

Consumers' Buying Intentions with Apparel Brands

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Abstract:

This study examines key factors influencing consumer buying intentions in the apparel industry, focusing on brand, quality, price, and endorsement. Using a descriptive research design, data were collected from 145 respondents through stratified sampling and a self-made questionnaire. Findings indicate that most respondents were older, male, and had a lower educational background but a higher personal income. Brand, price, and endorsement significantly influenced consumer buying decisions, while quality had a lesser impact. Key factors shaping buying intentions included brand reputation, advanced fabric technology, online price comparisons, perceived exclusivity, and frequent social media advertisements. Personal income significantly affected consumer preferences, whereas age, sex, and education level had minimal influence. The study concludes that strong brand identity, pricing strategies, and endorsements are critical in driving consumer decisions in the apparel market. Based on these findings, it is recommended that apparel brands enhance their brand identity, improve product quality, adopt tiered pricing strategies to appeal to diverse consumer segments, and strengthen digital marketing efforts. Effective endorsement strategies and targeted marketing approaches can further increase brand trust and visibility.

Keywords: Apparel, brands, consumer's buying intentions

Introduction:

Nature of the Problem

The fashion industry is one of the most globalized sectors, driving export-oriented growth and creating millions of jobs due to its low entry barriers. Since the 1980s, renowned brands from the USA, Japan, and Europe have dominated the global market (Sri Zuliarni, 2023). Economic uncertainties have influenced consumer behavior, with a 2024 study by Huang et al. revealing that online reviews highlighting material ecology, apparel functionality, and price positively impact sustainable clothing purchases. Despite challenges, global textile exports remained strong, increasing by 19.6% in 2021. The digital transformation of the apparel industry, alongside evolving consumer preferences and competition, has further emphasized the role of social media and user-generated content (UGC) in shaping purchase decisions. Authentic peer reviews and real-life demonstrations have become crucial in influencing buying intentions.

Consumer purchase intention, often synonymous with behavior, helps marketers predict shopping trends and measure customer satisfaction. However, actual purchases are harder to forecast due to factors like product availability and impulse buying (Brodie et al., 2015). Keller's Brand Resonance Model highlights the need for strong brand relationships, while the Theory of Planned Behavior links consumer engagement to attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control (Keller, 1993; Aaker, 1996). Additionally, brand identity and product quality significantly influence consumer trust and loyalty. High-quality products enhance credibility, while poor quality deters purchases, reinforcing the importance of maintaining strong brand-consumer relationships in the apparel industry.

Finally, the researcher's gained experiences in different customer-facing roles with regards to consumer buying intention with apparel brands and the emotional connections with brands, that often choosing to remain loyal to those that resonate with their values and preferences has impacted the researcher's curiosity to explore more the academic and practical implications of consumer buying intentions in the apparel sector.

The researchers firmly believe that through this research, valuable insights can be contributed to help apparel companies refine their branding strategies, ultimately enhancing customer relationships and staying competitive in

the ever-evolving fashion market. This study aims to fill a gap in academic knowledge and provide actionable insights for industry professionals.

Current State of Knowledge

Rajab (2021) defines buying intention as a consciously expressed intent to purchase, equating it with behavior. He emphasizes that buying intention is a key predictor of shopping intent for domestic products and a crucial metric for assessing customer satisfaction, ultimately influencing actual sales. However, predicting actual purchases is complex, as consumers may not disclose their true intentions or may make unplanned purchases due to external factors. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), introduced by Icek Ajzen in 1991, provides a psychological framework for predicting consumer actions based on three key influences: attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms (social pressures), and perceived behavioral control (confidence in executing the behavior). TPB has been applied across various domains, including consumer purchasing decisions, gambling, and health-related behaviors. For example, a study using TPB to analyze consumer behavior toward products irrigated with purified wastewater found that the theory explained 42.7% of behavioral variance. TPB assumes that people's intentions and actions align with their beliefs, though the significance of each factor varies by individual and context. For instance, driving behavior is more influenced by perceived control, while recycling is driven by attitudes and social norms.

Rajagopal's (2015) study, *Consumer Culture and Purchase Intentions Towards Fashion Apparel*, highlights the influence of sociocultural and personality-related factors on consumer behavior, emphasizing brand image, promotions, and external market knowledge. Similarly, Zulliarni's (2023) research on consumer buying intentions for local and international fashion reveals that consumers' purchasing perspectives can discourage the intent to buy local products, linking buying behavior to cultural and social identity theory, ethnocentrism, and cue utilization theory. Meanwhile, Mandaric et al. (2022) focus on the impact of fashion brand sustainability on purchasing decisions, finding that consumer attitudes toward sustainability significantly influence their buying choices. These studies collectively provide valuable insights into the factors shaping consumer behavior in the apparel industry, from cultural influences to sustainability considerations.

