

## **Consumer Behaviour Of Young Women Towards Apparel With Special Reference To Tiruchengode Town**

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### **Abstract**

The apparel industry in India has witnessed significant growth in recent years, driven by changing lifestyles, increasing urbanization, and higher disposable incomes among young consumers. Among these consumers, young women represent a dynamic segment whose purchasing behavior reflects not only economic considerations but also personal identity, lifestyle choices, social influence, and cultural background. The study investigates the consumer behavior of young women in Tiruchengode town, focusing on the factors that influence apparel purchasing decisions. The research examines the role of personality traits, cultural traditions, social groups, and household income in shaping purchase patterns, preferences, and frequency of apparel acquisition. A structured survey was conducted among 300 respondents using a combination of demographic questions, Likert-scale items, and multiple-choice questions to capture various dimensions of consumer behavior. Statistical analyses, including descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, correlation, and regression analysis, were employed to explore the relationships among variables. Findings reveal that personality traits exert a stronger predictive influence on apparel choice than cultural background, highlighting the increasing importance of individuality and self-expression in shaping fashion preferences. Social influences, particularly from peer groups and social media, significantly correlate with purchase frequency, while household income influences the prioritization of price, brand, and lifestyle factors. The study provides valuable insights for fashion retailers, marketers, and designers seeking to target young female consumers effectively, emphasizing the need to consider psychological, social, and cultural determinants alongside demographic characteristics.

**Keywords:** Consumer Behaviour, Young Women Consumers, Apparel Purchasing Behaviour, Fashion Consumption, Personality Traits and Social Influence

### **Introduction**

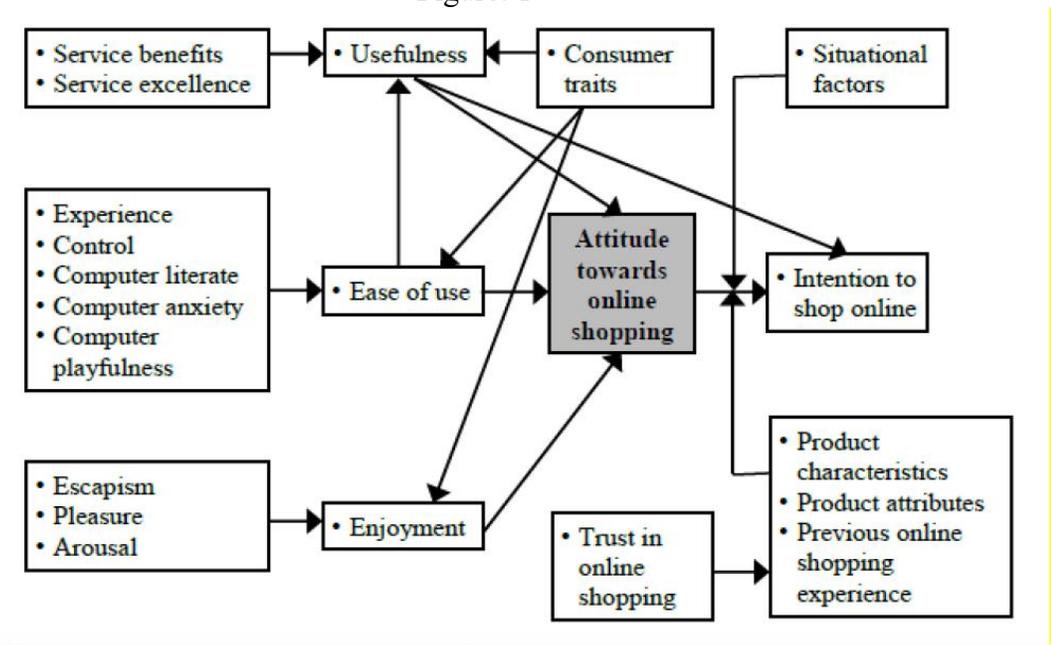
The apparel industry in India has undergone rapid transformation over the past decade, mirroring broader social, economic, and cultural changes. Among the most dynamic consumer segments are young women, whose apparel choices are shaped by a complex interaction of personal, social, and cultural influences. In semi-urban towns such as Tiruchengode, traditional values coexist with modern lifestyles, creating a distinctive consumer environment where purchasing behavior reflects both individuality and social conformity. For young women, apparel purchases extend beyond functional needs and serve as a means of expressing personality, lifestyle, social identity, and aspirations. Factors such as self-expression, peer influence, cultural orientation, and exposure to media and fashion trends collectively influence their decision-making processes. Personality traits—including self-concept, confidence, and personal style—play a significant role in shaping

