

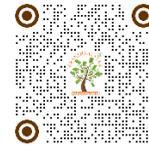
Original Article

## THE INFLUENCE OF BRAND EQUITY ON CONSUMER PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR IN THE APPAREL MARKET OF CHENNAI

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### ABSTRACT

The significance of brand equity is crucial in shaping consumer decisions and purchasing behaviours in the apparel industry. This study investigates the impact of different components of brand equity, including brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and overall brand value, on consumer purchasing behaviour within the apparel industry. With the increasing intensity of competition in the apparel market and the growing importance of consumer experience, understanding the complexities of brand equity has emerged as a vital consideration for marketers. Recent investigations highlight a notable correlation between positive brand equity and consumer purchasing behaviours, especially within emerging markets. This study looks at recent research to explain how brand equity affects how people buy clothes and how companies can improve their brand equity to stay competitive. This research examines the influence of brand equity on purchasing behaviour regarding apparel among consumers in Chennai. We selected a total of 172 respondents who consume apparel in Chennai for this descriptive study. The questionnaire functions as the instrument for gathering data in this study. The study utilises a convenience sampling method to select its respondents. This study employs multiple regression analysis and One-way ANOVA as its statistical tools. Chronbach's alpha is utilised to evaluate the reliability of the study. The analysis of data is conducted using SPSS version 25. The study's reliability has been assessed at 0.839, which corresponds to 83.9%. The findings indicate that the purchasing behaviour related to apparel is significantly affected by factors such as brand awareness, perceived quality, brand association, and brand loyalty. Perceived quality predominantly influences purchasing behaviour regarding apparel, followed by brand association and brand awareness in significance. The analysis reveals a notable impact of age, occupation, annual income, and social media usage on brand equity, suggesting that these demographic and behavioural factors can shape consumers' perceptions and relationships with brands in the apparel market.

**Keywords:** Brand Equity, Apparel Buying Behavior, Brand Awareness, Brand Loyalty and Perceived Quality

### INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, the global apparel industry has undergone significant changes, influenced by evolving consumer preferences, increased competition, and the effects of digital innovations on buying behaviours. In the current landscape, the significance of a brand in the perceptions of consumers has become a crucial factor influencing purchasing choices. Brand equity consists of multiple components, including brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. The interaction of these elements' influences consumer perceptions of a brand and their willingness to allocate additional resources towards its

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products. Consumers frequently exhibit a preference for brands that align with their personal identity, ensure consistent quality, and foster positive emotional associations. In the apparel industry, where product differentiation often encounters limitations, brand equity plays a vital role as a competitive advantage by fostering consumer trust and loyalty.

### BRAND EQUITY OF CUSTOMERS TOWARDS APPARELS

The concept of brand equity within the apparel sector encapsulates the value and perceptions that consumers associate with a clothing brand. This, in turn, significantly impacts their purchasing decisions, levels of loyalty, and overall consumer experience. The composition includes multiple essential elements:

- **Brand Awareness:** The extent to which customers can identify and remember the brand. A well-known brand has a strong place in people's minds, which leads to more trust and preference.
- **Perceived Quality:** Consumers evaluate the quality of clothing through various criteria, including the materials used, the level of craftsmanship, the durability of the items, and the overall design. The relationship between perceived quality and the willingness to pay for premium brands is positively correlated, indicating that as perceived quality increases, so does the consumer's readiness to invest in these brands.
- **Brand Associations:** Customers connect the brand with particular characteristics, including luxury, sustainability, affordability, or trendiness. Patagonia is known for its dedication to environmental sustainability, while Louis Vuitton is synonymous with luxury and exclusivity.
- **Brand Loyalty:** The occurrence of repeat purchases, alongside the establishment of an emotional connection with a brand, serves as a significant indicator of robust brand equity. Customers exhibiting loyalty demonstrate a preference for the brand in comparison to its competitors, regardless of the availability of less expensive alternatives.
- **Brand Trust and Emotional Attachment:** The establishment of trust is contingent upon the consistent delivery of quality, the overall customer experience, and adherence to ethical business practices. The influence of emotional attachment on purchasing behaviour is a significant area of study.

