Original Article

Influence of consumers' susceptibility to interpersonal influence, collective self-esteem and age on fashion clothing involvement: A study on Indian consumers

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ABSTRACT India presents a large market for global fashion brands. The purpose of the research was to examine the influence of consumers' susceptibility to interpersonal influence (CSII), collective self-esteem (CSE) and demographics on Indian consumers' fashion clothing involvement. The CSE and demographics were considered as moderators on CSII. A self-administered questionnaire was used for data collection ($n=773$). The results indicate that from CSII scale, only normative influences affect Indian consumers' fashion clothing involvement. Age, self-identity and marital status moderate normative influence and affect fashion clothing involvement.

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INTRODUCTION

Changing lifestyle, economic development and rising income makes the Indian sub-continent an attractive market for global companies. A large population of more than 1 billion (of which an

estimated 50 per cent is between the ages of 15 and 29 years) and high purchasing power makes India a lucrative market for global brands.¹ The Indian urban clothing market stands at US\$3.5 billion and is expected to become the third largest market in coming years.² The change in socio-economic factors has contributed to the growth of the Indian luxury market, and it is growing at 25 per cent annually. AT Keanery² projects that the current \$3.5 billion Indian luxury market will turn \$30 billion in 2015. Considering India's potential as a growing market for global fashion wear and branded apparel, the current research is directed towards understanding Indian consumers' fashion clothing involvement. Consumers' susceptibility to interpersonal influence (CSII) on fashion clothing involvement was studied. The influence of demographic variables and collective self-esteem (CSE) were considered as moderators in predicting Indian consumers' fashion clothing involvement.

Consumers have an enduring involvement with those product categories that are related to their interests and self-identity.³ Research for many years has recognized apparel as a high involvement product category.⁴⁻⁶ For Indian consumers western brands connote emotional value⁷ and decisions to purchase fashion clothing brands is associated with superior value.

Research objectives

Earlier research on fashion clothing involvement has studied influence of age, education, social class and gender on fashion clothing involvement.⁸⁻¹⁵ There has been limited research to understand the influence of moderator variables in predicting fashion clothing involvement of Indian consumers. As an extension to the existing research on fashion clothing, this research considers CSE (which comprises of membership esteem, public esteem, private esteem and importance to identity) and demographic variables (age, education, income and marital status) as moderator variables in influencing CSII in predicting Indian consumers' fashion clothing involvement.

Figure 1: Relationship between CSII, CSE, demographic variables and fashion clothing involvement.

The primary research questions for this investigation were:

- RQ1:** Do normative and informational influences (CSII) affect Indian consumers' fashion clothing involvement?
- RQ2:** What is the influence of CSE and demographics on CSII and its impact on Indian consumers' fashion clothing involvement?
- RQ3:** Do CSII, CSE and fashion clothing involvement vary across age categories and gender?

Figure 1 shows the variables being considered for the current research.

The research is important from both theoretical and marketing perspectives. It adds to the fashion clothing literature as it studies the influence of susceptibility to interpersonal influence, CSE and demographic influences in predicting Indian consumers' fashion clothing involvement. There is limited research to understand Indian consumers' predisposition towards fashion clothing. India has exhibited high collectivist values where an individual is influenced by strong group identity.¹⁶ Understanding the influence of group identity and social norms on fashion clothing involvement would help global and local apparel manufacturers to position and market their products effectively.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Fashion clothing involvement

Clothing bestows not only self-identity on to individuals but also social identity.¹⁷ Understanding how consumers assign meaning to fashion clothing can be of critical importance to clothing manufacturers. It can help them in designing advertising messages to target the consumer groups.¹⁰ Clothes communicate 'symbolic' values endorsed by social groups.^{10,17–20}

Fashion is defined as 'a form of collective behavior, or a wave of social conformity' (Solomon and Rabolt, 2004, p. 19).¹³ Davis (1994) states that fashion clothing signifies a social code of behaviour, and describes values endorsed by society, which are ever-changing. Research suggests that consumers' possessions are an extension of their identity.^{21,22} Clothing helps individuals to assert their identity. Fashion clothing involvement can be understood in light of person-fashion clothing attachments.¹⁴ The attachments are determined by the relevance a person attaches to the product, and its importance in his/her life.^{11,12} Consumers adopt clothing styles that have symbolic social meanings as it helps them to improve their social image.²³ Goldsmith *et al*²⁴ suggest that consumers with heavy clothing buying habits derive satisfaction from purchasing clothes. It enables them to project a favourable social image and get social acceptance. Fashion innovators describe themselves as comfortable, pleasant, contemporary, vain and formal. Thus, it can be assumed that fashion helps consumers in describing themselves and projecting positive qualities.