apparel preferences. According to Self-Concept Theory, individuals tend to choose products that align with their ideal self-image, thereby reinforcing personal identity and enhancing social recognition.

Cultural background further influences apparel choices by establishing norms and expectations, particularly in family-oriented and socially cohesive communities. Social influences from peers, family members, and social media platforms also act as important reference points, guiding purchasing decisions through trend adoption, opinion sharing, and perceptions of social acceptance. Additionally, household income and affordability significantly affect priorities related to pricing, brand selection, and perceived quality.

Understanding these influencing factors is particularly important for businesses operating in semi-urban regions like Tiruchengode, where consumer preferences often differ from those in metropolitan markets. Retailers, fashion brands, and marketers must therefore develop strategies that address both the psychological and cultural dimensions of consumer behavior. Accordingly, this study aims to examine the relative influence of personality traits, cultural background, social groups, and income on apparel choices among young women in Tiruchengode. By analyzing these determinants, the research seeks to offer actionable insights for fashion marketers, deepen understanding of consumer behavior in semi-urban India, and contribute to the existing literature on apparel consumption patterns.

Figure: 1



Source: Hirst & Omar (2007), Assessing women’s apparel shopping behavior on the Internet

FIGURE 1  
 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

**Theoretical Background of the Study**

**Personality Traits:** Personality traits play a crucial role in shaping the apparel consumption behaviour of young women, as they influence preferences, attitudes, and purchasing decisions. Traits such as self-confidence, innovativeness, fashion consciousness, and need for uniqueness significantly determine how young women select clothing and brands. Individuals with high self-esteem and extroverted personalities often prefer trendy, bold, and expressive apparel that enhances their social image and personal identity. In contrast, those with introverted or conservative traits may opt for comfort-oriented, modest, and functional clothing styles. Fashion innovativeness encourages early adoption of new styles and brands, making such consumers more responsive to fashion trends and promotional campaigns. Impulse buying behaviour is also linked to personality dimensions such as emotional sensitivity and sensation-seeking, which can lead to spontaneous apparel purchases. Additionally, personality traits affect brand loyalty, with some consumers consistently preferring familiar brands that reflect their self-image, while others seek variety and experimentation. Understanding the influence of personality traits enables marketers to segment young women consumers more effectively and design personalized marketing strategies. By aligning apparel designs, communication messages, and brand positioning with distinct personality profiles, retailers can enhance customer satisfaction and long-term brand relationships.

