Consumer Behavior towards Clothing Apparel of Designer Brands: A Study on the Boutiques and Fashion Houses in Bangladesh

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Abstract: *This paper is an attempt to identify the main factors affecting buying behavior of consumer towards clothing apparel in Bangladesh. The study examines the attributes of clothing apparel and their impact on consumers buying attitudes. Two research questions were put forward and two hypotheses were developed. At first, exploratory research has been conducted to gain an insight of the topic and to find out the attributes and in turn, this article reports on the findings based on a conclusive (descriptive) research. A self-administered structured questionnaire is developed and administered to a non-probabilistic quota sample of 125 apparel consumers of different age from different location. The respondents' ratings of 22 statements are then factor analyzed to determine the underlying behavioral factors. It has been observed that there are some interdependent attributes affecting the buying decision for clothing apparel. Eight factors emerged and used as independent variables in regression analysis. Results indicate significant impact of some of the attributes to consumer behavior of buying clothing apparel. This helps to highlight the functional and psychological attributes that marketers of different boutiques and fashion houses should consider when they introduce or market clothing apparel of designer brands in Bangladesh.*

Keywords: *Consumer behavior, clothing apparel, designer brand, boutique, fashion house, Bangladesh.*

1. Introduction

Consumer behavior towards products and services are constantly changing. To create a proper marketing mix, marketing managers must have to consider this change with a clear understanding of consumer behavior. Consumer behavior can be defined as the process a consumer uses to make purchase decisions. When consumers form an attitude toward a product, they make evaluative associations between the product and its

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attributes (Kim et al, 2002). Apparel is a product category that reflects consumer's personality characteristics. The needs thought to be met through the apparel products would provide appropriate indicators to reflect the cultural, social, individual and psychological experience factors that would affect consumers (Liu and Burger, 2009). Consumer market for apparel has become more diverse by designer brands, store brands, personalization, advertising, and ethnicity in the global marketplace. Shifts in the cultural values, consumer preferences, and purchase intentions towards designer products is arguably the most critical issue faced by the marketing managers today (Rajagopal, 2010). To understand the consumer behavior towards clothing apparel in today's increasingly competitive markets, it is necessary to recognize the tangible and intangible attributes that affect consumers' decision of buying. Marketers need to research the value consumers attach to certain attributes in order to understand the way people interpret clothing when making purchase decisions. Marketing communications directed at the pleasure segment should emphasize on the significant variables. Moreover, marketing managers have to realize the complexities of these factors to be able to plan, to develop and to implement innovative strategies meant to improve their programs.

2. Literature Review

Buying behavior of clothing apparel is composed of several determinant attributes, i.e., those product and/or brand characteristics that actually determine which product and/or brand the consumer buys. A large number of research works relating to various aspects of buying behavior, consumer preference, brand and the determinant attributes of fashion apparel have been published in home and abroad. However, reviews of some of the previous studies have been made in this paper.

As described by Kamineni and O'Cass (2000), consumers exhibit lifestyle as an aesthetic way to uphold their personality. Individuals feel that a particular possession conveys a strong message or signal to the consumers' world of what and who they are. Apparel is largely consumed publicly and possesses public meaning and satisfies various needs such as the expression of personality, identity and image. Clothing, as a form of nonverbal communication, facilitates the formation and expression of identity. Brands are increasingly seen as an important factor because it can create, communicate and maintain a new sense of social and/or personal identity of a person.

Moye and Kincade (2000) stated that, customers often choose stores for higher levels of customer service. Three categories of services include *services that provide convenience* (e.g., store location, effective and knowledgeable sales staff), *services that facilitate sales* (e.g., store credit cards), and *auxiliary services* (e.g., return or change within specified

time, gift certificates, layaway, gift wrapping, special orders, mail orders). In addition to developing higher levels of consumer service, marketers should create comfortable and attractive stores that would appeal to their consumers by manipulating environmental attributes, such as store decor, layout, and background music. Stores that present pleasing and attractive physical appearance through sensory appeals create a competitive environment among stores and most likely entice more consumers to patronize their stores.

A study reported that consumers love to differentiate themselves by adopting various behaviors. Consumer experience creates distinct psychological motives towards buying designer apparel that develop unique consumption patterns. Consumers try to find something innovative and different from mass fashion, with the added panache of exclusivity. A brand's reputation for its credibility would also be a good measure. A strong and favorable brand image assists consumers to consider a product positively, regardless of price. Designer brands are generally expensive and the price of goods is generally related to their quality and style level. Respondents spontaneously associated words like luxury, intelligence, expensiveness, brand names, and durability with the high priced apparel. Researchers found that the brand name is used as a cue to assess quality of a product and influences consumers' perceptions. Fabric, material, style, and design divided the top-quality clothing from low-quality clothing (Lee, 2001).

