

A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON URBAN AND RURAL YOUTH: EXPLORING PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR OF APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES IN VADODARA DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

This research paper presents a comprehensive comparative study conducted in Vadodara district regarding the influence of information sources and sources of inspiration on shopping attitudes regarding apparel and related accessories. The study categorizes urban and rural youth respondents by gender and area of residence. This study employs structured questionnaire surveys and data analysis tools to uncover insights into the factors that influence apparel and accessory purchases. Understanding the variations in the purchase preferences, motivations, and decision-making processes between urban and rural youth is vital for marketers and policymakers. The results reveal distinct patterns within the male and female categories, shedding light on how individuals gather information about apparel and accessories. In the male category, personal ideas play a pivotal role in sourcing information, followed by input from family members and social media. Surprisingly, radio appears to be the least utilized source of information. Conversely, females rely heavily on family members for information, followed by their own ideas and television. Radio remains the least utilized source in this category as well. The urban-rural divide further explains the data. Rural residents, both male and female, prioritize family members as their primary information source, followed by their personal ideas and friends. Meanwhile, urban residents, irrespective of gender, value their own ideas as the most significant source, closely followed by family members and social media. Radio, in both cases, is the least influential information source. The study also explores the factors inspiring new apparel purchases. Family emerges as the dominant source of inspiration for both males and females, followed by friends and social media trends. In contrast, magazines appear to have the least impact on purchasing decisions. The influence of sex and place of residence on shopping attitudes was further investigated through t-test statistics. The results demonstrate that there are no significant differences in shopping attitudes based on gender as well as place of residence.

KEYWORDS: *Purchase Behaviour, Information Sources, Gender Preferences, Area of Residence.*

Introduction

Consumer behaviour, particularly in the context of fashion and apparel, is influenced by various factors, including culture, lifestyle, economic status, and geographical location. Vadodara district, situated in the Indian state of Gujarat, represents a microcosm of urban and rural diversity, each with unique characteristics. The Census of India defines an urban area as "all places with a municipality, municipal corporation, cantonment board, statutory town, cities" and "All other places satisfying the following criteria: "Minimum population of 5000; At least 75 percent of male working population in non-agricultural pursuit; and Density of population is at least 400 persons per square kilometer. (1,000 per sq. mile)" Since there is

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no formal definition for what constitutes a rural area, a region that does not meet the aforementioned criteria may still be regarded as a rural area. The youth population in Vadodara district is a significant consumer segment, and understanding their purchase behaviour in apparel and accessories is essential for businesses and policymakers. The conduct of rural consumers sees a larger impact from societal norms, traditions, caste, and social practices on their consumer behaviour, in contrast to the urban area. To fully realize the enormous potential of India's rural market, businesses must create specialized marketing strategies and action plans that take into account a number of factors that affect customer behaviour. If the marketing strategy and action plans are merely a slight extension or modification of the urban marketing strategy and plans, rural marketing will not be successful [1]. In an urban family, the husband, wife, and even the kids participate in the decision-making process for purchases. Urban dwellers are free to make their own independent purchasing decisions. But in a village, men typically make the majority of the purchasing decisions because of cultural, social, and traditional customs. Compared to their counterparts in rural areas, urban residents are more exposed to advertisements and technology advancements.

Objectives

- To determine the Sources from where the youth get the information about the Apparel & Accessories.
- To analyze the gender influence on purchase behaviour of apparel and accessories among urban and rural youth in Vadodara district.
- To identify the factors influencing purchase decisions according to demographic profile.
- To examine the attitude towards purchase behaviour of apparel and accessories among urban and rural youth in Vadodara district.

