

# REPOSITIONING STRATEGIES OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCING CONSUMER PREDILECTION OF BRANDED APPARELS AMONG CHENNAI YOUTH

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## ABSTRACT

*Fashion is inevitable in our day to day lives and apparels play a pivotal role. Fashion is one of the key factors that influence the youth to adhere to new changing trends. According to Flung. T.T, a fashion statement trending today can be outdated tomorrow. This study is based on generation Centennials the youth aged between 18 – 35 constituting the future target of brands. The youth of a country can be closely acquainted with fashion and its trends as they get adapted easily to changing trends. The availability and accessibility of international apparels brands is on the increase with the emergence of technology. The aim of this study is to provide an understanding the key influence of the repositioning strategies adopted by brands to retain consumers that result in repeat purchase using social media as a platform. Brands understand the cognitive behaviour of consumers through data and trigger them for a repurchase with brand repositioning. The key components influencing the repurchase of apparels among brands according to this study comprise of peer pressure, affordability, accessibility, quality, repositioning strategies and brand repositioning. The research gap identified in this study deals with feasibility of brand repositioning using social media that enable a consumer to stay connected. Social media marketing drives youngsters towards fashion trends that is linked with consumer predilection. Marketers use technology as a powerful weapon in retargeting and re-engaging existing consumers who use social media in identifying brands that offer fashionable apparels. Responses were collected using a structured questionnaire from the youth in Chennai irrespective of gender, qualification, social and marital status. Convenient sampling was used in collecting data which forms part of non-probability sampling method. The value of Cronbach's Alpha derived with the data was 0.882 which shows that the study is 88.2% reliable. All the data analysis pertaining to this study was analysed using SPSS v21 package. The results show that the quality aspect of branded apparels influence the consumers in repurchasing apparels.*

**Keywords:** Consumer Predilection, Social Media, Brand Repositioning, Retargeting, Repurchasing. Repositioning Strategies.

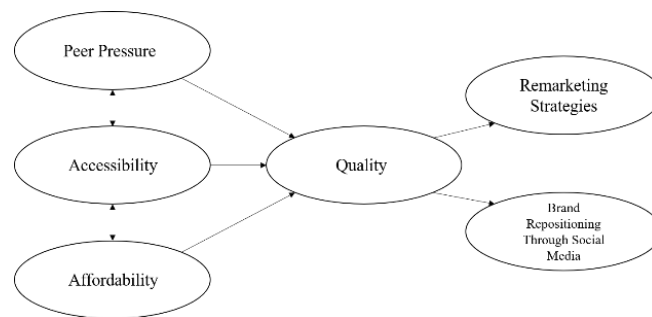
## INTRODUCTION

Indian apparel industry has been facing changes for more than a decade as the availability and demand for global apparel brands have increased to a great extent. Buying behaviour among the youth involves a lot of money and a drastic increase in the choice of branded apparels (Mahendher & Boaler 2016). Developing countries like India have youth consumers who generate attraction to international brands which has widened the scope of marketers. Consumers have gained brand awareness and have also become brand conscious. Youth being more receptive to global trends have caught the eye of the brands (Khare & Rakesh 2010). Globalisation has brought not just brands into the country but also has changed the lifestyle of consumers as they have adopted the use of western wear. It has widened the local market with the ability to access international apparel brands to a large extent by owning individual showrooms and outlets. Branded apparels are connoted as a status symbol as it communicates self-image and quality lifestyle. The emerging western market has blended well with traditional apparel styles creating a new market for indo-western wear without disrupting the Indian value system. Consumption patterns vary with perception in choosing clothes that fit well and is comfortable (Apeageyi, 2011). There is a huge market for branded apparels among the youth of the

