seven components with eigenvalues above 1.0, accounting for 68% of total variance. Varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalization improved interpretability, with factor loadings below 0.50 suppressed. The resulting factors represent distinct clusters of extrinsic attributes shaping purchase decisions, meeting accepted analytical thresholds and providing a sound basis for subsequent labelling and analysis.

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings	
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance
1	3.872	19.362	19.362	3.872	19.362
2	2.456	12.28	31.642	2.456	12.28
3	2.159	10.796	42.438	2.159	10.796
4	1.541	7.703	50.141	1.541	7.703
5	1.291	6.456	56.596	1.291	6.456
6	1.211	6.055	62.651	1.211	6.055
7	1.052	5.26	67.911	1.052	5.26
8	0.935	4.673	72.585		
9	0.887	4.437	77.022		
10	0.74	3.702	80.723		
11	0.618	3.089	83.812		
12	0.598	2.988	86.8		
13	0.518	2.592	89.392		
14	0.432	2.159	91.55		
15	0.386	1.93	93.481		
16	0.336	1.679	95.159		
17	0.331	1.655	96.815		
18	0.281	1.405	98.22		
19	0.2	1.001	99.221		
20	0.156	0.779	100		

Table 1: Observed Variations in Consumer Buying Behaviour

Component	Rotated Eigenvalue	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.320	11.602	11.602
2	2.100	10.500	22.102
3	2.052	10.262	32.364
4	2.040	10.199	42.563
5	1.908	9.538	52.101
6	1.643	8.215	60.316
7	1.519	7.595	67.911

Table 2: Total Variance Explained (Rotated Components)

The rotated component matrix (Table 2) highlights seven coherent factors derived from 20 observed variables. These factors were labeled based on thematic clustering of items with high loadings.

Factor Name	Factor Description	Variables	Loading	Percentage of Variance	Cumulative Percentage
F1	Product Positioning	Price	.520	19.362	19.362
		Brand	.501		
		Advertisements	.626		
		Discounts	.824		
		Promotion	.679		
F2	Shop Locale	Shop location	.721	12.28	31.642
		Shop ambience	.707		
		Parking facilities	.705		
F3	Merchandising	Store display	.588	10.796	42.438
		Store Variety	.909		
		Store trends	.615		
F4	Fabric Quality	Product Quality	.725	7.703	50.141
		Product Material	.823		
		Product texture	.625		
F5	Aesthetics	Product Design	.771	6.455	56.596
		Style of the product	.745		
F6	Elegance	Comfort	.537	6.055	62.651
		Colour	.732		
		Fashion	.648		
F7	Product Durability	Durability of the Product	.818	5.26	67.911

Table 3: Factors extracted from Exploratory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (AMOS 20.0) confirmed the seven-factor model's validity and reliability, with all standardized loadings > 0.60 ($p < .001$), $AVE \geq 0.50$, and $CR > 0.70$, indicating strong convergent validity and internal consistency. Model fit indices ($\chi^2 = 298.218$, $df = 163$, $\chi^2/df = 1.83$) demonstrated satisfactory structural soundness, reinforcing the model's robustness in explaining consumer behaviour in Kolkata's organised apparel retail sector.

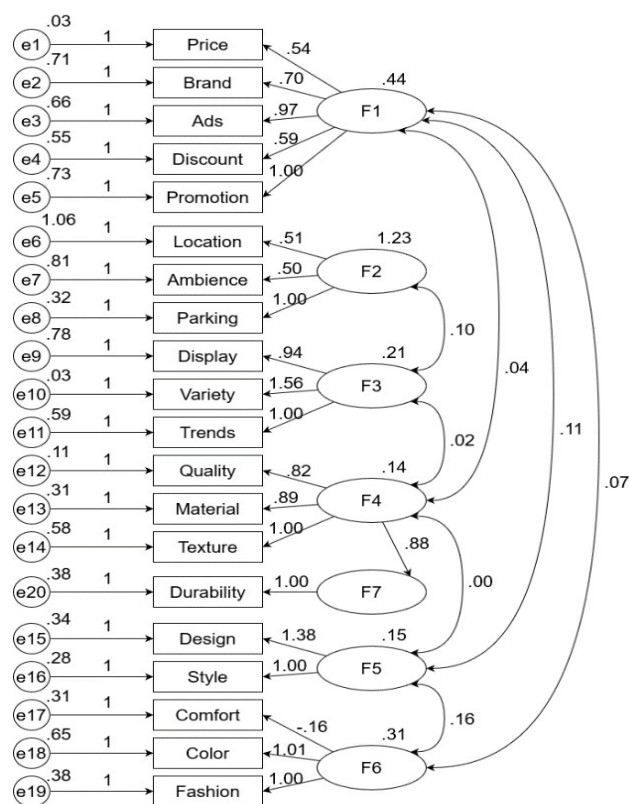


Figure 2: CFA Path Diagram

Independent samples t-tests revealed significant gender-based differences in extrinsic purchase drivers. Males prioritised functional attributes—product positioning, fabric quality, and durability—while females valued experiential cues such as aesthetics, elegance, and shop locale. Although factor structures were consistent across groups, results indicate gender moderates the impact of extrinsic attributes on buying intentions, suggesting targeted marketing strategies: utilitarian appeals for men and aesthetic emphasis for women. Chi-square tests identified partial associations among retail attributes, indicating that some cues are cognitively linked in consumers’ evaluations, while others are assessed independently.