Literature Review

Global marketing literature recognizes the significance of exposure to media and marketing initiatives in consumers' purchasing decisions. There is proof from earlier studies that consumers obtain knowledge from media exposure. Major media outlets like print (newspapers, magazines, direct mail), broadcast (radio, television), display (billboards, signs, banners), and online (e-mail, business websites, online social and sharing sites) can all be used to gather information [2]. The advertising is the biggest influence among all factors. It has been seen that marketers use social media and other forms of advertising, but television is the most effective medium for influencing rural consumers' purchasing decisions [3]. TV commercials were one of the main sources of entertainment for the majority of children under the age of eight. Both boys and girls over the age of eight found that TV advertisements provided the information they needed to make a purchase [4]. Television has an edge over other media as it is viewed as a combination of audio and video elements, giving products quick credibility and fame and providing the best opportunity for innovative advertising [5]. Over a longer length of time, televisions have become a commonplace item in all upper- and middle-class homes, as well as in many poorer urban and rural households [6]. The responses to TV commercials appeared to be more powerful than responses to print advertisements. Due to the low literacy rate, advertisers believe that television is a more effective way to reach customers than print media [7]. The usage of social media and the internet has altered both consumer behaviour and company practices. Social and digital marketing lowers costs, raises brand awareness and boost sales. However, there are serious issues with negative online word-of-mouth and unwanted, obtrusive brand presence [8]. The young customers purchasing decisions are significantly influenced by television commercials. They feel that television advertisements assist them in choosing products or stores more wisely. When a product is promoted by a well-known individual or celebrity, young people are more likely to purchase it [9]. The purchasing habits of youths in urban and rural areas differ. Teenagers in rural areas are more likely to watch TV commercials, get involved, and purchase the goods they see there. Urban youths, on the other hand, only purchase products that are advertised on television if they also need them and like watching advertising for goods they already own. TV commercials have a greater impact on male teenagers than female teenagers [10]. The information related to the brands are collected through social media, internet, and television. Despite their limited finances, the respondents are curious about branded clothing [11]. Social media significantly influences a consumer's choice to buy a specific brand as they are observing brand on social media frequently. A well-known person's promotion increases the value of the product since consumers are more likely to trust the brand and its reputation [12]. The customers preferred branded clothing to non-branded clothing.

More than 50% of buyers choose private label products over other brands because they think they are more affordable [13]. The consumer behaviour is influenced by several factors such as Internal or Psychological factors, Social factors, Cultural factors, Economic factors and Personal factors [14]. While buying any goods or services, men and women responded completely differently. Respondents who were women acted intuitively and subjectively. Men, on the contrary acted logically and analytically, forming their opinions in the process. Men choose products and buy them to satisfy immediate needs, but women typically consider options carefully before making a choice [15]. The people buy things based on emotional response rather than environmental response and that there is a positive relationship between television advertising and youth buying. Teenagers' purchasing decisions are influenced by TV advertisements in relation to their diverse residential backgrounds (such as rural and urban) and gender identities [16].

Research Methodology

For the purpose of data collection Random sampling technique was used to a represent sample of urban and rural youth in Vadodara district, focusing on their apparel and accessories purchasing habits, brand preferences, and the factors influencing their decisions. The sample size of 400 respondents was selected from Urban and rural areas of Vadodara district of Gujarat. The sample size selected is based on several experts' opinions. To have proportionate representation of the sample almost equal number of boys and girls from rural and urban areas of the district are selected.

For collecting data for this study, a structured questionnaire was prepared and rectified as per the expert advice and used as a research instrument. The development of the questionnaire starts from personal and demographic information which further progresses with the study specific questions. This data is further used in the research to find various correlations between the demographic aspects and its influence on clothing selection among the adolescence. The language of the questionnaire was bi linguistic i.e. in Gujarati and English for better understanding of all the respondent. The Questionnaire contained closed ended questions. Types of closed questions which were included are Demographic Questions, Dichotomous Questions, Multiple Choice – Single Response Questions, Multiple Choice – Multiple Response Questions, Rating Scale Question, Five-point Likert Scale Questions.

Data was analyzed using statistical methods, like percentage, ratios, mean and standard deviation. With the help of percentage analysis various facts were analyzed. T-test was used for analysis of the data.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Mean Comparison of getting information about the apparel or related accessories across the Sex

Information about apparel and accessories	Sex					
	Male		Female		Total	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Own idea	8.38	1.80	8.12	2.32	8.25	2.09
Through friends	6.55	2.50	6.46	2.39	6.50	2.44
Through newspaper	3.77	2.25	3.97	2.40	3.88	2.33
Through Magazines	3.35	2.12	3.42	2.13	3.39	2.12
Through poster, banners, leaflets	4.79	2.35	4.90	2.38	4.85	2.36
Through TV	6.03	2.49	6.67	2.28	6.36	2.40
Through radio	2.75	1.88	2.88	2.02	2.82	1.95
Through social media	6.65	5.43	6.49	2.79	6.57	4.27
Through window display	5.69	2.42	5.39	2.40	5.54	2.41
Through family Members	7.94	2.35	8.21	2.13	8.08	2.24
Through relative	6.46	2.32	6.10	2.54	6.28	2.44

Note: SD = Standard Deviation

Table (1) and Table (2) show the average mean score assigned by the respondent for getting information about the apparel or related accessories. As per the result, overall mean score assigned by the respondents irrespective of their background characteristics, their own idea (mean score = 8.25) played the most important role for getting information about the apparel and related accessories followed by the information obtained through family member (mean score = 8.08) and social media (mean score = 6.57) whereas radio (mean score = 2.82) was the source from which least amount of information was obtained by them.

