

Factors Affecting Consumers Attitude and Purchase Intention towards Foreign Apparel Brands in Pakistan

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Abstract:

This paper aims to study factors affecting Pakistan's consumer's attitude and purchase intention towards foreign apparel brands. Purchase intention is explained in terms of general consumer variables (face saving, group conformity, internal self behavior control, country of origin perception, clothing interest & uniqueness, attitude) and brand specific variables (perceived quality & comfort). The sample comprised of respondents coming for purchase in big shopping malls in major cities of Pakistan (Islamabad, Lahore, Multan & Karachi), with 300 participants completing the self-administered questionnaire during evening timings. Results reveal that all the variables have the positive significant impact on purchase intention directly and also through the mediator i.e. attitude. Only group conformity is non-significant in this study which shows that consumers of foreign apparels in Pakistan do not value the group view/ opinions or suggestions in making purchase. Both quality and comfort had significant impact on purchase intention. Clothing interest & uniqueness along with the society or cultural consideration had positive impact on consumer's attitude and purchase intention. Internal self behavior control of the customers can also increase the purchase intention as customers have the confidence on their purchase.

The findings of this paper cannot be generalized to other consumer products, or other segments of society. However, results reveal that foreign apparel brands need to focus on quality and their brand's emotional attributes through unique style and design if they want to succeed in Pakistan's apparel market.

Key words: Foreign Apparel Brands, Purchase Intention, Attitude

Introduction

Latest increase in population and strong competition is encouraging the top Apparel brands of the world to search new markets and customers (Steenkamp & Hofstede, 2002). The development of economy in Asian countries (China, India, and Pakistan), with growing numbers of middle class customers is attracting these clothing brands to make sure that they are also availing this opportunity through their presence in these countries (Dickson et al., 2004). Due to growth in economy and with the improvement in education level of the customers (Dickson et al., 2004), now customers have more fashion knowledge and awareness of foreign apparels (Morton, 2002; Bryck, 2003), so customers of Asian countries such as China, India, Pakistan, Japan and South Korea have successfully gain attention from global clothing firms.

Apparel is usually a billion-dollar market hiring many people worldwide. Apparel displays your own modern society together with your own traditions; also the idea displays precisely how individuals put together their selves. Now the customers are offered with so many choices as large number of clothing brands is available to them. As a result, customers are now more sensitive to brands they are purchasing as they seek what the brand offers, what it addresses them, and how it satisfy their particular needs (Anholt, 2000). The consumer will purchase a brand or not is affected by so many different factors. In addition to the functional benefits that a customer is getting from the brands, customer might prefer a foreign brand that

best demonstrate his/her personality, their social image, association or to satisfy his/her need for uniqueness (Kim et al., 2002).

Purchase intention towards foreign apparels is a very emerging phenomenon in developing countries as so many foreign brands are entering in these countries. According to the prior studies there are number of factors which can directly or indirectly impact the purchase intention of foreign clothing.

According to government sources the per capita income was observed to be at \$897 during 2005-06, which increases to \$980 in the year 2006-07 and then to \$1,053 in 2007-08 however it slightly improved to \$1,026 in 2008-09, 1072 in 2009-10, 1275 in 2010-11, 1323 in 2011-12, and finally 1368 in 2012-2013. Pakistan is the second highest per capita income after India in the whole south Asian region (Asian Development Bank, 2012). Pakistan is a country where society is more consumption-oriented and people like to spend money on rituals like marriages and on social gatherings (Burki & Muhammad, 2008). As a result, it can be said that in Pakistan people like to have some social status, So Pakistani consumers expend a substantial sum of cash on the purchase of clothing. Hence, it is a profitable and attractive market for foreign apparel firms.