This study aims to investigate the influence of brand equity on consumer purchasing behaviour, drawing on recent research findings and identifying key strategies for brands to improve their market presence. The relationship between brand equity and consumer purchasing behaviour within the apparel sector is noteworthy. Brand equity denotes the significance a brand possesses in the perceptions of consumers, impacting their purchasing decisions through multiple mechanisms. The following factors influence customer purchasing behaviour regarding apparel:

- **Brand Awareness and Recognition:** Consumers are more likely to buy apparel from brands they recognize. Strong brand equity guarantees that a brand remains prominent in consumers' considerations when they are in the process of purchasing apparel.
- **Perceived Quality and Trust:** There is a correlation between strong brand recognition and consumer perceptions of quality, leading to a willingness to pay a premium price. A brand characterised by substantial equity fosters trust and reliability, which in turn encourages repeat purchases.
- **Brand Loyalty and Repeat Purchases:** Strong brand equity results in customer loyalty, reducing the likelihood of switching to competitors. Customers who exhibit loyalty often engage in repeated purchasing behaviours, particularly within the fashion sector.
- **Emotional Connection and Social Influence:** Brands with high equity often evoke positive emotions and a sense of identity. Individuals purchase clothing from brands that resonate with their values, reflect their personality, or signify their social status.
- **Price Sensitivity:** Customers are less price-sensitive toward brands with high equity. Individuals recognise branded clothing as an indicator of social status, which results in an increased propensity to pay a premium price.
- **Word-of-Mouth and Social Proof:** Strong brand equity leads to positive word-of-mouth marketing. Individuals exhibit a tendency to be swayed by online reviews, social media platforms, and endorsements from celebrities during the process of purchasing apparel.
- **Purchase Decision Process:** Brand equity simplifies decision-making for consumers, as they trust the brand's quality and reputation. In the competitive apparel market, consumers often prioritise brand image over the product's mere attributes.

The influence of brand equity on purchasing behaviour is significant, as it plays a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions, mitigating uncertainty, and promoting brand loyalty. Within the apparel sector, the interplay of trends and individual identity is significant, leading to a scenario where brands possessing robust equity gain a competitive edge in both attracting and retaining their customer base, as consumers are more likely to choose brands that resonate with their personal values and lifestyle choices.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bian and Haque (2025) conducted an investigation into the impact of consumer-based brand equity on purchase intention within the fashion apparel sector. The study demonstrated that brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand associations significantly influence consumers' attitudes towards apparel brands. These attitudes subsequently have a positive impact on purchase intention and brand preference. In a similar vein, Li et al. (2025) examined the correlation between brand equity and repurchase behaviour within the fast-fashion sector, revealing that robust brand equity significantly boosts customer engagement, satisfaction, and enduring loyalty to fashion brands. Hyun (2024) conducted an analysis of the interconnections among customer-based brand equity, brand authenticity, and consumer loyalty within the fashion apparel industry. The application of structural equation modelling in this study demonstrated that brand authenticity serves to enhance brand equity, thereby significantly influencing consumer loyalty and behavioural intentions in relation to apparel brands. In a separate investigation, Dwivedi et al. (2024) examined the impact of brand equity on consumer purchasing intentions. Their findings indicate that perceived quality and brand trust play a significant role in fostering robust brand relationships and enhancing the likelihood of purchase among apparel consumers. Chakraborty and Biswas (2023) point out the importance of brand awareness in shaping purchasing decisions in the apparel industry. The research indicates that exposure to brands via advertising and digital promotions markedly enhances consumers' intentions to make purchases. In a similar vein, Wong and Lim (2023) investigated the impact of perceived quality on customer satisfaction and loyalty within the apparel sector. Their findings indicate that consumers frequently link elevated prices with superior quality, thereby enhancing brand equity and promoting repeat purchasing behaviour. Huang, Lee, and Wang (2022) conducted a study examining the correlation between sustainability practices and brand equity within the apparel sector. The research findings indicate that branding strategies focused on environmental responsibility significantly enhance brand awareness, brand associations, and consumer trust, thereby positively influencing purchasing behaviour. In a similar vein, Husain et al. (2022) conducted an analysis regarding the influence of social media marketing activities on brand equity, revealing that digital engagement plays a significant role in enhancing brand trust and consumer purchase intentions related to fashion brands. In their 2021 study, Kim and Park examined the role of emotional branding within the luxury apparel sector, revealing that both perceived quality and emotional attachment have an influential impact on consumer loyalty and the likelihood of repeat purchasing behaviour. Individuals exhibiting an emotional connection to clothing brands show heightened levels of brand loyalty. In a similar vein, Singh and Kaur (2021) conducted an investigation into consumer behaviour within the fast-fashion sector, revealing that factors such as brand awareness, affordability, and brand image are key influences on purchase decisions among younger consumers. Buil, Martínez, and de Chernatony (2020) underscored that facets of consumer-based brand equity, such as brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand associations, are instrumental in influencing consumer reactions and purchasing behaviour concerning branded products.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the objectives of the study

- To identify the impact of Brand equity on Buying Behaviour towards apparels among the customers in Chennai.
- To investigate the impact of demographic variables on brand equity concerning apparel among customers in Chennai.

## HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The following are the null hypotheses of the study

H01: There is no significant impact of Brand Equity on Buying Behaviour towards apparels

H02: There is no significant influence of demographic variables on Brand equity

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research investigates the influence of Brand Equity on consumer purchasing behaviour concerning apparel in Chennai. The study, characterised as descriptive in nature, selected a sample of 172 respondents engaged in apparel consumption in Chennai. The questionnaire functions as the instrument for gathering data in this study. The study utilises a convenience sampling approach to select its respondents. The questionnaire is divided into three parts. The first part asks for demographic information, and the next two parts ask about Brand equity and the respondents' buying behaviour, respectively. The study utilises multiple regression analysis to determine the influence of brand equity on consumer buying behaviour in the apparel sector. One-way ANOVA is utilised to determine the impact of demographic variables on brand equity. Chronbach's alpha is utilised to evaluate the reliability of the research. The analysis of data is conducted using SPSS version 25.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The study's reliability has been assessed at 0.839, equating to 83.9%. A total of 127 respondents who consume apparel participated in this study. Among the respondents, 78.9% identify as male, 39.2% fall within the age range of 30-40 years, 54.9% are married, and 48.1% possess either an undergraduate or postgraduate degree. 40.9% of the respondents work in the private sector, and 69.2% reported a monthly salary exceeding 50,000. This section delineates the factors that impact the post-purchase behaviour associated with electric vehicles.

**IMPACT OF BRAND EQUITY ON BUYING BEHAVIOUR**

This section examines the influence of Brand Equity on consumer purchasing behaviour regarding apparel. To achieve this objective, multiple regression analysis is utilised. This analysis examines the factors contributing to Brand Equity, which are considered independent variables, including Brand Awareness, Perceived Quality, Brand Association, and Brand Loyalty. The dependent variable in this study is the Buying Behaviour towards apparel. The findings are displayed in Table A.

**H01: There is no significant impact of Brand Equity on Buying Behaviour towards apparels**

**Table 1**

Table 1 Impact of Brand Equity on Buying Behaviour					
Independent Variables	R <sup>2</sup>	Beta	F	t	p
(Constant)		0.628		5.846	0
Brand Awareness	<b>0.572</b>	0.186		4.489	0
Perceived Quality	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.329	41.251	7.689	0
Brand Association	<b>0.565</b>	0.265	<b>(p=.000)</b>	5.123	0
Brand Loyalty		0.127		3.426	0.001

p < .01

The analysis presented in Table A indicates that the F-statistic of 41.251 is statistically significant, leading to the rejection of H<sub>01</sub> at the 1% significance level. The R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.572 suggests that Brand Equity accounts for a variability of 57.2% in Buying Behaviour related to apparel purchases. The factors contributing to brand equity, namely Brand Awareness, Perceived Quality, Brand Association, and Brand Loyalty, exhibit a positive and significant influence on consumer buying behaviour concerning apparel. Additionally, an increase of one unit in Brand Awareness, Perceived Quality, Brand Association, and Brand Loyalty has resulted in improvements in Buying Behaviour towards apparel by 0.186, 0.329, 0.265, and 0.127 units, respectively.

The findings suggest that factors like brand awareness, perceived quality, brand association, and brand loyalty significantly influence purchasing behaviour regarding apparel. It has been identified that the purchasing behaviour related to apparel is predominantly influenced by perceived quality, with brand association and brand awareness following in significance.

**INFLUENCE OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES ON BRAND EQUITY**

This section identifies the impact of demographic variables on brand equity. To ascertain the substantial impact, a one-way ANOVA is utilised. Table B presents the findings regarding the impact of demographic variables on brand equity.

**H02: There is no significant influence of demographic variables on Brand equity**

**Table 2**

Table 2 Influence of Demographic Variables on Brand Equity					
Variable	Category	Mean	S D	F	
<b>Gender</b>	Male	3.54	0.962	1.669	
	Female	3.44	0.926	<b>(p=.362)</b>	
Age (in years)	Up to 20	3.64	0.911	5.682	
	21 - 30	3.57	0.922	<b>(p=.001)</b>	
	31 - 40	3.34	1.033		
	41 - 50	3.85	0.948		
	50 and above	3.18	0.837		