Shu Mingjun (2021) defines dealers as independent business entities responsible for sales and services within a specific region, operating with ownership of goods and minimal supplier restrictions. Xiao Peng (2021) expands on the marketing mix, describing it as a strategic combination of methods to meet consumer and societal needs while ensuring business profitability. He emphasizes that the traditional 4Ps—product, price, place, and promotion—have evolved to include people, processes, and tangible proof, shaping how businesses understand customer preferences, differentiate themselves, and interact with consumers (Huang Chunjiao, 2023). Similarly, Dai Xia (2023) reinforces that the 4Ps are fundamental to marketing strategy, determining how businesses position and promote their products or services. He highlights that these elements are influenced by internal and external business factors, demonstrating their interconnected nature within a dynamic market environment. Collectively, these studies underscore the importance of a well-structured marketing mix in achieving business success and long-term growth.

The study by JL Adan et al. (2023) assessed the effectiveness of promotional strategies used by garment bazaar retailers in the National Capital Region, Philippines, during the COVID-19 pandemic, revealing low to moderate effectiveness. However, the study concluded that promotional strategies significantly influence consumer buying intentions and support businesses during crises. Meanwhile, APM Valentine et al. (2023) examined generational differences in purchasing sustainable clothing in a developing economy, finding that Generation X, more than Generation Z, is influenced by environmental knowledge when buying eco-friendly apparel. Their study highlights the importance of increasing awareness to reduce the fashion industry's environmental impact. Similarly, DP Tunacao (2022) explored factors such as social media, perceived value, and environmental knowledge in influencing Millennials' purchase intentions for sustainable clothing in Metro Manila. The study concluded that attitudes and behaviors vary by context, making generalizations difficult, but emphasized the role of effective communication strategies in promoting sustainability. Collectively, these studies underscore the impact of marketing and environmental awareness on consumer decisions in the fashion industry.

Theoretical Underpinnings

The theoretical framework for this study is grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) and consumer buying intentions with apparel brands.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) suggests that a person's intentions to perform a behavior (such as purchasing apparel from a specific brand) are influenced by three key factors: attitude toward the behavior, social influence, and perceived behavioral control (Ease or Difficulty of Purchase).

This theory explains how attitudes, social influence, and perceived control shape consumer buying intentions in the apparel industry. It also provides a foundation for understanding how branding strategies impact consumer engagement by shaping perceptions and driving consumer interactions with apparel brands.

Further, this framework helps to explore how different demographic variables influence these dynamics and contributes to a comprehensive understanding of consumer-brand relationships in the apparel industry.

Objectives

This study examines consumers' buying intentions with apparel brands in China for the last quarter of 2024. Specifically, it aims to determine the following questions: 1) the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment and personal income; 2) the level of consumer buying intentions with apparel brands according to the area of brand, quality, price, and endorsement; and 3) the significant difference in the level of consumer buying intentions with apparel brands when respondents are grouped and compared according to the aforementioned variables.

Methodology:

This section presents a discussion of the research methodology used, the subjects and respondents of the study, the research instruments used, the validity and reliability of the instruments, the procedure for data gathering, and the statistical tools and procedures for data analysis.

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive research design to investigate the level of consumers' buying intentions for apparel brands in China. According to Calmorin (2016), a descriptive research design method focuses on the current situation while seeking to uncover the new truth. A survey, case study, or observation can be used to achieve the primary objective of describing the study participants. Furthermore, fact-finding methods are employed in descriptive research designs concerning ongoing processes, dominant practices, held beliefs, relationships and conditions, emotional effects, or new trends. This study is suited for a descriptive research design since its goal is to identify prevailing conditions or relationships, held beliefs and opinions, processes and effects, and emerging trends. Observing and describing a subject's behavior without influencing them is part of the scientific design method.

Study Respondents

The respondents of this study were the selected 145 consumers of apparel brands from a sample size of the population located in different cities in China.