The purpose of this study is to find factors affecting Pakistan's consumer's purchase intention towards the foreign apparel brands. The young generation of Pakistan has a wish to boost their self image and to look "cool". Consumer's attitude & decisions to buy are very much influenced by the Self Behavior Control and normative influence (Fishbein, 1975). Clothing interest and uniqueness is also important in shaping the purchase behavior (Solomon, 2003). So the results of this study will let the foreign clothing brands to better recognize Pakistan's market and will also help them to implement valuable and effective strategies for the Pakistan's apparel market.

Literature Review

Face saving is the pressure of people on you in making any decision. “Face saving is actually capturing individual perceptions of living up to the principles or standards of one’s position”. Face saving is meeting the expectation of people around us who are important in our life (Chung and Pysarchik, 2000).

Face is very important in describing the consumer’s behavior (Redding and Ng, 1983; Stover, 1974) and interpersonal relationships are also greatly affected by it (Yau, 1986). (Lee, 1990) Conducted a study with the purpose to know the effect of face saving on the purchase intention and results prove that consumers purchase intention of Korea was affected by the face saving factor. These findings were also proved right in the later studies, conducted in Hong Kong, China and Japan (Lee, C and Green, R.T, 1991).

Group Conformity is “when there is a change in thoughts or beliefs of a person due to pressure of groups around them” (Blackwell et al., 2006). According to Burki, B.H. and Mohammed (2008) this factor is very clear and important in Pakistan where people live in collective society and people have to respect the feelings of each other. In countries like India and Pakistan traditional core values are of high importance and you have to consider the family members and persons close to you, when making a purchase. Group conformity can positively affect the attitude and purchase intention in countries where people live in collective society(Son, Jin, & George, 2013).

“Country of origin perception is actually the positive or negative evaluation of the customer about any country’s product and it may be different according to different countries” (e.g. Schooler, 1965; Roth and Romeo, 1992; Yasin et al., 2007). Country of origin is a very important factor towards purchase intention and previous studies shows that country from which product is coming can significantly impact the perception about

the brand. Customers see country of origin to judge the quality of the brand and this can affect the purchase intention (Schooler, 1965; Roth, M.S. and Romeo, J.B., 1992; Yasin, 2007).

“Uniqueness is actually persons desire to see themselves as dissimilar from others in the society (Kumar, Kim, & Pelton, 2009)”. Fromkin (1970, p. 521) opines that most of the individuals have a “need for separate identity” or a “need for uniqueness (NFU).” People have clothing interest and use apparel brands to have unique image in the society and also to express their personality (Solomon, 2003). A study conducted in USA explores those consumers who have high clothing interest uniqueness have a positive attitude towards the fashion apparels (Belleau, Nowlin, & Summers, 2001). Similarly a study conducted in India shows the positive relationship between clothing interest and attitude (Kumar et al., 2009).

“Comfort is actually the state of feeling calm and happiness after using the product or brand” (Sweeney, J.C. and Soutar, G. , 2001) There are products and brands like apparel brands which brings pleasure and comfort for the consumers. They feel happy to wear certain brands as they are getting some emotional benefits by wearing these brands.

Perceived quality is overall benefits and customer individual perception about the quality of the product (Zeithaml, 1988; Dodds et al., 1991). Aaker (1991) opines that perceived quality is a major tool for making the comparison of different products or service and can become the new and choosy brand in the mind of the customers. The perception of high quality may lead consumers to recognize the differentiation and superiority of a particular brand and thus encourage them to choose that brand over competing brands (McConnell, 1968b; Yoo et al., 2000). Comfort towards any brand is connected with positive feelings (e.g. a sense of happiness and pleasure) from using the brand, which increases

consumer intention to repurchase the brand (Stauss and Neuhaus, 1997; Yu and Dean, 2001).

“Internal self behavior control is actually the ability a person possesses to perform some specific tasks in order to achieve the goals” (Bandura, 1997). This is on the grounds reality that brand products are basically accessible in high-close assorted shops in metropolitan urban areas, and purchasers may need trust because of less appearance to foreign apparel brands of western countries (Bobby George, 2013).