nation as they adapt so well to changing trends. Choice of brands is a cognitive behaviour process which involves peer pressure, affordability and accessibility which has become very expressive in choosing branded apparels and is highly related to an individual's self-esteem. Social image of a consumer is positioned with use of branded apparels. Consumer predilection communicates the value of a consumer in the society. Global brands have steadily improved social image among users. Retaining customers is crucial as the preferences and tastes change from time to time. Marketers influence the buying decision of consumers (Milichovský & Mráček 2017). The major reason that branded apparels are preferred more over local produce is brand image, quality, durability and keeping track of trends at affordable cost. Price is the significant player when it comes to influencing the buyer in decision making (Bhatt, 2016). Fashion retailing of international brands choose fast fashion to meet the demand at the global level to match the customer requirements (Taplin, 2014). The entry of social media platforms and MNC's has brought in a huge cultural shift among Indian youth (Manohari, 2021). The price and quality of the apparels go hand in hand as the perceived value among customers that highly priced apparels are of high quality and apparels sold at lower prices are of low quality (Ismail et al., 2012). Targeting consumers with social media mediation has made it flexible and feasible for marketers to sell their apparels to their target audience for repositioning and repurchasing (Rahman, 2011). The real market is dependent on brand image, thus creating craze among youngsters for branded products.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Fashion through social media links brand consciousness and consumer predilection (Kautish, P *et.al*, 2018). Developing countries like India are becoming more brand oriented consumers. Brand consciousness is highly given importance among youth which makes them loyal to a particular brand and consumers end up choosing the same brand again and over again for repurchasing (Khare & Rakesh 2010). Social media platforms have replaced the old strategies followed by brands to retain customers efficiently and influence in repurchasing apparels again. Indian youth today focus on sustainability in fabric, this is one such untapped markets of the branded world. Peer pressure creates social consumption and status consumption which creates positive purchase intentions towards brands (Sevtap et al., 2019). Fast fashion adopted by brands can meet the preferences of consumers at a faster pace. International brands have the advantage to tap this market for brand-oriented consumer society (Taplin, 2014). Globalisation has restructured the apparels industry and brands have been taking steps in creating value for their customers. The Indian fashion industry is trying to add value to the products by creating brand awareness and brand consciousness. Consumer perception towards brands vary between genders. Women tend to be more considerate about the brand they choose to buy their apparels. There are high levels of perception among women with respect to choosing trendy apparels, quality of the fabric and pricing of the apparels when compared to men in deciding to purchase. Customer choices and the comfort of shopping from home has positive impact in choosing brands that leverage innovation in selling their apparels to young consumers who predominantly choose quality (Jürgensen, K., *et.al* 2018). Apparel brands following fast fashion is now taking a new dimension in introducing sustainable fabric to capture the Indian market among youngsters. Consumers are brand conscious and are not new to online buying. They are also aware of what they purchase online, yet there is a gap in understanding the quality before the purchase action is taken (Manohari, 2021). Preferred comfort and style with main focus on quality shows tendency among young customers in adapting to apparels needs (Rahman, 2011). Online purchase trend focusses us on saving time, comfort of shopping from home, convenience, privacy, product variety etc., the youth depend mainly on shopping from the comfort of home (Bashir *et.al.*, 2015). Purchase decision is triggered by providing adequate information through business messages sent to target consumers with regard to coupons, discounts and offers. Brands used this opportunity to create competitive advantage. Brands use social media to send reminder messages on discounts, coupon codes etc., using the data collected through pop up ads, social media suggestions to stay connected with their customers Figure 1.



**FIGURE 1**  
**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

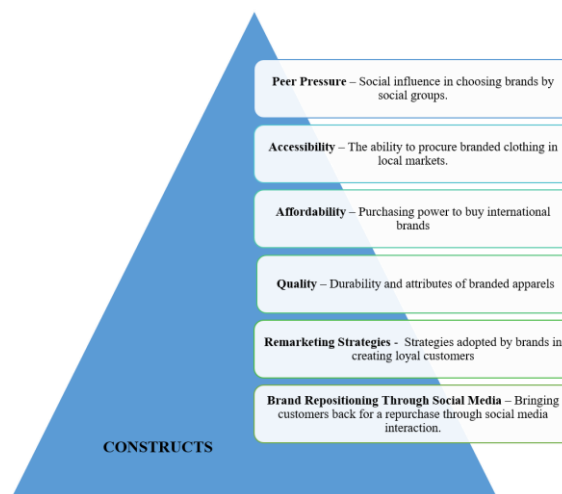
**Source:** The Authors.

Social media highly influences the purchase decision among youth by being instrumental in trending fashion among the youth (Milichovský, F., *et.al*, 2017). Brands are in a position to compliment the aesthetic likings of men and women who are conscious about their image, fashion consumers are preoccupied with life style changes and the entrustment of social responsibility (Apegyei, 2011). Social media platforms such as; Facebook has the new market place for buying and selling consumer goods. Instagram has business accounts that trade small scale business of products and services, it also used as a tool to make money by content creators. WhatsApp has provision for business accounts to promote goods and services. Pinterest may sound new to many but has created a huge platform for content creators in making money. Other related products on social media suggestions have gained dominance as personalized suggestions are catered to each consumer. Local brands have also become active users of social media to stay connected with their customers (Tee, et al., 2015).