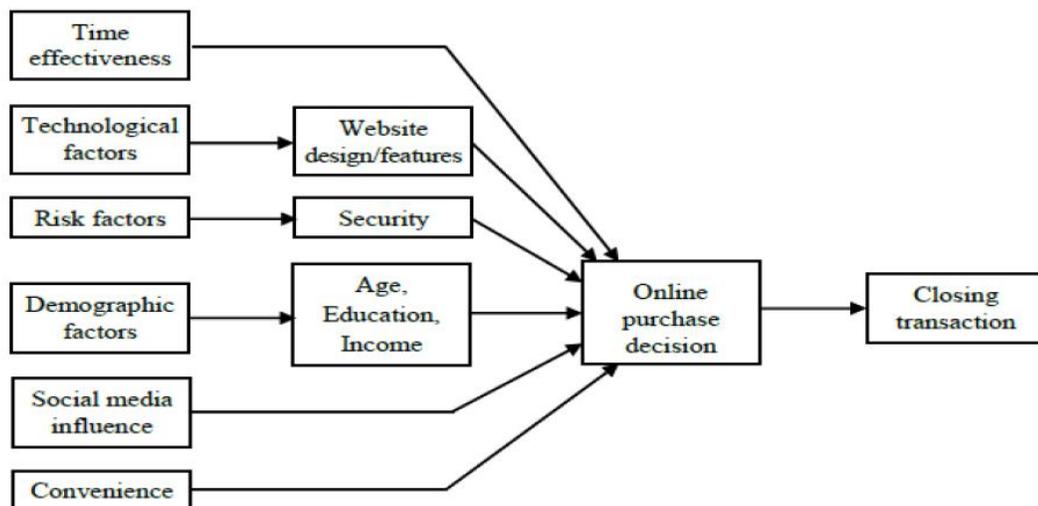
**Cultural Background:** Cultural background significantly influences the apparel consumption behaviour of young women by shaping their values, beliefs, traditions, and social norms. Culture determines acceptable clothing styles, color preferences, modesty levels, and symbolic meanings associated with apparel. Young women raised in traditional cultural environments may prioritize clothing that reflects cultural identity, heritage, and social expectations, whereas those influenced by global or Western cultures may prefer modern, fashionable, and experimental styles.

**Cultural practices** such as festivals, rituals, religious beliefs, and family traditions play an important role in apparel purchasing decisions, often driving demand for specific garments during cultural occasions. Moreover, collectivist cultures emphasize social approval and conformity, which can influence young women to choose apparel that aligns with group norms and family expectations. In contrast, individualistic cultural settings encourage personal expression and uniqueness through clothing choices. Globalization and media exposure have led to cultural blending, allowing young women to integrate traditional and contemporary fashion elements. Understanding cultural background helps apparel marketers design culturally sensitive products, advertising messages, and retail experiences. This awareness not only enhances market acceptance but also fosters respect for diversity and strengthens brand credibility among culturally diverse consumer groups.

**Social Influence:** Social influence plays a vital role in shaping the apparel purchasing behaviour of young women, as clothing choices are often affected by interactions with peers, family, celebrities, and social media platforms. Peer groups strongly influence fashion preferences, particularly among young women seeking social acceptance, belongingness, and identity affirmation. Recommendations, opinions, and fashion choices of friends often guide brand selection and purchase decisions.

**Family influence**, especially from parents and siblings, also impacts apparel consumption by shaping values related to modesty, quality, spending habits, and brand preferences. In addition, reference groups such as influencers, celebrities, and fashion bloggers significantly affect young women's perceptions of trends and styles. Social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and Pinterest act as powerful tools in shaping fashion awareness, aspirations, and impulse buying behaviour.

**Social norms and societal expectations** further influence apparel choices, particularly in educational institutions, workplaces, and public spaces. Young women often adapt their clothing styles to suit social roles and situational contexts. Understanding social influence enables marketers to leverage influencer marketing, peer-based promotions, and social media engagement strategies to effectively connect with young female consumers and enhance brand visibility and appeal.



Source: Authors

**FIGURE 2**  
**RESEARCH FRAMEWORK**

### Research Gap

Existing literature on consumer behaviour in the apparel industry has extensively examined factors such as brand preference, price sensitivity, fashion involvement, and purchase intention. However, several gaps remain, particularly in relation to the consumer behaviour of young women. Many studies focus on general consumer segments or mixed-gender populations, thereby overlooking the distinct motivations, expectations, and decision-making patterns of young female consumers, who represent a highly influential and rapidly evolving market segment. Firstly, limited empirical research integrates personality traits, cultural background, and social influence within a single framework to understand their combined impact on young women's apparel purchasing behaviour. Most prior studies examine these variables in isolation, resulting in