Product attitude is commonly defined as “consumers’ overall evaluative judgment of a product’s attributes such as style, brand, and quality” (Erdogan & Uzkurt, 2010).

Purchase intention is known as particular exchange behavior developed after customers’ overall assessment of the product or services. It is basically a perception based reaction about an individual’s attitude toward an entity. So the purchase intention is one’s assessment & attitude toward a product or service along with external stimulus (Hsu, 1987).

Research Methodology

After the survey of Pakistani clothing market it was observed that Levi’s is most popular foreign brand among Pakistani consumers and is easily available in many cities. Along with Levi’s some other popular brands are Dockers, Next, Denizen & Mark and Spenser. So these brands were selected for this research.

Hypothesis and Model

H1a: Face saving has a positive significant impact on attitude towards foreign apparel brands among Pakistani consumers.

H1b: Face saving has a positive significant impact on purchase intention towards foreign apparel brands among Pakistani consumers.

H2a: Group conformity has a positive significant impact on attitude towards foreign apparel brands among Pakistani consumers.

H2b: Group conformity has a positive significant impact on purchase intention towards foreign apparel brands among Pakistani consumers.

H3a: Internal self behavior control has a positive significant impact on attitude towards foreign apparel brands among Pakistani consumers.

H3b: Internal self behavior control has a positive significant impact on purchase intention towards foreign apparel brands among Pakistani consumers.

H4a: Country of origin perception has a positive significant impact on perceived quality & comfort towards foreign apparel brands among Pakistani consumers.

H4b: Country of origin perception has a positive significant impact on attitude towards foreign apparel brands among Pakistani consumers.

H4c: Country of origin perception has a positive significant impact on purchase intention towards foreign apparel brands among Pakistani consumers.

H5a: Clothing interest & uniqueness has a positive significant impact on perceived quality & comfort towards foreign apparel brands among Pakistani consumers.

H5b: Clothing interest & uniqueness has a positive significant impact on attitude towards foreign apparel brands among Pakistani consumers.

H5c: Clothing interest & uniqueness has a positive significant impact on purchase intention towards foreign apparel brands among Pakistani consumers.

H6a: Perceived quality & comfort has a positive significant impact on attitude towards foreign apparel brands among Pakistani consumers.

H6b: Perceived quality & comfort has a positive significant impact on purchase intention towards foreign apparel brands among Pakistani consumers.

H7: Attitude has a positive significant impact on purchase intention towards foreign apparel brands among Pakistani consumers.

H8: Attitude mediates the relationship between the face saving and purchase intention.

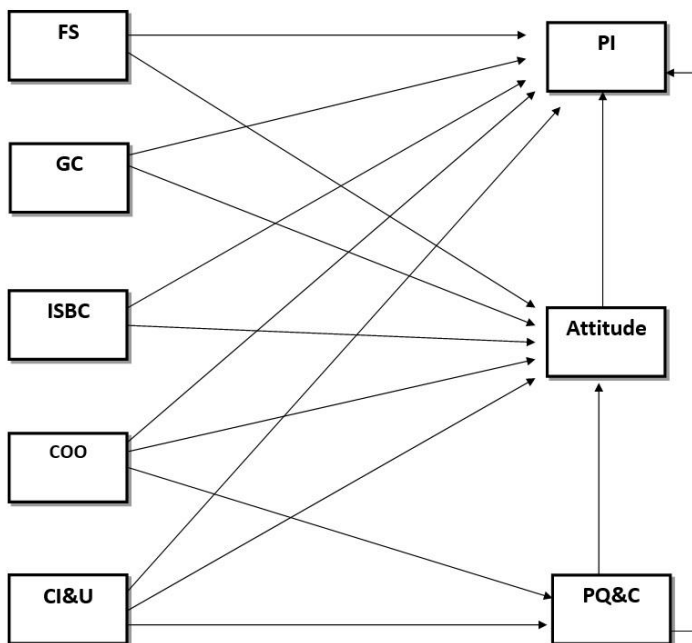
H9: Attitude mediates the relationship between the group conformity and purchase intention.