Instruments

To determine the level of consumers' buying intentions with apparel, the researcher of this study employed a self-designed study questionnaire, which can be divided into two parts: Part I dealt with the profile of the respondents, and the chosen respondents were asked to fill out the questionnaire that determined the profile variables used in the study, namely age, sex, civil status, personal income, and highest educational attainment. Part II is the proper questionnaire to determine the level of consumers' buying intentions with apparel brands in brand, quality, price, and endorsements—five (5) questions in each area, totaling twenty (20) items. It was subjected to validity (4.48-excellent) and reliability (0.79-excellent). All of them were interpreted as worthy and good; respectively.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher sent a letter to the online video game administrator to conduct the study after confirming the validity and reliability of the instruments. Following approval, the researcher met with the participants, explained the study's goal, and provided guidance on how to honestly and impartially complete the questionnaire. They will be guaranteed data confidentiality as part of the protocol. The researcher assisted the participants in completing the survey and collected them in person. Following collection, the data are sorted, tabulated, and ready for further statistical analysis.

Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

Objective No. 1, used a descriptive-analytical scheme and mean to determine the respondent's profile in terms of age, sex, civil status, personal income, and highest level of education.

Objective No. 2, used a descriptive-analytical scheme and mean to determine the level of consumers' buying intention with apparel brands in terms of brand, quality, price, and endorsement.

Objective No. 3 used comparative analytical scheme and Mann-Whitney U test to determine whether there exists a significant difference in the level of consumers' buying intention with apparel brands when respondents are grouped and compared according to the aforementioned variables.

Ethical Consideration

Participants' personal demographic information results were collected and were noted in the data capturing sheet. Informed consent via verbal communication was elicited with the respondents. They read and understood the provided information and can ask questions. Moreover, their participation was voluntary, and they were free to withdraw without giving any reasons. The respondents were assured that there would be no risks of harm will experience before, during, or after participating in the research. The data and information used in the study were treated with strict confidentiality. No statement regarding the participant's identity was disclosed unnecessarily in this study. After the data gathering, since there was no need, debriefing was not done by the researcher anymore, as cited in the Data Privacy Act.

Results and Discussion:

This section presents, analyzes, and interprets the data that were gathered consistent with its predetermined objectives.

Table 1
Profile of Respondents

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Younger (below 41 years old)	68	46.90
	Older (41 years old and above)	77	53.10
	Total	145	100
Sex	Male	88	60.69
	Female	57	39.31
	Total	145	100
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower (Bachelor's Degree)	108	74.48
	High (Master's Degree)	37	25.52
	Total	145	100
Personal Income	Lower (Less than 7000)	48	33.10
	(7000 and above)	97	66.90
	Total	145	100

Table 1 shows the profile of the respondents in terms of age; there were 68 or 46.90% younger respondents and 77 or 53.10 older respondents.

Regarding sex, there were 88, or 60.69%, male respondents and 57, or 39.31%, female respondents. In terms of highest educational attainment, there were 108, or 74.48%, had lower education attained, and 37, or 25.52%, had higher education attained; in terms of personal income, 48, or 33.10, had lower individual income, and 97, or 66.90 have higher personal income.

The majority of respondents in the garment industry are older (41 years and older), male, have a bachelor's degree or above, and make more money (7000 and above), according to the demographic profile. This implies that clothing companies may need to concentrate their marketing efforts on attracting financially stable, mature, and well-educated customers. However, it is essential to remember that a sizable percentage of younger people and those with lower earnings are also present. Brands should consider dividing their audience and adjusting their branding tactics to appeal to younger, more affluent, and cost-conscious consumers to increase engagement.

Table 2
Level of consumer buying intention with apparel brands in the area of Brand

Items	Mean	Interpretation
As a consumer of apparel, what is the level of your buying intention with the following items?		
1. Brand attractive deals despite price changes	3.94	High Level
2. A well-established and reputable brand that fosters trust	4.78	Very High Level
3. Brand identity and values that resonate with personal beliefs.	4.74	Very High Level
4. Brand accessibility like online availability, physical store presence, and delivery options.	4.74	Very High Level
5. Consistently introduce brand-new designs, features, or collections	4.72	Very High Level

Overall Mean	4.58	Very High Level
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Table 2 presents the overall mean score of 4.58, which is interpreted as a very high level. Item No. 2 got the highest mean score of 4.78, which states, "A well-established and reputable brand that fosters trust," interpreted as high level. Meanwhile, Item No. 1 got the lowest mean score of 3.94, which states, "Brand attractive deals despite price changes," interpreted as a high level.

The data shows a very high level of consumer buying intention, with an overall mean of 4.58. The most influential factors are brand reputation, identity, and accessibility, all scoring between 4.72 and 4.78. The least significant item is "attractive deals despite price changes," with a mean score of 3.94. This suggests that while pricing deals matter, brand trust and convenience are more important in driving consumer purchases. Brands should strengthen these areas to boost buying intentions (Aaker, 1997; Keller, 2003).