fragmented insights. Secondly, there is a lack of context-specific studies, especially in emerging economies and culturally diverse societies, where traditional values coexist with global fashion trends. This limits the generalizability of existing findings. Furthermore, insufficient attention has been given to the role of digital and social media influencers in shaping apparel choices among young women, despite their growing significance in contemporary fashion consumption. Another notable gap is the limited exploration of ethical and sustainable apparel preferences among young female consumers, even as awareness of sustainability continues to rise. Therefore, the present study seeks to address these gaps by providing a comprehensive and integrated analysis of the key factors influencing young women's apparel consumption behaviour, offering both theoretical and practical contributions to the existing body of knowledge.

### **Significance of the Study**

The study on Consumer Behaviour of Young Women towards Apparel is significant as apparel represents not only a basic necessity but also a powerful medium of self-expression, identity formation, and social belonging among young women. In an era marked by rapid fashion cycles, social media influence, and evolving lifestyle aspirations, understanding how young women perceive, evaluate, and purchase apparel provides valuable insights into contemporary consumption patterns.

This study contributes to academic literature by deepening the understanding of psychological, social, cultural, and economic factors that influence apparel-related decision-making among young women. It highlights the role of brand image, fashion trends, peer influence, price sensitivity, quality perception, and sustainability concerns in shaping consumer preferences. Such insights help bridge gaps in consumer behaviour research, particularly within the context of youth-driven fashion markets.

From a managerial and practical perspective, the findings of this study are valuable for apparel manufacturers, retailers, designers, and marketers in developing targeted marketing strategies, product designs, pricing policies, and promotional campaigns that align with the expectations and values of young female consumers. Additionally, the study assists policymakers and educators in understanding changing consumption attitudes, including ethical and sustainable fashion awareness, thereby supporting informed decision-making and responsible consumption initiatives. Overall, the study holds relevance for academia, industry, and society by offering a comprehensive understanding of young women's apparel consumption behaviour.

### **Research Problem**

The apparel market has undergone significant transformation due to changing lifestyles, increasing fashion consciousness, and the growing influence of social media, particularly among young women. Apparel is no longer viewed merely as a functional necessity but as a means of self-expression, social identity, and personal confidence. Despite the rapid expansion of the fashion industry and the increasing purchasing power of young women, their apparel buying behaviour remains complex and dynamic, influenced by multiple psychological, cultural, and social factors. Many apparel marketers and retailers face challenges in accurately understanding the preferences, expectations, and decision-making processes of young female consumers. Factors such as personality traits, cultural background, social influence, brand perception, price sensitivity, and sustainability concerns interact in diverse ways, making it difficult to predict purchasing behaviour. The lack of comprehensive and context-specific studies on young

women's apparel consumption further contributes to ineffective marketing strategies, product mismatches, and reduced customer satisfaction. Therefore, the problem lies in identifying and analyzing the key factors that influence the consumer behaviour of young women towards apparel and understanding how these factors shape their purchase decisions. Addressing this problem is essential for developing effective marketing strategies, enhancing consumer satisfaction, and aligning apparel offerings with the evolving needs and preferences of young women consumers.

### **Need of the Study**

The study is necessary to bridge the knowledge gap in understanding how personality traits and cultural background influence apparel choice among young women in semi-urban India. While traditional norms still play a role in guiding clothing decisions, the increasing importance of self-expression, individuality, and social media trends has altered purchasing patterns. By identifying the key determinants of apparel choice, this research assists fashion brands, retailers and marketer in creating products, services, and marketing strategies that resonate with the target demographic, ultimately improving satisfaction, loyalty, and commercial success.