Table (1) result indicates that within the male category area their own idea played the most important role for getting information about the apparels and related accessories followed by the information obtained through family member and social media, whereas radio was the source from which least amount of information was obtained. In the female category most of the information about the apparels and related accessories were obtained through the family member followed by the information obtained by their own idea and TV, whereas radio was the source from which least amount of information was obtained by them.

Table (2): Mean Comparison of getting information about the apparels or related accessories across the Place of the Residence

Information about apparel and accessories	Place of The Residence					
	Rural		Urban		Total	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Own idea	8.06	2.13	8.43	2.03	8.25	2.09
Through friends	6.38	2.40	6.63	2.48	6.50	2.44
Through newspaper	3.64	2.35	4.11	2.29	3.88	2.33
Through Magazines	3.03	2.15	3.74	2.04	3.39	2.12
Through poster, banners, leaflets	4.65	2.42	5.05	2.29	4.85	2.36
Through TV	6.19	2.44	6.54	2.35	6.36	2.40
Through radio	2.65	2.06	2.98	1.83	2.82	1.95
Through social media	6.16	2.78	6.98	5.34	6.57	4.27
Through window display	5.42	2.49	5.65	2.33	5.54	2.41
Through family Members	8.22	2.17	7.93	2.31	8.08	2.24
Through relative	6.30	2.38	6.25	2.51	6.28	2.44

Note: SD = Standard Deviation

Table (2) depicts that in rural areas, family members were the primary source for clothing information, followed by personal ideas and friends. Radio was the least used source. In urban areas, personal ideas were most influential, followed by family members and social media, with radio being the least utilized source.

Table (3) and Table (4) show that the Respondents, regardless of background, were most inspired to buy new apparel by family (mean score = 2.48), followed by friends (mean score = 2.97) and social media trends (mean score = 3.85). Magazines had the least influence (mean score = 6.19) on their apparel purchases.

Table (3): Mean Comparison of inspiration for new purchases of the apparels across the Sex

Inspiration for new purchases	Sex of the respondent					
	Male		Female		Total	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Friends	2.78	1.80	3.14	1.73	2.97	1.77
Family	2.46	1.78	2.49	2.01	2.48	1.90
Celebrity styling	4.31	1.63	4.37	1.65	4.34	1.64
Magazines	6.19	1.37	6.18	1.24	6.19	1.30
Social media trends	3.72	1.75	3.98	1.81	3.85	1.78
Fashion blogs	4.39	1.54	3.88	1.63	4.13	1.61
Shop display	4.17	1.67	4.01	1.76	4.09	1.72

Note: SD = Standard Deviation

Table (3) display that in the male category, family was the top inspiration for new apparel purchases, followed by friends and social media trends, with magazines being the least influential. Among females, family also led as the primary inspiration for new apparel, followed by friends and fashion blogs, while magazines were the least inspiring for purchases.

Table (4): Mean Comparison of inspiration for new purchases of the apparels across the Place of the Residence

Inspiration for new purchases	Place of the Residence					
	Rural		Urban		Total	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Friends	2.64	1.56	3.30	1.90	2.97	1.77
Family	2.50	1.86	2.45	1.94	2.48	1.90
Celebrity styling	4.46	1.65	4.21	1.62	4.34	1.64

Magazines	6.27	1.20	6.10	1.40	6.19	1.30
Social media trends	4.00	1.74	3.70	1.82	3.85	1.78
Fashion blogs	4.27	1.67	3.99	1.54	4.13	1.61
Shop display	3.93	1.68	4.24	1.75	4.09	1.72

Note: SD = Standard Deviation

Table (4) reveals that in rural areas, family was the primary inspiration for new apparel purchases, followed by friends and shop displays, while magazines had the least influence. Urban area respondents were similarly inspired most by family for new apparel purchases, followed by friends and social media trends, with magazines having the least impact.

Table (5) and Table (6) show the average mean score assigned by the respondent for getting inspired for purchasing new accessories. As per the result it reveals that overall mean score assigned by the respondents irrespective of their background characteristics, family (mean score = 2.74) inspired them most to purchase new accessories followed by the inspiration obtained by their friends (mean score = 2.97) and social media trends (mean score = 3.81), whereas magazine (mean score = 6.14) inspired them the least for new accessories purchase.

Table 5: Mean Comparison of inspiration for new purchases of the accessories across the Sex of the respondent

Inspiration for new purchases	Sex of the respondent					
	Male		Female		Total	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Friends	2.77	1.75	3.15	1.99	2.97	1.89
Family	2.89	2.01	2.61	1.93	2.74	1.97
Celebrity styling	4.06	1.79	4.40	1.58	4.24	1.69
Magazines	6.14	1.38	6.13	1.36	6.14	1.37
Social media trends	3.76	1.81	3.85	1.79	3.81	1.80
Fashion blogs	4.26	1.47	3.94	1.57	4.10	1.53
Shop display	4.06	1.73	3.88	1.72	3.97	1.72

Note: SD = Standard Deviation

Table (5) result indicates that in the male category, friends were the top inspiration for new accessory purchases, followed by family and social media trends, while magazines had the least impact. Among females, family was the primary inspiration for new accessories, followed by friends and social media trends, with magazines being the least inspiring for purchases.