Table 3

Level of consumer buying intention with apparel brands in the area of Quality

Items	Mean	Interpretation
As a consumer of apparel, what is the level of your buying intention with the following items?		
1. Advance fabric technology used, such as moisture-wicking or antimicrobial materials,	4.72	Very High Level
2. Confidence that the product consistently meets expectations on durability and functionality.	4.73	Very High Level
3. Positive feedback from peers or online reviews reinforces perceptions of quality.	2.70	Moderate Level
4. Established brands with a history of delivering high-quality apparel	4.69	Very High Level
5. Apparel brand labels indicating eco-friendliness, ethical sourcing, or compliance with quality standards	4.70	Very High Level
Overall Mean	4.31	High Level

Table 3 presented the overall mean score of 4.31, which is interpreted as high. The data shows a high level of consumer buying intention, with an overall mean of 4.31. The most significant factors are advanced fabric technology, product durability, and established brands, all scoring between 4.69 and 4.73. The least significant item is "positive feedback from peers or online reviews," with a mean score of 2.70, indicating a moderate level of influence.

The data showed a high level of consumer buying intention, with an overall mean of 4.31. The most significant factors are advanced fabric technology, product durability, and established brands, all scoring between 4.69 and 4.73. The least significant item is "positive feedback from peers or online reviews," with a mean score of 2.70, indicating moderate influence. This suggests consumers prioritize tangible qualities like fabric technology and brand reputation over peer reviews when purchasing. Brands should focus on improving product performance and maintaining a strong reputation for quality (Lichtenstein et al., 1993; Aaker, 1997).

Table 4

Level of consumer buying intention with apparel brands in the area of Price

Items	Mean	Interpretation
As a consumer of apparel, what is your level of buying intentions with the following items?		
1. Easy access to online price comparisons and customer reviews	4.72	Very High Level
2. The price reflects the quality or exclusivity of the apparel.	4.72	Very High Level
3. Competitive pricing that reflects elasticity of demand.	4.22	High Level
4. Price reductions, sales, and bundled offers can significantly boost buying intentions	4.71	Very High Level
5. Limited availability at a specific price point creates urgency to purchase.	4.72	Very High Level
Overall Mean	4.62	Very High Level

Table 4 presented the overall mean score of 4.62, which is interpreted as a very high level. The data reveals a very high level of consumer buying intention with an overall mean of 4.62. The most significant factors influencing purchasing decisions include easy access to online price comparisons, the price reflecting quality or exclusivity, and price reductions or bundled offers, all scoring 4.71 or 4.72. Competitive pricing, with a mean score of 4.22, remains important but slightly less influential. This indicates consumers prioritize precise value alignment between price and

quality and sales promotions when purchasing. Apparel brands should focus on competitive pricing, transparent value, and promotional strategies to maximize consumer interest (Grewal et al., 2018; Zeithaml, 2017).

Table 5

Level of consumer buying intention with apparel brands in the areas of Endorsement

Items	Mean	Interpretation
As a consumer of apparel, what is your level of buying intentions with the following items?		
1. Frequency of seeing the brand's ads on social media	4.80	Very High Level
2. Regularly receiving promotional emails or notifications from the brand	4.74	Very High Level
3. Engaging with the brand's content on social media	4.73	Very High Level
4. Awareness of the brand's latest trends or promotions	4.71	Very High Level
5. Regular visits to the brand's website or online store	4.71	Very High Level
Overall Mean	4.74	Very High Level

Table 5 presented the overall mean score of 4.74, which is interpreted as a very high level. The data indicates a very high level of consumer buying intention, with an overall mean of 4.74.

The data's overall mean of 4.74 suggests that consumers have a high level of buying intention. The most important elements in this category include engagement with the brand's content, regular promotional emails or notifications, and frequent exposure to brand advertisements on social media (rating 4.71 to 4.80). These results suggest generating consumer attention requires a consistent and targeted internet presence. In order to interact with consumers and influence their purchasing decisions, clothing manufacturers should have a strong and consistent online presence through advertisements, promotions, and content, according to Hollebeek (2011) and Kumar & Shah (2004). Clothing brands should continue to have a strong and consistent online presence through advertisements, promotions, and content to fortify consumer relationships and sway consumer decisions.