It has been observed by some researchers that social and cultural values affect the preferences and perceptions of fashion apparel. The designer apparel brands are perceived by the consumers as prestigious brands encompassing several physical and psychological values such as perceived conspicuous value, perceived unique value, perceived social value, perceived hedonic value, perceived emotional value and perceived quality value (Prendergast and Wong, 2003).

Cox, Cox and Anderson (2005) found that bargain hunting can be a source of pleasurable shopping experience. Many shoppers enjoy bargain hunting and seek an economic advantage through negotiating. Even though, in general, people do not enjoy shopping as much as in the past. Consumers now attempt to limit the time they spend in shopping. They spend fewer hours cruising the mall in search of the perfect item, and look to get what they need as quickly as possible (www.ianbrooks.com). An online clothes shopping is a good alternative to them to actually going into the store. Convenience is a great advantage to online shopping. Moreover, it gives the chance to browse for diverse items in different stores at the same time, providing with a wide range of clothing choices to select from. There are also scopes to compare prices of the same or similar products (www.wahm.com).

Research indicates that revealing a store as the manufacturer and endorser of a brand mitigates consumers' perceived risk of buying apparel. Social risk appears particularly important for products that are visible to others and communicate the consumer's self-image, such as clothes. The apparel consumers likely be affected also by the psychosocial risk, the performance or functional risk, and the financial risk (Liljander et al, 2009).

Researchers revealed that country of origin has a significant effect on customers' evaluation of apparel products. However, in an age of increasing international competition and globalization, the concept of country of origin has come under great criticism and recently, some scholars have argued that brand origin is a cue that consumers use to evaluate apparel product quality (Peterson and Brookshire, 2009). Research suggests that ethnocentrism directly affects consumers' buying decision. Traditional clothing practice is often assimilated to the generic preferences of ethnic dressing. Thus, modern fashion apparel market has emerged with the announcement that ethnic dressing comes from the core of the traditional culture (Rajagopal, 2010).

Research revealed that traditionally the market for the luxury brands was considered to be for the ones between the age of 30 and 50 but now younger people are entering the market. Once young consumers were attracted by low prices, and they tented to be unwilling to pay higher prices for brand-named clothing. However, the need for materialism and appearance is not limited to the wealthy consumers but also covers the less-well off young consumers that have a desire for fashion brands. The youth today wants value for money and they purchase luxury goods for self-identity and well-being (www.essayblog.org). In addition, celebrity endorsement and media reviews of designer brands play a significant role in consumers buying behavior. The fashion apparel has short product life-span and is influenced largely by the celebrity promotions. Celebrities contribute in creating, enhancing and even changing brand images since they bring their personal images to the associated brand (Jansson and Power, 2010).

A review of past literature has come up with certain key areas which contribute to the current literature to explore the attributes that influences the buying behavior of clothing apparel among consumers of Bangladesh. The variables to be included in the factor analysis are specified based on these previous researches. It appears from the preceding discussions that, there is considerable research in psychology and in some other branches on how consumers evaluate different attributes to make choices. However, consumer behavior towards clothing apparel may not be addressed earlier from the viewpoint of designer brands of boutiques and fashion houses in Bangladesh. It would, therefore, not be unjustifiable to state that conducting this study to investigate the factors influencing the consumers shopping behavior of designer brands clothing apparel is unique, meaningful and can be used as guidelines for the similar studies in years ahead.

3. Designer Brands of Boutiques and Fashion Houses: The Changing Face of Bangladeshi Fashion Industry

An aspect seen in the changing face of Bangladeshi fashion industry is the prominence of boutiques (a small retail outlet or specialty store, especially one that offers specialized products and services) and the growing popularity of fashion houses (that sell designer, unique and fashionable goods). Exclusive designer items can be revealed in these boutiques and fashion houses which are unavailable in common retail outlets and shopping malls. Some recognized boutiques and fashion houses of Bangladesh are Aarong, Anjans, Kaykraft, Rang, Shada Kalo, Deshal, Jatra, Banglar Mela etc.

A *boutique* is a small retail shopping outlet, especially one that specializes in elite and fashionable items such as clothing, jewelry, gifts, accessories, foods etc. In such cases the establishments aim to convey the idea that the operation is highly specialized in one aspect of a larger field. Although some boutiques specialize in hand-made items and other truly one-of-a-kind items, some chains can be referred to as boutiques if they specialize in particular styles. Recently, the term boutique has started being applied to normally mass market items that are either niche or produced in intentionally small numbers at very high prices (en.wikipedia.org).