H10: Attitude mediates the relationship between the internal self-behavior control and purchase intention.

H11: Attitude mediates the relationship between the country of origin and purchase intention.

H12: Attitude mediates the relationship between the clothing interest uniqueness and purchase intention.

H13: Attitude mediates the relationship between the perceived quality & comfort and purchase intention.



Face saving, group conformity, clothing interest and uniqueness, COO perception and internal self behavior control are exogenous variables while Attitude, perceived quality & comfort and purchase intention are endogenous variables.

In this model it is suggested that face saving and group conformity affect the attitude and then PI towards foreign brands of people in cultures like Pakistan, because people live in groups and have to meet the expectations of each others. Both of these variables are more effective at measuring NI effect (Lee, 1990). This attitude will positively or negatively affect the purchase of the customer. As suggested by George (2013) self behavior control can positively affect the attitude and purchase intention. So in this study behavior control is taken as internal self behavior control to check the effect on attitude & PI. This model also proposed that Clothing interest is very important in shaping the perceived quality and emotions of the people. People like to have uniqueness factor in their personality by purchasing unique clothes as they become emotionally satisfied and feel comfort by doing so (Kumar et al., 2009). These emotions and perceived quality can positively affect the purchase intention towards foreign brands. Among Pakistani consumers attitude of the customers is also important in making the final purchase. As discussed in literature customer perception of country, family members, clothing interest and perceived quality all can build the positive attitude of the customers. Ultimately this positive attitude can affect the purchase intention of the customers.

This framework will be very helpful not only for foreign brands which are already working but also for the brands which are looking to enter in the Pakistani market.

For each brand count was 50 so for six brands total count is 300 questionnaires. Systematic shopping sampling technique is used. Questionnaires were handed over to the customers coming to big shopping malls in which retail outlets of foreign brands were available. Multiple choice and seven

likert scale questions were used in the questionnaire. Customers have to answer the questions according to the instructions given. Printed close ended questionnaire were distributed and were collected at the same time from the shopping malls of selected cities.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

FACTORS	Internal Self Behavior Control	Country of origin perceptions	Clothing interest & uniqueness	Group Conformity	Face saving	Perceived quality & Comfort	Attitude
Satisfied with life.	.860						
Satisfied physical appearance.	.812						
Pleased as an individual.	.883						
Satisfied with purchase.	.711						
Do not rely on other	.698						
Easy access to retail outlets.		.710					
Prefer to buy foreign clothes		.779					
knowledge and awareness		.521					
USA brands are Superior in design		.757					
UK brands are Superior.		.618					
Better physical appearance.		.520					
Liking of clothing			.796				
Setting wardrobe is favorite activities.			.593				
Spend more money			.791				
Develop personal uniqueness			.802				
buy unusual brands			.577				
Stop wearing fashions when unpopular.			.559				
Approval of close friends				.652			
Approval of Parents				.873			

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Approval my peers/colleagues				.723			
Comply with other people decisions				.767			
Makes me fit with other people.				.623			
affect my reputation with the people					.602		
Feel ashamed people see me wearing brand					.670		
People allow me to use that brand.					.767		
Foreign brands are reliable.						.745	
Foreign brands are Durable.						.705	
Foreign brands are of high quality.						.805	
Makes me feel good.						.828	
Gives me pleasure.						.887	
Makes me want to use it.						.895	
Prefer foreign brand							.786
High quality than domestic products.							.842
Given a choice, I buy foreign brand							.686

Principal component factor analysis identified seven factors which lead to purchase intention of the foreign apparel brands in Pakistan. It suggest that customers of the foreign apparel brands look to purchase the foreign apparels by considering the importance of these factors like Group conformity (GC), Face saving (FS), Internal self behavior control (ISBC), Country of origin (COO), Clothing interest uniqueness (CIU) and perceived quality & comfort (PQC) and attitude.