Peer pressure is a form of social influence that is prevalent within a group of people who fall under the same demographics. It can also be called the influence of certain behaviour in a group that impact individuals and there is a tendency that everybody follows. Peer pressure has been instrumental in creating brand awareness and has attracted many consumers (Chang & Nguyen 2018). Brands have reached its target audience through peer socialisation which maintains existing social hierarchy among peers (Williams & Littlefield, 2018). The growth of internet and online shopping in Indian is growing at a faster pace when compared to the worldwide growth. Marketers can tap the retail online market to cater to the youth consumers who are well acquainted with social media Accessibility is always saving time and convenient. Comparing market rates of similar products and brands is easy through online medium. There are certain barriers such as lack of touch and feel of the apparels, extensive duration of delivery, fraud in online payment and usage of personal information. Online shopping also caters to a colossal number of positive prospects as buyers can check reviews on products, personalized recommendations. Special discounts etc., which paves way for easy decision making among consumers (Jackson, K, 2018) Youngsters are very passionate in choosing branded apparels over local produce In spite of apparels being costly and inaccessible. People tend to become loyal to a particular brand after repeatedly purchasing from brands and show involvement (Nesha, et al., 2019). India being one of the hubs that manufacture textiles for export expresses low quality as there are many sweatshop issues that have been brought to light. Consumers choose brands and avoid locally sourced and produced apparels, it also initiates in exploring the consumer perspectives and traders targeting parallelly (Fioratta, 2019). Brand sensitive youth choose fast fashion in connection with fashion brand preferences. Individuals who are brand sensitive are also price sensitive, they are early adopters of new trends (Nistor, 2019). Purchase decision starts with the desire to purchase till

post purchase which triggers the future purchasing habits of individuals. Content consumption is the kick start point of any desire. Pervasive digital medium has highly influenced buying decision.

The intervention of social media has catered to increase sales and income in the fashion industry. The tremendous growth in marketing has improved the economy of the country. Online medium has now changed many factors in assisting consumers in choosing products. Online platform has changed the traditional habits of buying apparels (Dasgupta & Grover 2019). Traditional businesses have incorporated strategies to promote their products through digital medium to target the potential customers. Digitalisation has given marketers the opportunity to analyse consumer behaviour. The number of internet users have increased rapidly. Scrolling through social media has inculcated the values of international brands and since then brands have grabbed this scope to implement marketing strategies in online platforms resulting in huge consumer engagement (Jamble, R. 2021). Pricing of apparel tends to be the competition factor among brands. The conspicuous attitude of consumers illustrates the brand repositioning and focus those retailers should maintain in bridging the gap of consumer satisfaction (Ghosh et al., 2021). Millennials are luxury consumers who choose global brands, attracting them and maintaining brand equity through brand repositioning is challenging. The process of repositioning brands in the consumers' mind is important in keeping them loyal to the brand and to bring them back for a repurchase. Repositioning strategies are backed up by brand performance to enhance market orientation (Cano et al., 2019). The key element that affects buying behaviour is money and the quality received for the money spent. Every buying aspect substantially contributes to the hidden aspect of quality which affects the decision of buying apparels among the youth (Figure 2). Brands should pay attention to segmentation, targeting and positioning (STP) to cater to the explicit needs of the consumers to offer better value (Dhiman, et al., 2018).



**FIGURE 2**  
**CONSTRUCTS OF THE STUDY**

**Source:** The Authors.

## METHODOLOGY

This study concentrates on brand repositioning strategies among Indian youth and aims to identify the impact of dependent constructs like peer pressure, accessibility and affordability that impact repositioning strategies and brand repositioning with quality as the mediating factor. The sample size in this study is 115 and is descriptive in nature. Convenient sampling method under non-probability technique was adopted. Indian youth consumers who fall under the age group of 18 to 35 who purchase branded apparels were the respondents of this study. The questionnaire was structured in a way which consists of seven sections, the first section holds questions related to the demographic

profile of the respondents with multiple choice questions and the next of six sections comprises of 5-point Likert scales related to peer pressure, accessibility, affordability, quality, repositioning strategies and brand repositioning. The review of literature and questions for the questionnaire was collected from various newspaper articles, websites, and research articles from journals. The respondents were selected irrespective of age groups, educational qualification, income slabs, marital status etc. Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess the reliability of the constructs in the study and the derived value was 0.882. SPSS v21 package was used to analyse the collected data.