A *fashion house* is a place where the art of fashion design (the art of the application of design and aesthetics to clothing and accessories) is applied. Such an establishment designs, makes, and sells fashionable items usually allied with a fashion designer. Fashion design is influenced by cultural and social latitudes, and has varied over time and place. *Fashion designers* attempt to design clothes which are functional as well as aesthetically pleasing. They experiment with colors and recognize the tradition & manifestation of culture. Fashion designers can work in a number of many ways. Fashion designers may work full-time for one fashion as 'in-house designers' which owns the designs. They may work alone or as part of a team. Freelance designers work for themselves, selling their designs to fashion houses, directly to shops, or to clothing manufacturers. The garments bear the buyer's label. Some fashion designers set up their own labels, under which their designs are marketed. Some fashion designers are self-employed and design for individual clients. Other high-fashion designers cater to specialty stores or high-fashion department stores. These designers create original garments, as well as those that follow established fashion trends. Most fashion designers, however, work for apparel manufacturers, creating designs of men's, women's, and children's fashions for the mass market. Large *designer brands* which have a 'name' as their brand are likely to be designed by a team of individual designers under the direction of a designer director (en.wikipedia.org).

4. Research Objectives

Broad objective:

To discover and analyze the influential attributes that affect consumer behavior towards clothing apparel products of designer brands in Bangladesh.

Specific objectives:

- To identify the motivating attributes that drive consumers to choose clothing apparel products of a designer brand or from a non-brand apparel outlet in Bangladesh.

- To examine the whole set of interdependent relationships among the identified motivating attributes and represent those in terms of few underlying factors.

- To analyze whether there is any associative relationship between the preference for designer brands of boutiques and fashion houses of Bangladesh (dependent variable) and the selected independent variables (underlying motivating factors) as well as to measure the strength of this association.

- To investigate how consumer preference for designer brands of Bangladesh differs from the preference for non-brand outlets.

5. Methodology

5.1 Research Design Formulations

To conduct this study, both *qualitative* and *quantitative data* have been collected that belong to exploratory and descriptive research respectively. At first the *exploratory research* is conducted to gain an in-depth knowledge of the consumption of clothing and to discover the influencing variables that might be considered at the time of buying apparel. Then a *single cross-sectional design* of the *descriptive research* has been undertaken to analyze the data and to test the hypothesis.

5.2 Sources of data

Necessary information is gathered from both primary and secondary sources to bring out the research objectives. The literature part of the report is mainly based on *secondary data* which is gathered from the websites and journals. Various research studies relating to the factors affecting consumer behavior towards clothing apparel have been published at home and abroad. Critical review of some of those has been made in this paper. The type of quantitative information that is required for the descriptive research is mainly primary in nature. The data have been collected from primary sources by the means of

three different *survey methods* (telephone surveys, e-mail surveys and in-house surveys*)* with a structured questionnaire.

5.3 Measurement & Scaling Techniques

For scaling purpose, the *7-point Likert Scale* of the itemized rating scale (*Noncomparative scaling*) has been used. Respondents were asked to rate twenty-two (22) dimensions on a 7-point Likert scale of agreement or disagreement relative to a particular buying decision. The respondents have marked the point that best indicate how they would describe the object being rated. The questions are formulated in such a way that the analysis can be done with the statistical tools of the multivariate technique.

5.4 Sampling Design & Procedure

5.4.1 Target Population

- Elements: Both male and female customers (aged 20-69)

- Sampling Units: Clothing apparel customers of designer brands of boutiques and fashion houses (Aarong- Dhaka and Sylhet, Deshi Dosh- Dhaka) and some other non-brand apparel outlets (Bashundhara City Shopping mall-Dhaka, Al-Hamra Shopping City-Sylhet)

- Extent: Dhaka and Sylhet, Bangladesh

- Time: From March 16, 2013 to May 10, 2013

5.4.2 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Data have been collected using a *quota* (non-probability) *sampling* and the total sample size is 125. At first males & females of age 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69 have been selected, each as control category or quota of population element, and then elements are chosen from each category on the basis of convenience.