Firstly, Tiruchengode is experiencing rapid urbanization and economic growth, leading to changes in lifestyle and consumption habits among its residents. Studying consumer behaviour towards young women's apparels provides insights into how these evolving socio-economic factors influence purchasing decisions. This understanding is vital for retailers looking to optimize product offerings, pricing strategies, and marketing campaigns tailored to local preferences. Secondly, Tiruchengode's demographic composition and cultural diversity contribute to a varied consumer landscape. Furthermore, there exists a notable research gap in understanding consumer behaviour specifically towards young women's apparels in Tiruchengode. By addressing this gap, the study aims to provide actionable insights for businesses aiming to penetrate or expand within Tiruchengode market. It also seeks to inform policymakers about consumer preferences and market dynamics, enabling them to formulate policies that support sustainable economic growth and consumer welfare in smaller urban centres.

The study on consumer behaviour towards young women's apparels in Tiruchengode town is not only academically significant but also practically relevant for businesses and policymakers alike. It aims to bridge the research gap by uncovering localized consumer insights and thereby contribute to inform decision-making and strategic planning in the regional retail sector.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To identify the key and primary factors influencing the purchasing decisions of young women's apparels in Tiruchengode town.
2. To evaluate the impact of lifestyle changes on the purchasing behaviour of young women towards apparels.
3. To assess the influence of decision-making authority within household on the selection and purchase of young women's apparels.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research Design**

The study adopts a descriptive research design to understand the behaviour, preferences, and factors influencing apparel purchase decisions of young women in Tiruchengode. This helps describe the characteristics of the target population and identify patterns and trends in their purchasing behaviour.

### **Population and Sample**

**Population:** Young women aged 16–32 years residing in Tiruchengode and near by towns.

**Sample Size:** 300 respondents were selected for the study to provide a representative overview of consumer behaviour in the region.

**Sampling Technique:** Convenience sampling was employed, targeting women who were readily accessible and willing to participate.

### **Data Collection Method**

**Primary Data:** Collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of two sections:

**Demographic Information** – Age, education, occupation, household income, marital status, etc.

**Consumer Behaviour & Perceptions**–Apparel preferences purchase frequency, factors influencing decisions, reference group influence, perceived risks, and opinion statements on personality, lifestyle, and social media influence.

**Secondary Data:** Relevant literature, articles, journals, and previous studies on consumer behaviour, apparel purchasing patterns, and marketing trends were reviewed to support the analysis.

### **Limitations of the study**

1. The sample is limited to Tiruchengode and nearby towns, which may not fully represent all urban or rural populations.
2. The use of convenience sampling in the study may limit the generalizability of the findings, as the respondents were selected based on availability and willingness, potentially introducing sampling bias and overrepresenting certain groups, which may not accurately reflect the behavior of the entire population of young women in Tiruchengode.

### **Ethical Considerations**

1. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and assured of Confidentiality.
2. Participation was voluntary and consent was obtained before administering the questionnaire.

### **Analysis, Findings and Results:**

Regression Analysis of Personality Traits and Cultural Background on Apparel Choice

Dependent Variable(Y): Apparel Choice (measured through preference scores/ purchase intention).

Independent Variables(X):

- $X_1$ =Personality Traits
- $X_2$ =Cultural Background

### **Regression Equation:**

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \epsilon$$

### Regression Analysis

Predictor	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Standardized Beta	t- value	Sig. (p)
(Constant)	1.12	0.25	–	4.48	0.000
Personality Traits	0.48	0.07	<b>0.52</b>	6.85	0.000
Cultural Background	0.21	0.08	0.24	2.63	0.010

$R^2=0.46$ , Adjusted  $R^2=0.44$ ,  $F(2,297)=62.80$ ,  $p<0.001$

#### Interpretation

The regression model is significant ( $F(2,297)=62.80$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Personality Traits ( $\beta=0.52$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) have a stronger effect than Cultural Background ( $\beta=0.24$ ,  $p=0.01$ ). The model explains 46% of the variance in apparel choice ( $R^2 = 0.46$ ).