Regression

Relation	Estimate	S.E.	P value	Hypothesis	Result
attitude <--- FS	.350	.062	.000	H1a	Accepted
PI <--- FS	.187	.038	.000	H1b	Accepted
attitude <--- GC	.186	.055	.000	H2a	Accepted
PI <--- GC	.036	.032	.264	H2b	Rejected
attitude <--- ISBC	.265	.066	.000	H3a	Accepted
PI <--- ISBC	.086	.039	.029	H3b	Accepted
PCQ <--- COO	.611	.054	.000	H4a	Accepted
attitude <--- COO	.415	.076	.000	H4b	Accepted
PI <--- COO	.153	.046	.000	H4c	Accepted
PCQ <--- CIU	.305	.075	.000	H5a	Accepted
attitude <--- CIU	.005	.087	.000	H5b	Accepted
PI <--- CIU	.455	.051	.002	H5c	Accepted
attitude <--- PCQ	.559	.065	.000	H6a	Accepted
PI <--- PCQ	.303	.042	.000	H6b	Accepted
PI <--- Attitude	.599	.034	.000	H7	Accepted

Linear regression with the help of IBM AMOS helped to find out the relation between each independent variable with each dependent variable one by one. Face saving generates the consumers attitude and purchase intention towards the foreign apparels brands. The relationship between group conformity and purchase intention of foreign brand clothes was not supported in this study. Internal self behavior control affects the attitude and purchase intention of the customers. Country of origin generates the perceived quality for the foreign brands; this perceived quality generates the positive attitude and purchase intention of the consumers. Consumers with high clothing interest & uniqueness perceive that foreign brands are superior in quality so they purchase they purchase these brands to have uniqueness and quality in their outlook. Attitude of the customers significantly impact the purchase intention of the customers. So all of the variables will help to retain & increase the consumer base.

Mediation Analysis

First we investigated the impact of Face saving on mediator i.e attitude. We found that Face saving ($B=.537$; $p=.000$) was positively associated with mediating variable i.e. Attitude. Then attitude ($B=.762$; $p=.000$) was positively associated with purchase intention. Then we investigate the impact of group conformity on mediator that is attitude. We found group conformity relationship with purchase intention through mediator was non-significant. Thirdly we investigated the impact of country of origin on mediator i.e attitude. The results show that country of origin ($B=.763$; $p=.000$) was positively associated with the attitude and attitude ($B=.737$; $p=.000$) was positively associated with the purchase intention. Clothing interest uniqueness has significant impact on PI directly and through mediator. The results show that clothing interest uniqueness ($B=.526$; $p=.000$) was positively associated with the attitude and attitude ($B=.829$; $p=.000$) was positively associated with the purchase intention. We investigated the impact of internal self behavior control on mediator i.e attitude. We found that internal self behavior control ($B=.131$; $p=.000$) was positively associated with mediating variable i.e. Attitude. Then attitude ($B=.823$; $p=.000$) was positively associated with purchase intention. In the last we investigated the impact of perceived quality comfort on mediator i.e attitude. We found that perceived quality comfort ($B=.733$; $p=.000$) was positively associated with mediating variable i.e. Attitude. Then attitude ($B=.688$; $p=.000$) was positively associated with purchase intention. Hence the results prove that there exists the mediating relationship among the variables.

Conclusion:

Previously many studies have been conducted to find the impact of face saving on purchase intention (George, 2013).