Table 1: Quota sampling with the control category of age and gender

Control Characteristics		Gender				
		Male	%	Female	%	Total
Age	20-29	10	40%	15	60%	**25**
	30-39	10	40%	15	60%	**25**
	40-49	10	40%	15	60%	**25**
	50-59	10	40%	15	60%	**25**
	60-69	10	40%	15	60%	**25**
	Total	**50**		**75**		**125**

5.5 Statistical Techniques Used to Analyze the Data

Factor and regression analysis (dependence techniques) of *multivariate techniques* have been carried out and to get the results, SPSS (a popular computer program for analyzing marketing data) has been used. The data have been collected on twenty two (22) variables that are closely related with affecting the customer behavior. For the purpose of data reduction and summarization, relationships among sets of many interrelated variables are examined and represented in terms of few underlying factors. At the beginning, the data was factor analyzed using *principal components analysis* with varimax rotation and Pearson correlation to come up with a set of small number of uncorrelated factors. As the result of this factor analysis need to be used in subsequent multivariate analysis, principle component analysis has been used. From about twenty-two (22) variables, an eight (08) factor solution resulted and has been used as independent variables (metric) in the regression analysis. Consumer Preference for clothing apparel of designer brands of boutiques and fashion houses in Bangladesh served as the dependent variable (metric). Then multiple r*egression analysis* has been conducted to show how the dependent variable changes according to the changes in independent variables.

6.   Approach to the Problem

6.1 Analytical Model (Mathematical)

For the Factor Analysis:

$F_i = W_{i1}X_1 + W_{i2}X_2 + W_{i3}X_3 + \ldots\ldots\ldots + W_{ik}X_k$

Where,

F_i = Estimate of *i*th factor

W_i = Weight or factor score coefficient

K = number of variables

X_1= age,	X_2= shopping time,	X_3= quality,	X_4= price sensitivity,
X_5= assortment of merchandise,	X_6= uniqueness,	X_7= organic handloom,	X_8= creativity with sound fabric sense,
X_9= aesthetic design,	X_{10}= personal identity	X_{11}= foreign country of origin,	X_{12}= personality,
X_{13}= self-image,	X_{14}= celebrity endorsement,	X_{15}= cultural values,	X_{16}=ethnocentrism,
X_{17}= credibility,	X_{18}= customer service,	X_{19}= shopping atmospherics,	X_{20}= bargain shopping,
X_{21}= perceived risk,	X_{22}=online shopping.		

For the Regression Analysis:

$Y^{\wedge} = a + b_1 x_1 + b_2 x_2 + b_3 x_3 + \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots + b_k x_k$

Where,

Y=dependent or criterion variable

x=independent or predictor variable

a=Intercept of the line

b_1=Slope of the line

6.2 Research Questions and Research Hypotheses

R.Q.-1: Is there any correlations among the set of identified motivating attributes that affect consumer behavior towards clothing apparel.

Hypothesis-1:

H_0: There is no correlation among the set of identified motivating attributes that affect consumer behavior towards clothing apparel. That means twenty two (22) identified variables are uncorrelated.

H_1: The variables are highly correlated.

R.Q.-2: Is there any associative relationship between the preference of a designer brand and the selected independent variables?

Hypothesis-2:

H_0: No relationship exists among the dependent variable (consumer preference for the clothing apparel of designer brands of boutiques and fashion houses in Bangladesh) and the independent variables (obtained uncorrelated factors, i.e., distinctiveness, age, ethnic dressing, value for money, perceived risk, foreign country of origin, celebrity endorsement, shopping time) that form the consumer behavior toward clothing apparel products).

H_1: There is relationship among the preference for clothing apparel of designer brands and the obtained uncorrelated factors.

7. Results and Discussions from the data analysis

7.1 Factor Analysis

There were twenty two (22) variables, most of which are correlated and which must be reduced to a manageable level. By using factor analysis, the whole set of interdependent

relationships among variables have been examined. Using varimax rotation, 22 variables are reduced into 8 uncorrelated factors having eigenvalue greater than 1.0. *Principle Component Analysis* has been selected to determine the minimum number of factors that will account for maximum variance in the data for use in subsequent multivariate analysis.

7.1.1 Testing Hypothesis-1: KMO and Bartlett's Test

The null hypothesis, that the twenty two (22) variables are uncorrelated to the population or the population correlation matrix is an identity matrix, is rejected by the Bartlett's test of sphericity (table 2). The test statistic for sphericity is based on a chi-square transformation of the determinant of the correlation matrix. A large value of the test statistic favors the rejection of the null hypothesis. From the table, it has been found that the approximate chi-square statistics is 912.027 with 231 degrees of freedom which is significant at .05 level. Besides, high values (between 0.5 and 1.0) of KMO measure of sampling adequacy indicate that the factor analysis is appropriate. Here, as the value of the KMO statistic (table 2) is .606, the factor analysis is considered an approximate technique for analyzing the data.