Table 6

Difference in the level of consumer buying intention with apparel brands in the area of Brand when grouped and compared according to variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	68	76.32	2392.500	0.363		Not Significant
	Older	77	70.07				
Sex	Male	88	75.37	2299.500	0.390	0.05	Not Significant
	Female	57	69.34				
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	108	70.81	1762.000	0.276		Not Significant
	Higher	37	79.38				
Personal Income	Lower	48	93.94	1323.000	0.000		Significant
	Higher	97	62.64				

Table 6 shows that personal income considerably impacts consumers' intentions to purchase brands, according to the data, with those with lower incomes showing stronger intentions to purchase ($p = 0.000$). However, there is no discernible effect of age, sex, or educational level ($p > 0.05$). This result is consistent with earlier research indicating that income levels can influence consumer behavior, with lower-income consumers being more receptive to branding initiatives and price-sensitive promotions (Chung & Kim, 2017; Lee et al., 2019). The conclusion for businesses is that marketing tactics should be modified to target lower-income demographics, possibly focusing on accessibility and value for money.

Table 7

Difference in the level of consumer buying intention with apparel brands in the area of Quality when grouped and compared according to variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	68	72.35	2573.500	0.858	0.05	Not Significant
	Older	77	73.58				

Sex	Male	88	71.31	2359.500	0.541	Not Significant
	Female	57	75.61			
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	108	72.84	1981.000	0.938	Not Significant
	Higher	37	73.46			
Personal Income	Lower	48	55.38	1482.000	0.000	Significant
	Higher	97	81.72			

Table 7 showed no appreciable variations in customer purchasing intentions about quality according to age, sex, or greatest level of education ($p > 0.05$). However, there was a substantial difference ($p = 0.000$) in personal income, with those with greater salaries having stronger inclinations to purchase high-quality clothing. This study supports the work of Anderson and Sullivan (1993), who highlighted that income is frequently a key factor in consumer preferences for product quality. They indicated that higher-income consumers may prioritize and appreciate quality more when buying garments.

Table 8

Difference in the level of consumer buying intention with apparel brands in the area of Price when grouped and compared according to variables

compared according to variables							
Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	68	69.96	2411.500	0.402	0.05	Not Significant
	Older	77	75.68				
Sex	Male	88	73.62	2453.500	0.821		Not Significant
	Female	57	72.04				
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	108	72.66	1961.000	0.864		Not Significant
	Higher	37	74.00				
Personal Income	Lower	48	85.88	1710.000	0.008		Significant
	Higher	97	66.63				

Table 8 shows that price is more important to customers with lower incomes, according to Table 9, which demonstrates a significant difference in consumer buying intention based on personal income ($p = 0.008$). Age, sex, and educational achievement did not significantly differ ($p > 0.05$). This implies that consumers with lower incomes are more price sensitive, consistent with Verhoef et al. (2015) findings that income affects how people perceive prices and make purchases. In order to appeal to customers with varying income levels, brands need to modify their price tactics.

Table 9

Difference in the level of consumer buying intention with apparel brands in the area of Endorsement n when grouped and compared according to variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	68	72.92	2612.500	0.982	0.05	Not Significant
	Older	77	73.07				
Sex	Male	88	69.28	2180.500	0.169		Not Significant
	Female	57	78.75				
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	108	74.56	1829.000	0.426		Not Significant
	Higher	37	68.43				
Personal Income	Lower	48	74.81	2241.000	0.705		Not Significant
	Higher	97	72.10				

Table 9 showed that age, sex, greatest level of education, and personal wealth do not significantly affect consumers' intentions to purchase, according to Table 10 ($p > 0.05$). This suggests that consumers in various demographic groups are impacted by endorsement variables like advertising and social media involvement in a comparable way. The results imply that social media and advertising endorsements are universally helpful, irrespective of age, gender,

money, or level of education. This is consistent with results by Kumar and Shah (2004) that consumers' involvement with brand endorsements is driven more by the content than by individual demographic variables.

Conclusions:

The study concludes that consumers' buying intentions in the apparel industry are strongly influenced by brand reputation, quality, price, and endorsement factors. Brand identity and quality attributes, such as advanced fabric technology and durability, significantly shape consumer preferences, while competitive pricing and promotions drive purchasing decisions, indicating a strong responsiveness to value-driven offers. Digital marketing, including social media ads and promotional emails, also plays a crucial role in influencing buying intentions, highlighting the importance of online engagement. Demographic analysis reveals that older male consumers with higher education and income levels exhibit stronger purchasing intentions, though younger, price-conscious consumers remain a key segment that brands must address. To enhance consumer buying intentions, apparel companies should focus on strengthening brand identity through quality investments, leveraging tiered pricing and promotions, expanding digital marketing efforts with influencer collaborations and personalized campaigns, effectively segmenting consumer markets, and enhancing brand trust through CSR initiatives and transparency in sourcing. Implementing these strategies will help apparel brands maximize consumer engagement and maintain a competitive edge in the evolving retail landscape.

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