### Data Collection and Discussion

The test of reliability of the constructs was assessed with Cronbach's alpha, the value more than 0.7 is treated as reliable. Test of normality of the constructs was analysed using the Skewness and Kurtosis. Values that lie between +/- 3 (Hair et al., 2006) of Skewness and Kurtosis show that the data has normal distribution.

S. No	Construct	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha	Skewness	Kurtosis
1	Peer pressure	4	0.878	-0.152	-1.279
2	Affordability	4	0.879	-0.693	-1.467
3	Accessibility	4	0.877	-1.325	-0.534
4	Repositioning strategies	4	0.876	-1.094	-0.885
5	Quality	4	0.875	-1.514	-0.492
6	Repositioning through social media	4	0.877	-1.994	-1.280
	<b>Overall reliability of the study</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0.882</b>		

**Source:** Primary data.

It is evident from Table 1 that shows reliability values of this study ranges between 0.875 and 0.882. the overall reliability of the study identified with the help of data is 0.882 and in terms of percentage the reliability is 88.2%. The Cronbach's alpha value of the constructs is found to be above the threshold limit of 0.7 and the normality of data is assessed through Skewness and Kurtosis which shows values that fall within the threshold limit of +/- 3 hence the data collected is normally distributed.

Demographic Profile	Category	No. of respondents (N=115)	Percentage
Age	18-20	41	35.7
	21-25	56	48.7
	26-30	10	8.7
	31-35	8	7.0
Gender	Male	53	46.1
	Female	62	53.9
Educational Qualification	Schooling/Diploma	3	2.6
	Under Graduate	62	53.9
	Post Graduate	41	35.7

	Professional	9	7.8
<b>Social Status</b>	Student	72	62.6
	Government Employee	2	1.7
	Private Employee	34	29.6
	Entrepreneur	7	6.1
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married	12	10.4
	Unmarried	100	87.0
	Others	3	2.6
<b>Family income (per annum)</b>	2,50,000-5,00,000	62	53.9
	5,00,001-7,00,000	17	14.8
	7,00,001-10,00,000	15	13.0
	> 10,00,000	21	18.3
<b>Money spent on apparels</b>	< 2500	51	44.3
	> 2500	36	31.3
	< 5000	18	15.7
	> 5000	10	8.7
<b>Time spent on social media</b>	< 30 mins	9	7.8
	> 30 mins	14	12.2
	< 1 hr	63	54.8
	> 1 hr	29	25.2
<b>Source of social media awareness</b>	Facebook	28	24.3
	WhatsApp	16	13.9
	Instagram	66	57.4
	Pinterest	5	4.3

*Source - Primary data*

The data for this study was collected through primary sources. Table 2 depicts the demographic profile of the respondents who form part of the primary data, which was collected by the authors. The respondents were categorised according to their age, gender, educational qualification, marital status and social status. The study was conducted among the youth of Chennai city who fall within the age group of 18 to 35. Respondents who fall between 18 – 20 (35.7 %), 21 – 25 (48.7 %), 26 – 30 (8.7 %) and 31 – 35 (7.0%). The percentage of male respondents who have participated in the study account to (46.1%) and female respondents account to (53.9%). Respondents represent various educational qualifications; schooling/diploma (2.6 %), undergraduates (53.9 %), postgraduates (35.7 %) and professionals (7.8 %) and hold different social statuses such as students (62.6 %), government employee (1.7 %), private employees (29.6 %) and entrepreneurs (6.11 %). The marital statuses of respondents were married (10.4 %), unmarried (87.0 %) and others (2.6 %).

The income slab of the respondents fall under are 2,50,000-5,00,000 (53.9 %), 5,00,001-7,00,000 (14.8%), 7,00,001-10,00,000 (13%) and more than 10,00,000 (18.3 %). Money spent on apparels by the respondents account to spending less than 2500 rupees (44.3 %) more than 2500 rupees (31.3%), less than 5000 rupees (15.7 %) and mor than 5000 rupees (8.7 %). Youngsters spend most of their time on social media. The respondents who spend less than 30 minutes account to (7.8%), more than 30 minutes account to (12.2%), less than an hour is spent by (54.8%) and more than an hour is spent by (25.2). Social media mostly used by Indian youth are Facebook (24.3%), WhatsApp (13.9%), Instagram (57.4%) and Pinterest (4.3%).