Table 2: KMO & Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.606
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	912.027
	df	231
	Sig.	.000

7.1.2 Communalities, Initial Eigenvalues and Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings

In table 3, 'Initial' column of 'Communalities' shows that the communality for each variable is 1.0 as unities are inserted in the diagonal of the correlation matrix. The second column (Extraction) gives relevant information after the desired numbers of factors have been extracted. The communalities for the variables under 'Extraction' are different than under 'Initial' because all of the variances associated with the variables are not explained unless all the factors are retained. The eigenvalues for a factor indicates the total variance attributed to that factor. The total variance accounted for by all the twenty two variables is 22, which is equal to the number of variables. Factor 1 account for a variance of 3.516, which is (3.516/22) or 15.983% of the total variance. Likewise, the next 7 factors account for 12.749%, 9.144%, 8.015%, 7.620%, 6.341%, 5.706% and 4.582% of the total variance respectively. Here, the first eight (08) factors combined account for 70.140% of

the total variance. The 'Extraction Sums of Square Loadings' shows the variances associated with the factors that are retained. These are the same as under 'Initial Eigenvalues'.

Table 3: Communalities, Initial Eigen Values & Extraction Sums of Square Loadings

Communalities			Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Initial	Extraction		Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
X_1	1.000	.799	1	**3.516**	15.983	15.983	3.516	15.983	15.983
X_2	1.000	.617	2	**2.805**	12.749	28.732	2.805	12.749	28.732
X_3	1.000	.585	3	**2.012**	9.144	37.876	2.012	9.144	37.876
X_4	1.000	.740	4	**1.763**	8.015	45.891	1.763	8.015	45.891
X_5	1.000	.777	5	**1.676**	7.620	53.511	1.676	7.620	53.511
X_6	1.000	.824	6	**1.395**	6.341	59.852	1.395	6.341	59.852
X_7	1.000	.491	7	**1.255**	5.706	65.558	1.255	5.706	65.558
X_8	1.000	.459	8	**1.008**	4.582	**70.140**	1.008	4.582	**70.140**
X_9	1.000	.693	9	.932	4.238	74.379			
X_{10}	1.000	.755	10	.814	3.701	78.079			
X_{11}	1.000	.771	11	.738	3.354	81.434			
X_{12}	1.000	.743	12	.654	2.972	84.405			
X_{13}	1.000	.836	13	.583	2.652	87.057			
X_{14}	1.000	.670	14	.475	2.157	89.214			
X_{15}	1.000	.756	15	.453	2.058	91.272			
X_{16}	1.000	.673	16	.411	1.867	93.140			
X_{17}	1.000	.833	17	.350	1.590	94.730			
X_{18}	1.000	.697	18	.317	1.441	96.171			
X_{19}	1.000	.617	19	.292	1.328	97.499			
X_{20}	1.000	.481	20	.207	.939	98.438			
X_{21}	1.000	.819	21	.192	.872	99.310			
X_{22}	1.000	.795	22	.152	.690	100.000			
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis									

7.1.3   Determining the Number of Factors

The numbers of factors have been determined based on several considerations: (i) eigenvalues (only eight (08) factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 are retained. [table 3]); (ii) scree plot (the plot [fig 1] has a distinct break (at 8 factors) between the steep slope of factors, with large eigenvalues and gradual trailing off (scree) associated with the rest of the factors); (iii) percentage of variance (the factors extracted should account for at least 60% of the variance and here, the first eight (08) factors account for 70.140% of the total variance [table 3]).
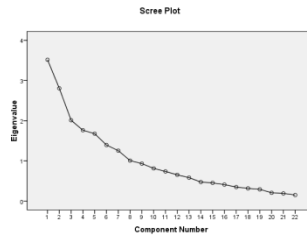

Fig.1 Scree Plot

7.1.4   Rotated Component Matrix

Table 4: Rotated Component Matrix

Variables	Component							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Age (X_1)	.053	**.855**	.217	.057	-.084	.006	-.091	-.011
Willingness to spend time in product selection (X_2)	.035	.252	-.042	.308	.170	-.019	.317	**.571**
Importance attached with quality (X_3)	.091	.085	.158	**.733**	.036	.037	-.015	.070
Attitudes towards price sensitivity (X_4)	.221	.027	-.111	**-.811**	.109	.046	.047	.068
Importance attached with the assortment of merchandise (X_5)	.235	-.066	-.341	.251	**.556**	.243	.253	-.326
Preference for uniqueness (X_6)	**.633**	-.088	.164	.073	.226	.079	.563	-.096
Preference for organic handloom (X_7)	.148	.231	**.426**	.134	-.281	-.328	-.138	-.103
Preference for creativity with sound fabric sense (X_8)	-.075	.049	**.539**	.251	-.187	-.008	-.037	-.248