Education	School	3.58	0.923	1.115
	Degree/ Diploma	3.45	1.046	(p=.126)
	Master's Degree	3.46	0.858	
	Professional	3.49	0.817	
	Others	3.59	0.989	
Marital Status	Married	3.52	0.945	1.186
	Unmarried	3.61	0.902	(p=.156)
Occupation	Student	3.89	1.024	6.373
	Salaried	3.37	0.894	(p=.000)
	Business/Self-employed	3.47	0.993	
	Home-maker	3.25	0.953	
	Others	3.61	0.856	
Annual Income (Rs. in Lakhs)	Nil	3.55	0.984	8.627
	Up to 5	3.34	0.849	(p=.000)
	05-10	3.82	0.972	
	10-15	3.44	0.886	
	Above 15	3.54	0.953	
Usage of social media (in years)	Less than 1	3.27	0.821	7.227
	01-02	3.85	1.016	(p=.000)
	03-05	3.38	0.862	
	5 or above	3.46	0.939	
Time spent on social media (in hours)	Less than 1	3.52	0.853	1.129
	01-02	3.61	0.835	(p=.333)
	02-03	3.58	1.064	
	03-04	3.59	0.938	
	4 or above	3.55	1.036	

p<.01

There is a notable impact of age ( $F=5.682$ ,  $p=.001$ ), occupation ( $F=6.373$ ,  $p=.000$ ), annual income ( $F=8.627$ ,  $p=.000$ ), and social media usage ( $F=7.227$ ,  $p=.000$ ) on brand equity, leading to the rejection of H02 at the 1% significance level. The analysis reveals that there is no significant influence of gender ( $F=1.669$ ,  $p=.362$ ), education ( $F=1.115$ ,  $p=.126$ ), marital status ( $F=1.186$ ,  $p=.156$ ), and time spent on social media ( $F=1.129$ ,  $p=.333$ ) on brand equity. Consequently, the null hypothesis H02 is accepted at the 5% significance level.

The group of respondents aged 41 to 50 years exhibited the highest mean value of 3.85, whereas the respondents over 50 years recorded the lowest mean value of 3.18. The findings indicate that individuals aged 41 to 50 exhibit a higher level of trust in the brand and demonstrate greater brand equity. Conversely, those over the age of 50 show a lower preference for the brand and are associated with diminished brand equity, which may be attributed to factors such as changing consumer preferences or a lack of engagement with the brand's marketing efforts.

The respondents comprising students have achieved the highest mean value of 3.89, whereas the lowest mean value is recorded by the respondents who are homemakers, at 3.25. The observations indicate that the students exhibit a high level of trust, demonstrate a strong preference for the brand, and possess an elevated level of brand equity. Nevertheless, individuals engaged in homemaking are associated with a lower level of brand equity.

The group of respondents earning an annual income of 5 to 10 lakhs achieved the highest mean value of 3.82, while those earning up to 5 lakhs recorded the lowest mean value of 3.34. Individuals with an annual income ranging from 5 to 10 lakhs exhibit a greater influence from the brand, indicating a favourable level of brand equity. In contrast, those earning up to 5 lakhs demonstrate comparatively lower levels of brand equity.

The data shows that people who have used social media for 1 to 2 years had the highest mean value of 3.85, while people who have used it for less than a year had the lowest mean value of 3.27. Individuals engaged with social media services for 1 to 2 years exhibit a higher level of confidence in the brand and demonstrate enhanced brand equity. Conversely, individuals who have engaged

with social media for under one year exhibit a relatively diminished level of brand equity, which may result in lower consumer trust and reduced likelihood of making purchases from the brand.

## CONCLUSION

The influence of brand equity on consumer purchasing behaviour within the garment industry is substantial. The various components of brand equity, encompassing awareness through to loyalty, play a significant role in shaping consumer perceptions and interactions with a brand. Entities possessing strong brand equity experience various competitive advantages, such as enhanced customer loyalty, the ability to command premium prices, and superior positioning within the market. Factors such as brand awareness, perceived quality, brand association, and brand loyalty significantly influence purchasing behaviour regarding apparel. Additionally, it has been determined that the purchasing behaviour regarding apparel is predominantly influenced by perceived quality, with brand association and brand awareness following in significance. A notable impact of age, occupation, annual income, and social media usage on brand equity has been identified. No significant influence of gender, education, marital status, and time spent on social media on brand equity has been observed. The data indicates that individuals aged 41 to 50 years, students, those with an annual income ranging from 5 to 10 lakhs, and users of social media services for a duration of 1 to 2 years exhibit a higher level of brand equity. In a highly competitive and digital landscape, it is imperative for organisations to emphasise the importance of maintaining consistent quality, fostering emotional connections, and leveraging digital channels to build and maintain strong brand equity. Subsequent research could explore the influence of novel themes, including sustainability, inclusivity, and customisation, on the improvement of brand equity in the apparel sector.

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