Factor	Male Mean	Female Mean	t-statistic	p-value	Interpretation
Product Positioning	2.88	3.64	-6.47	< 0.001	Significant difference: Females rated higher
Shop Locale	3.18	3.35	-1.87	0.063	No significant difference
Merchandising	3.98	3.79	2.92	0.004	Significant difference: Males rated higher
Fabric Quality	4.35	4.42	-1.54	0.125	No significant difference
Aesthetics	4.35	3.89	6.23	< 0.001	Significant difference: Males rated higher
Elegance	4.81	4.59	3.77	< 0.001	Significant difference: Males rated higher

Table 4: Gender-Based Comparison of Factor Means Using Independent Samples t-Test

Factor 1	Factor 2	Chi-Square (χ^2)	p-value	Interpretation
Product Position	Shop Locale	3.26	0.071	No significant relationship
Product Position	Merchandising	0.00	0.951	No significant relationship
Product Position	Fabric Quality	0.00	1.000	No relationship
Product Position	Aesthetics	6.56	0.010	Significant relationship
Product Position	Elegance	10.53	0.001	Significant relationship
Product Position	Durability	1.12	0.291	No relationship
Shop Locale	Merchandising	12.41	0.0004	Strong significant relationship
Shop Locale	Fabric Quality	0.00	1.000	No relationship
Shop Locale	Aesthetics	11.54	0.0007	Significant relationship

Factor 1	Factor 2	Chi-Square (χ^2)	p-value	Interpretation
Shop Locale	Elegance	14.48	0.00014	Significant relationship
Shop Locale	Durability	11.46	0.00071	Significant relationship
Merchandising	Fabric Quality	0.00	1.000	No relationship
Merchandising	Aesthetics	20.04	< 0.001	Very strong relationship
Merchandising	Elegance	19.09	< 0.001	Very strong relationship
Merchandising	Durability	15.37	< 0.001	Strong relationship
Fabric Quality	Aesthetics	0.00	1.000	No relationship
Fabric Quality	Elegance	0.00	1.000	No relationship
Fabric Quality	Durability	0.00	1.000	No relationship
Aesthetics	Elegance	28.83	< 0.001	Extremely strong relationship
Aesthetics	Durability	16.28	< 0.001	Strong relationship
Elegance	Durability	17.90	< 0.001	Strong relationship

Table 5: Chi-square test results

Chi-square analysis further identified interrelationships among retail stimuli. Product positioning was linked to aesthetic appeal and elegance, while shop locale influenced merchandising and durability. Merchandising exhibited broad associations, particularly with aesthetics and elegance, whereas fabric quality remained independently evaluated. The strongest connection emerged between aesthetic appeal and elegance, supporting multidimensional frameworks for understanding consumer evaluations in apparel retail.

5. CONCLUSION

This study investigates the psychological and behavioral drivers shaping apparel purchases among male consumers in Kolkata's organized garment sector. Seven validated dimensions—Product Positioning, Shop Locale, Merchandising, Fabric Quality, Aesthetic Appeal, Elegance, and Durability—emerged as the core influences. Consumer decisions were found to reflect both external market cues, such as pricing, promotions, and merchandising, and internal motivations linked to aesthetics, material trust, and identity expression. This mix of functional and symbolic considerations points to a more complex, value-laden approach to apparel buying. A notable shift is the rising importance of brand storytelling and experiential retail. While consistent with global trends, these preferences carry distinct meaning in Kolkata's socio-cultural setting, making them both globally resonant and locally specific.

For practitioners, the study emphasizes the need to move beyond transactional retail models. Curated assortments, immersive environments, and emotionally engaging communication can strengthen consumer connection and loyalty. The seven identified dimensions provide a strategic framework for aligning merchandising, design, and marketing with evolving consumer expectations. Theoretically, the research contributes a context-specific model of male garment purchase behaviour that integrates psychological and socio-cultural drivers with empirical rigor. It adds to the broader consumer behaviour discourse while offering actionable insights for India's rapidly modernizing retail sector. In sum, the study bridges academic inquiry with managerial application, offering a concise yet robust framework to understand and engage the changing preferences of urban male consumers in emerging markets.

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Declaration of Conflicting Interests: The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

Funding: The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.