Table 6: Mean Comparison of inspiration for new purchases of the accessories across the Place of the Residence

Inspiration for new purchases	Place of The Residence					
	Rural		Urban		Total	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Friends	2.74	1.90	3.20	1.85	2.97	1.89
Family	2.96	1.92	2.53	2.00	2.74	1.97
Celebrity styling	4.32	1.73	4.15	1.65	4.24	1.69
Magazines	6.11	1.34	6.16	1.39	6.14	1.37
Social media trends	3.95	1.85	3.66	1.73	3.81	1.80
Fashion blogs	4.07	1.60	4.12	1.46	4.10	1.53
Shop display	3.84	1.67	4.10	1.77	3.97	1.72

Note: SD = Standard Deviation

Table (6) result shows that in rural areas, friends were the primary inspiration for new accessory purchases, followed by family and shop displays, while magazines had the least influence. In urban areas, family served as the top inspiration for new accessories, followed by friends and social media trends, with magazines being the least inspiring for purchases.

Table (7) and Table (8) shows the mean comparison of attitude towards shopping of apparel and accessories across the sex and the Place of the residence of the respondent using T-test.

Table 7: Mean comparison of Attitude towards shopping of Apparel and Accessories across the Sex of the respondent using T-test statistics

	Sex	N	Mean	SD	SE	t-value	df	p-value
Attitude towards shopping of Apparel and Accessories	Male	194	3.42	0.36	0.03	-1.566	398	0.118
	Female	206	3.48	0.36	0.03			

Note: N = sample; SD = Standard Deviation; SE = Standard Error; df = Design Effect; p-value <0.05 = significant

T-test statistics result as shown in Table (7) indicates that there do not exist any significant (p-value > 0.05) influence in attitude towards shopping of apparel and accessories as far as the sex of the respondent is concerned.

Table (8): Mean comparison Attitude towards shopping of Apparel and Accessories across the Place of the residence using T-test statistics

	Place of the Residence	N	Mean	SD	SE	t-value	df	p-value
Attitude towards shopping of Apparel and Accessories	Rural	200	3.42	0.33	0.02	-1.702	398	0.089
	Urban	200	3.48	0.38	0.03			

Note: N = sample; SD = Standard Deviation; SE = Standard Error; df = Design Effect; p-value <0.05 = significant

T-test statistics result as shown in Table (8) indicates that there do not exist any significant (p-value > 0.05) influence in attitude towards shopping of apparel and accessories as far as the place of the residence of the respondent is concerned.

Conclusion

The current study aims to identify factors influencing clothing selection among the youth of Vadodara district. The study also attempts to understand the association of the various factors influencing selection and purchase among the youth of urban and rural Vadodara district. Through a comprehensive analysis of different demographic categories, this study offers valuable insights that can inform retail strategies and marketing approaches.

In the male category, personal ideas emerged as the dominant source for information, followed closely by family members and the influence of social media. Strikingly, radio failed to exert a significant impact in this context. Conversely, in the female category, family members played the most prominent role in providing information, followed by personal ideas and television. Radio, again, was the least utilized source.

The urban-rural divide also revealed distinct patterns. Rural residents leaned heavily on family members for information, followed by personal ideas and the influence of friends, while radio remained a marginal source. Urban dwellers, on the other hand, relied on their personal ideas as the primary source of information, supplemented by input from family members and social media. Radio, yet again, appeared as the least influential source.

In terms of inspiration for new apparel purchases, family was the consistent driver across both male and female categories, followed by friends and digital trends, such as social media and fashion blogs. Magazines proved to be the least inspiring source for apparel purchases. With changing times, the sources of information to influence regarding apparels and accessories have been changing for the youth, which is quite in lines with the global trends. The present study revealed that yet in Indian culture, though youth have their own ideas, they are yet to larger extent influenced by the views of family members who play critical role in their life.

This research paper provides valuable insights into the purchase behaviour of apparel and accessories among urban and rural youth in Vadodara district. Urban and rural consumers may often exhibit disparities in their purchase behaviour due to differences in income, education, exposure to media, and lifestyle. These variations have a significant impact on their choices and preferences. Consumer behaviour in the context of apparel and accessories is complex and influenced by factors such as individual preferences, cultural norms, peer influences, and economic conditions. Understanding these variations is essential for businesses to tailor their marketing efforts effectively and cater to the diverse consumer base in the region.

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