Attitude towards experiment on aesthetic design (X_9)	**.604**	-.271	.058	.156	-.156	.257	-.261	-.260
Desire to create personal identity (X_{10})	**.703**	.141	.319	.080	.196	.021	.281	-.121
Attitude toward foreign country of origin (X_{11})	.101	.052	-.010	-.110	.081	**.793**	.329	.045
Importance attached with personality (X_{12})	**.779**	.026	-.159	-.063	.104	.051	.163	.257
Importance attached with the expression of self-image (X_{13})	**.714**	.263	-.136	-.428	.016	.110	-.196	.068
Importance attached with celebrity endorsement (X_{14})	-.114	.081	.028	.085	.114	-.069	**-.781**	-.124
Importance attached with the manifestation of cultural values (X_{15})	.051	.338	**.745**	.015	.262	.085	-.062	-.066
Importance attached with heritage (X_{16})	.022	.009	**.713**	.072	.140	.194	.201	.249
Importance attached with credibility (X_{17})	.170	.015	.186	.086	-.109	**.851**	-.143	.073
Importance attached with the quality of customer service (X_{18})	.236	-.155	-.245	**.498**	-.014	-.111	-.417	.352
Importance attached with pleasing shopping atmospherics (X_{19})	.141	-.145	.063	-.092	**.654**	-.013	.109	.351
Incompetence in bargaining (X_{20})	.029	.220	.012	.058	-.036	-.367	.057	**-.537**
Attitudes towards perceived risk (X_{21})	-.041	-.117	-.132	.049	**-.860**	.064	.203	.001
Preference for online shopping (X_{22})	-.017	**-.885**	-.084	.033	-.043	.008	-.019	.031

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 24 iterations.

An eight (08) factor solution resulted from the twenty two (22) variables, with the factors being labeled as:

1.	Preference for distinctiveness (x_1)	:	Preference for uniqueness (X_6), Attitude towards experiment on aesthetic design (X_9), Desire to create personal identity (X_{10}), Importance attached with personality (X_{12}), Importance attached with the expression of self-image (X_{13})
2.	Age (x_2)	:	Age (X_1), Preference for online shopping (X_{22})
3.	Generic preference for ethnic dressing (x_3)	:	Preference for organic handloom (X_7), Preference for creativity with sound fabric sense (X_8), Importance attached with the manifestation of cultural values (X_{15}), Importance attached with heritage (X_{16})
4.	Attitude toward the value for money (x_4)	:	Importance attached with quality (X_3), Attitudes towards price sensitivity (X_4), Importance attached with the quality of customer service (X_{18})
5.	Attitudes toward perceived risk (x_5)	:	Importance attached with the assortment of merchandise (X_5), Importance attached with pleasing shopping atmospherics (X_{19}), Attitudes towards perceived risk (X_{21})
6.	Attitude toward the foreign country of origin (x_6)	:	Attitude toward foreign country of origin (X_{11}), Importance attached with credibility (X_{17})
7.	Preference for celebrity endorsement (x_7)	:	Importance attached with celebrity endorsement (X_{14})
8.	Attitude towards shopping time (x_8)	:	Willingness to spend time in product selection (X_2), Incompetence in bargaining (X_{20})

7.2 Regression Analysis

The eight (8) factors that have been identified from the factor analysis are used as independent variables (metric) in the regression analysis and the dependent variable (metric) is 'consumer preference for the clothing apparel of designer brands of boutiques and fashion houses in Bangladesh'.

Table 5: Model Summary & ANOVA (b)

Model Summary	
Model R R^2 Adjusted R^2 Std. Error of the Estimate	.745[a] .555 .524 1.013

Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	148.189	8	18.524	18.055	.000[a]
	Residual	119.011	116	1.026		
	Total	267.200	124			

a   Predictors: (constant), distinctiveness, age, ethnic dressing, value for money, perceived risk, foreign country of origin, celebrity endorsement, shopping time.

b   Dependent Variable: consumer preference for the clothing apparel of designer brands of boutiques and fashion houses in Bangladesh

7.2.1 Strength of Association

Model summary (table 5) shows that, the *multiple correlation coefficient*, R is .745. That means there are significant positive relationship existing among dependent and independent variables. So, consumer preference for the clothing apparel of designer brands of boutiques and fashion houses is highly correlated with the identified predictors (distinctiveness, age, ethnic dressing, value for money, perceived risk, foreign country of origin, celebrity endorsement and shopping time). The strength of association in multiple regression is measured by the *coefficient of multiple determination*, R^2 and here R^2 is .555. That means 55% of the consumer preference for the clothing apparel of designer brands of boutiques and fashion houses is accounted for by the variation in distinctiveness, age, ethnic dressing, value for money, perceived risk, foreign country of origin, celebrity endorsement and shopping time. It is then adjusted for the number of independent variables and the sample size to account for diminishing returns and the

adjusted R^2 is .524 with a standard error of 1.013. The value of adjusted R^2 is close to R^2. This suggests that all the independent variables make a contribution in explaining the variation in the consumer preference for the clothing apparel of designer brands of boutiques and fashion houses in Bangladesh.