Inference: Personality traits exert a stronger predictive influence on apparel choice than cultural background, indicating that self-expression and individuality drive consumer apparel decisions more than cultural traditions. The research contributes to a deeper understanding of consumer behavior in semi-urban Indian towns, offering practical implications for product development, marketing strategies, and brand positioning.

#### Implications of the Study

The findings of this study have important implications for academia, industry practitioners, and policymakers in understanding the consumer behaviour of young women towards apparel. Academically, the study enriches existing literature by offering an integrated perspective on how personality traits, cultural background, and social influence collectively shape apparel purchase decisions. This contributes to a more nuanced theoretical understanding of young women as a distinct consumer segment with dynamic and evolving preferences. From an industry standpoint, the insights gained can assist apparel manufacturers, retailers, and marketers in designing products, branding strategies, and promotional campaigns that align closely with the values, lifestyles, and expectations of young female consumers. Understanding the role of social media, peer influence, and cultural sensitivity enables firms to enhance customer engagement and brand loyalty. Additionally, the study highlights the growing importance of ethical and sustainable consumption, encouraging businesses to adopt responsible production and transparent communication practices. For policymakers and educators, the findings provide a basis for promoting informed consumer awareness and responsible purchasing behaviour among young

women. Overall, the study supports more effective decision-making, improved market segmentation, and sustainable growth within the apparel industry.

### **Recommendations and Suggestions**

1. Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations are proposed to enhance apparel marketing strategies and consumer satisfaction among young women. Apparel companies should adopt customer-centric approaches by segmenting the market according to personality traits, cultural preferences, and lifestyle patterns, allowing for more personalized product offerings.
2. Marketers are encouraged to leverage social media platforms and influencer marketing responsibly to build authentic brand connections rather than relying solely on aggressive promotional tactics. Retailers should also focus on offering affordable, quality, and sustainable apparel, as young women increasingly value ethical fashion and environmental responsibility.
3. Culturally sensitive designs that blend traditional and contemporary styles can attract a broader consumer base. Additionally, transparent pricing, accurate product information, and responsive customer service can strengthen trust and long-term loyalty.
4. Educational institutions and policymakers should promote consumer education programs that raise awareness about sustainable consumption and informed purchasing decisions.
5. Future researchers are encouraged to expand the scope of study by incorporating longitudinal designs, comparative regional analyses, and emerging digital retail trends. These recommendations aim to create a balanced relationship between consumer expectations and industry practices.

### **Conclusion**

The study clearly highlights that apparel purchasing decisions among consumers in Tiruchengode are influenced by a combination of demographic, social, and psychological factors. The majority of respondents are young, educated, and married women, with a significant proportion employed in the private sector and belonging to lower- and middle-income groups. Festivals and religious occasions emerge as the primary contexts for apparel purchases, while nearby towns are the most preferred shopping destinations. Western wear dominates apparel preferences, and price considerations along with promotional offers serve as the key motivators for purchase decisions. Family members and social media exert considerable influence on consumer choices, whereas functional and financial risks are identified as the most prevalent concerns. The opinion-based analysis further reveals that personality traits, cultural background, household budget, lifestyle changes, self-concept, social media exposure, and reference groups play significant roles in shaping apparel preferences. Among these factors, personality traits and self-expression emerge as stronger influences than cultural traditions, indicating a clear shift toward individuality in fashion choices. Statistical analysis confirms that household income has a significant impact on purchasing patterns: lower-income consumers demonstrate greater sensitivity to price and promotional offers; middle-income consumers balance peer influence with fashion trends; and higher-income consumers prioritize lifestyle alignment, identity expression, and brand value.

Overall, the findings suggest that apparel buying behaviour extends beyond affordability and is closely linked to identity formation, social influence, and lifestyle aspirations. While cultural factors continue to hold relevance, contemporary consumers are increasingly driven by self-

expression, individuality, and economic considerations. Consequently, household income and personality traits emerge as the most decisive determinants of apparel purchasing decisions among young women in Tiruchengode.

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