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.779
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1041.088
	df	276
	Sig.	0

Source - Primary data

Table 3 shows Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of 0.779 confirms the sample size taken for this analysis is appropriate and depicts the global standard value of KMO that should be between 0.6 to 1. The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity's Chi-Square value of 1041.088 ( $p=.000$ ) is also found as significant.

Factor	Component	Factor Loading
Factor 1	Access to international brands (C2)	0.698
	Durability (Q1)	0.722
	Wide range (Q2)	0.711
	Clothes for all occasions (Q3)	0.514
	Fabric sustainability (Q4)	0.676
Factor 2	Benefits of accumulated points (R1)	0.693
	Reminder messages (R2)	0.741
	Personalized services (R3)	0.624
	Coupon codes and vouchers (R4)	0.636
Factor 3	Social media trends (RS1)	0.700
	Pop up ads during screen time (RS2)	0.768
	Irrelevant product advertisements (RS3)	0.784
Factor 4	Expensive (A3)	0.585
	Social media suggestions (RS4)	0.673
Factor 5	Best alternative (A4)	0.745
	Local accessibility (C1)	0.600
Factor 6	Peer influence (P1)	0.744
	Peer preference towards branded clothes (P3)	0.784
Factor 7	Affordability (A1)	0.845

Source - Primary data.

The components of the factors and their factor loadings are portrayed in Table 4. The factors that were related to this study was explored using exploratory factor analysis with principal components analysis with option of vari-max rotation and the variables were reduced to 19 factors.

Table 4 infers that factor 1 is a combination of five variables such as; "Access to international brands" (C2), "Durability" (Q1), "Wide range" (Q2), "Clothes for all occasions" (Q3) and "Fabric sustainability" (Q4) which is termed as "Quality". Factor 2 is grouped with four variables such as; "Benefits of accumulated points" (R1), "Reminder messages" (R2), "Personalized services" (R3) and "Coupon codes and vouchers" (R4) which are named as "Repositioning strategies".

Factor 3 consists of three variables such as; "Social media trends" (RS1), "Pop up ads during screen time" (RS2) and "Irrelevant product advertisements" (RS3) which is named as "Repositioning through social media". Factor 4 consists of two variable such as; "Expensive" (A3) and "Social media suggestions" (RS4) which is termed as "Convenience". Factor 5 consists of three variables such as;

“Best alternative” (A4), “Local accessibility” (C1) and “Peer influence” (P1) which is termed as “Peer influenced accessibility”. Factor 6 consists of two variable such as; “Peer influence” (P1) and “Peer preference towards branded clothes” (P3) which is termed as “Peer influence on brands”. Lastly factor 7 shows only one variable; Affordability (A1) Table 5.

<b>Component</b>	<b>Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings</b>		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of Variance</b>	<b>Cumulative %</b>
1	6.610	27.542	27.542
2	2.039	8.495	36.037
3	1.797	7.487	43.525
4	1.524	6.349	49.874
5	1.378	5.743	55.617
6	1.196	4.984	60.600
7	1.096	4.565	65.165

**Source:** Primary data.

It is noted from the analysis that the 19 variables are reduced to seven distinct factors. It is confirmed by the Eigen values: 6.610, 2.039, 1.797, 1.524, 1.378, 1.196 and 1.096, which are all greater than unity. The percentage of variance explored by the seven factors is 27.542, 8.495, 7.487, 6.349, 5.743, 4.984 and 4.565 respectively. Total cumulative variance explored by the reduced seven factors is observed as 27.542 %.

It is noted that quality is most preferred among Indian youth. Repositioning strategies adopted by brands retaining their existing consumers. The cognitive behaviour of Chennai youth show brands have strongly repositioned their names which in turn encourages a future purchase.

## CONCLUSION

Social media is responsible for the fast-spreading fashion trends across the globe. Branded apparels are available in a variety of ranges for all genders. Chennai being the metro city has access to almost all the international brands available in India. In today’s scenario, accessibility and affordability of branded apparels is a game changer and youngsters are free to express their freedom of choice. The use of social media is growing at a faster pace from 3.196 billion (2020) to 4.388 billion (2021). Marketers consider social media as a tool to enhance repositioning the brand among users. Brands track the cognitive behaviour of individuals using data mining and predict the future outcomes. Brands use repositioning strategies such as; reminder messages, personalized services, discounts, coupons and pop-up ad suggestions. Social media is also used for the purpose of creating awareness regarding brand discounts and product details. India has a noticeable large youth population in the world with 356 million young people (Ministry of Human Resources, 2021) hence consumer predilection and repositioning strategies through social media influences repurchase of branded apparels among youth.

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