7.2.2 Testing Hypothesis-2:

7.2.2.1 Significance of the Overall regression Equation (ANOVA (b))

The **F test** is used to test the null hypothesis for the overall test that the coefficient of multiple determination in the population, $R^2_{pop} = 0$. Here, $R^2 = 0.555$ which means that the null hypothesis can be rejected. This is equivalent to testing the null hypothesis: $H_0: \beta_1 = \beta_2 = \beta_3 = \beta_4 = \beta_5 = \beta_6 = 0$. Analysis of variance (table 5) shows that the overall test is conducted by using an F statistic where, F=18.055 which means the relationship is significant at $\alpha = 0.05$ level with 8 and 116 degrees of freedom. β's value associated with each of the independent variables for the model are not same and that means the null hypothesis can be rejected. So, it can be concluded that, 'consumer preference for the clothing apparel of designer brands of boutiques and fashion houses in Bangladesh' can be explained by distinctiveness, age, ethnic dressing, value for money, perceived risk, foreign country of origin, celebrity endorsement and shopping time. The explained variables have varying level of influences on forming the positive or negative attitudes of consumer preference for the clothing apparel of designer brands of boutiques and fashion houses in Bangladesh.

7.2.2.2 Significance of the Partial Coefficients (Coefficients (a)

Table 6: Coefficients (a)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.120		56.515	.000
	Preference for distinctiveness (x_1)	.192	.131	2.114	.037
	Age (x_2)	.458	.312	5.040	.000
	Generic preference for ethnic dressing (x_3)	.894	.609	9.827	.000
	Attitude toward the value for money (x_4)	.275	.187	3.024	.003

Attitudes toward perceived risk (x_5)	-.026	-.018	-.283	.778
Attitude toward the foreign country of origin (x_6)	-.020	-.014	-.220	.826
Preference for celebrity endorsement (x_7)	-.057	-.039	-.624	.534
Attitude towards shopping time (x_8)	-.263	-.179	-2.888	.005

a   Dependent Variable: consumer preference for the clothing apparel of designer brands of boutiques and fashion houses in Bangladesh

To determine which specific coefficients (β_1s) are nonzero, the significance of the partial coefficient for all the variables is tested by t-statistics (table 6). The partial regression coefficient for the preference for distinctiveness (x_1) is .192. The corresponding beta coefficient is .131. The value of t statistics, $t = 2.114$, with 116 degrees of freedom which is significant at $\alpha = 0.05$. The partial regression coefficient for age (x_2) is .458, with a beta coefficient of .312. The value of t statistics, $t = 5.040$, with 116 degrees of freedom which is also significant at the level of 0.05. The significance of the coefficient for all other independent variables is tested in a similar way and the generic preference for ethnic dressing (x_3), attitude toward the value for money (x_4) and attitude towards shopping time (x_8) are found to be significant and attitudes toward perceived risk (x_5), attitude toward the foreign country of origin (x_6) and preference for celebrity endorsement (x_7) are found to be insignificant. Therefore, distinctiveness, age, ethnic dressing, value for money and shopping time are important in explaining consumer preference for designer brands of boutiques and fashion houses.

So, the estimated regression equation is:

$Y^{\wedge} = 5.120 + 0.131\ x_1 + 0.312\ x_2 + 0.609\ x_3 + 0.187\ x_4 - 0.179\ x_8$

or,

Consumer preference for the clothing apparel of designer brands of boutiques and fashion houses in Bangladesh ($Y^{\wedge}$) = 5.120 + 0.131 (preference for distinctiveness) + 0.312 (age) + 0.609 (generic preference for ethnic dressing) + 0.187 (attitude toward the value for money) – 0.179 (attitude towards shopping time)

8.   Findings

The interpretation of quantitative research results presented in the paper reveals some criterion that have been found to influence the evaluation and buying decision of clothing

apparel. The paper presents interesting insights of critical issues. In the rotated component matrix, high coefficients have been found for uniqueness, aesthetic design, personal identity, personality and self-image. Moreover, there is high coefficient for age and a negative coefficient for online shopping. The negative coefficient leads to the interpretation that young customers prefer online shopping more than aged customers. Furthermore, high coefficients have been found for organic handloom, creativity with sound fabric sense, cultural values and heritage. Likewise, high coefficients have been found for quality and customer service and a negative coefficient for price sensitivity. Once more, the negative coefficient for a negative variable leads to an interpretation that the customers, who prefer quality and service tend to be less price sensitive. In the same way, high coefficients have been found for assortment of merchandise, pleasing shopping atmospherics and a negative coefficient for perceived risk. Similarly, high coefficients have been found for foreign country of origin and credibility. Over again, high coefficients have been found for celebrity endorsement. Besides, high coefficients have been found for willingness to spend time in product selection and a negative coefficient for incompetence in bargaining. It should be noted that, a negative coefficient for a negative variable (incompetence in bargaining) leads to a positive interpretation that the consumers' who are willing to spend time in product selection are also competent in bargaining.