Prior studies indicated that this affect is also seems to be positive in the customers from countries like China, Japan and impact the purchase (Lee, 1990; Lee and Green, 1991). Chung and Pysarchik (2000) also suggested that face saving is very important factor in shaping the attitude and purchase intention towards foreign brands in Korea. Prior studies also indicated that a customer who has an interest in apparel brands of different styles will prefer to buy unique styles and brands of apparel, as an approach to express their uniqueness (Goldsmith et al., 1999; Kaiser, 1998; Solomon and Schopler, 1982). Prior researches also indicates that consumers may hold different appraisals related to products from different countries, thus significantly influencing their purchase intention (e.g. Schooler, 1965; Roth and Romeo, 1992; Yasin et al., 2007).

The relationship between group conformity and purchase intention of foreign brand clothes was not supported in this study, although group conformity was an important factor in Fishbein's behavioral model. Group conformity direct effect on purchase intention was found to be non significant. Some of the latest studies conducted in developing countries like China have found an insignificant relation between group conformity and purchase intention (i.e. Shen et al., 2003; Wang, 2006; Wu and Jang, 2008). One of the reasons for its non significance is that foreign brand users are the people mostly with high clothing interest and uniqueness so they don't value the pressure of group conformity and take decisions on their own. The outcome of this study is also in line with these latest studies, which recommend the requirement for additional exploration.

With the help of conceptual framework this study demonstrates how these factors can affect the attitude and purchase intention of the customers in Pakistan. The study reveals that among Pakistani consumers quality and uniqueness factors are very important. People like to adopt western lifestyle by wearing foreign apparels of countries like

USA and UK. Customers who purchase the foreign brands give value to their internal satisfaction of uniqueness rather than group conformity. Customers have the trust on these foreign brands to offer the right quality and design as compared to the local brands.

The study provides valuable information on foreign apparel brands wanting to enter Pakistan's apparel market. The study posits that Face saving, COO perception, Clothing interest uniqueness, internal self behavior control and perceived quality & comfort have a positive impact on Purchase intention directly and through attitude.

Managerial Implications:

After analyzing the results of this research, the following suggestions can be made to western clothing brands looking to expand into the Pakistani market or other identical emerging markets. Brands which are foreign must look to plan their marketing strategy by focusing on the quality aspects and emotional benefits of their brands. The advertisement campaigns of these brands must communicate that their products have the consistent quality and the customers will feel superior by using their brand products.

Due to this reason, foreign brands must require to recognize and target the segment of the customer that feels happy about expenditure of their resources (i.e. time and money) on these foreign brand products. In Pakistan attitude of the customers was also originate to be the vital factor to find out purchase intention. As a result, to build positive attitudes toward the foreign clothing brands coming from countries like USA, UK, a brand must concentrate on promotional campaigns through a variety of media. Countries like Pakistan, where print advertising has been most popular media for years (Terpstra and Sarathy, 1997), so for this reason promotion method is suggested to be successful. Pakistani consumers of

foreign apparel brands have moved their consideration from price to a wish for design and quality aspects of the brands thus; foreign apparel brands should put emphasis on the design and quality aspect of their products to create positive attitudes among the consumers of Pakistan. Country of origin, self behavior control and perceived comfort & quality was also originated to be the most critical and important factors for the Pakistani consumers' purchase intentions of clothes.

At last, the importance point is that CIU, perceived quality comfort and attitude along with other factors was establish to be superior in forming the purchase intention of the customers than that of factor like group conformity in Pakistan. Hence, marketers should concentrate on building positive attitudes of the customers toward foreign clothing brands through by offering innovative designs and quality of apparels.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research:

- Cross-cultural studies in this scenario are also suggested to evaluate diverse countries and their consumer attitudes towards the foreign apparel brands. In this research it only studies the factors which are affecting the purchase intention towards foreign clothing brands. Upcoming studies may consider and conduct the research for the other consumer products.
- This study utilizes only US and UK brands and determines Pakistani consumers' purchase behavior based on those brands. Future research should identify several US, UK and other countries brands that are available in Pakistan and extend this study toward those brands.
- The data for this research was only collected from the big shopping malls of big cities like Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi and Multan. Future studies can be extended to other parts & cities of Pakistan.

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