The purpose was to have the variables or attributes that possess positive or negative association with clothing apparel of designer brands. Results of multiple regression analysis indicate that different *age* segments construct different judgments about preference. Moreover, Consumers pursue benefits in terms of some *material or functional attributes*, i.e., value for money (price, quality, customer service), shopping time (time in product selection, incompetence in bargain shopping) and some *psychological or symbolic attributes*, i.e., distinctiveness (uniqueness, experiment on aesthetic design, personal identity, personality, self-image), ethnicity (organic handloom, creativity with sound fabric sense, manifestation of cultural values, heritage). Value for money, distinctiveness and ethnicity are positively correlated and attitude toward shopping time is negatively correlated with the preference. These attributes serve as the significant drivers of consumer behavior towards clothing apparel of designer brand. Results give justification of the fact that, when forming an attitude toward a product, consumers really make evaluative association between the product and its utilitarian as well as hedonic attributes. There are some other attributes left, with which a negative association of consumer preference for designer brands has been revealed, i.e., attitudes toward perceived risk, attitude toward the foreign country of origin and preference for celebrity endorsement. But since the results regarding these factors are found to be insignificant, they have not been considered here for discussion.

9. Conclusion and Recommendations

Now-a-days, the consumer has become brand conscious and the market of designer brands is growing up in Bangladesh. From the very start, Bangladeshi boutiques and fashion houses are struggling with foreign trends and clothes. Gradually, they provide evidences that they can also produce world class product with local taste. Consumers' believe that boutiques and fashion houses are now able to beautifully balance a combination of aesthetically pleasing design with uniqueness and fashionable trendiness. Fashion and boutique houses imagine, introduce and communicate our native rich handcraft heritage and distinctive Bangladeshi artwork, fabrics in their dresses. Consumers' look for designer brands to go with their native image. The practical expertise of the weavers of Bangladesh is second to none in the world. Today the fashion and image conscious young and middle class people also tend to wear designer clothes while they find it affordable. Bangladeshi handcraft clothing has created a niche in the consumer markets.

Results of this study identify many important determinants of buyer behavior and provide a number of implications for the fashion designers, boutiques and fashion houses.

• Bangladesh is in the proud position of being able to possess of a range of ethnic handmade crafts like handloom cotton, Jamdani, Rajshahi Silk, Reshmi Silk, Comilla khadi, khaddar, Tangail Taant, Nakshikatha art and much more. Once upon a time, Muslin and Jamdani were legendary all over the world. Today's fashion designers can work with all these materials and can choose from a wide range of approaches and colors.

• The fashion houses should emphasize on encouraging consumers to buy traditional Bangladeshi products of our native designers. They should play the role of protector and promoter of traditional handlooms and should advertize to motivate the use of organic fabrics instead of foreign fabrics.

• Some times before, only wealthy people were the customers of boutiques and fashion houses, but at present it is a misconception. There is an increasing demand of designer clothes and to be competitive, fashion designers should be persistent with creativity and should constantly try to make a proper blend of price and quality.

• Marketers must consider the fact that different segments may prefer to carry fashion differently based on there need and/or the situation. As there is an ongoing change in the tastes and preferences of customers, the fashion designers must anticipate and act accordingly. New generation of designers should always try to create original style.

The notions that form the base of the paper come out with a significant application to consumer behavior, but these are subjected to further testing.

- In this study, customers of a particular social class (upper class and upper-middle class) of some specific locations (a few outlets of Dhaka and Sylhet) have been covered. Since different segments of customers perceive differently and construct different judgments about various attributes, further research is recommended in terms of social class, geographical area, cultural difference and occupation based on a mixture of urban and rural people in order to cover a broader consumer market.

- The study focused on a single apparel product category, i.e., clothing apparel. To develop an intense understanding of the preference for designer brand, it would be useful to consider the buying behavior in a broader variety of product categories, e.g., jewelry.

- The results can be justified further if more customers can be included as number of respondents. The small size of the sample presents a high risk for external validity. Besides, the survey instrument (questionnaire) had a total of twenty two questions relating to clothing apparel attributes. In order to conduct a more comprehensive study, questions regarding many other attributes may need to be formulated.

The future readers are requested to generalize the findings of this paper considering these constraints. All these things reveal huge opportunities for advance research. Research on a broader selection of these areas would help further understanding of consumer behavior.

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