Individuals desiring acceptance in social groups are active gathering information about latest fashion cues.¹⁰ They seek 'cues' that ensure group acceptance and avoid the 'wrong' cues that associate them with undesirable groups. Fashion clothing signifies different values to different people and differs according to evaluations of family and friends.¹⁴

Gender, age and fashion clothing involvement

Women are more involved with fashion clothing in comparison to men^{8,9,11,12,14,25} and they are conscious about their physical appearances and

self-identity.^{23,26–28} Hansen and Jensen²⁵ state that men and women exhibit different shopping orientation while shopping for clothes. Women assign symbolic meanings to clothes^{29,30} and use fashion clothing for self-definition and self-identity.^{31,32} Women's interest in fashion apparel is attributed to the 'feminine' symbolism of fashion clothing.¹⁴ Khare and Rakesh's³³ study on Indian youth and their fashion clothing involvement found that men and women differed in their involvement with fashion clothing advertisements. Research suggests that men and women exhibit different attitudes towards fashion clothing involvement.^{29,32} Changes in lifestyles have significantly affected the consumption decisions of men and women. Manrai *et al* found that young males are more fashion conscious than females in their study of fashion consciousness in Eastern Europe.³⁴ Fashion products are not singularly related to female consumption and involvement only.

Workman and Lee examined the relationship between the materialism, gender and fashion consumer groups of two countries – USA (individualist culture) and Korea (collectivist culture).²⁸ Females scored higher on materialism values. The US and Korean sample differed on materialism values and fashion change agents scored higher on materialism. The results suggest that fashion clothing consumption is positively related to materialism.

Research states that young consumers are more fashion conscious than older consumer groups.^{10–12,19,35,36} Kozar³⁷ examined the influence of the age of fashion models in determining a woman's intention to purchase fashion clothing. The older women showed positive beliefs about fashion wear if the model used was closer to their age. Borland and Akram³⁸ posit that age does not deter consumers from wanting to look attractive or be involved in fashion clothing. Thomas and Peters³⁹ examined the influence of lifestyle and self-concept on the apparel consumption decisions of older females. The older females were found to remain active and self-conscious and preferred clothes that gave them self-identity. The socio-psychological meaning associated with fashion clothing is more important in

its adoption than its functional attributes.⁴⁰ Psychographics are important in the purchase of fashion products^{41,42} and fashion clothing consumption.⁴³ Piamphongsant and Mandhachitara²³ examined the influence of self-construct and attention to social comparison information on fashion clothing involvement of women. The results suggest that self-construct had a positive relationship with attention to social comparison information, which in turn affected women's motivation to conform. The above literature review enabled the authors to determine the following hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Men and women would exhibit differences in fashion clothing involvement.

Hypothesis 2: Age would not affect fashion clothing involvement among Indian consumers.

Consumers' susceptibility to interpersonal influence

The social norms and values of a society influence consumers' consumption and purchase decisions. Social norms enable individuals to adapt their behaviour according to social values and systems. They are pressurized to comply with the behaviours and values of the groups to which they belong. McGuire⁴⁴ states that an individual's susceptibility to interpersonal influence is a general trait and varies across individuals. A person's susceptibility to influence in one situation would define his/her ability to be influenced in a range of different situations.⁴⁵ The desire to comply with social group pressures is influenced by individuals' need for recognition from groups.⁴⁶ Research suggests that interpersonal influence can be categorized under normative and informational influence.^{45–48} Normative influence reflects the individual's desire to conform to social group pressures or norms in expectation of rewards and avoid punishments.^{45,49} The normative influence is value expressive and utilitarian in nature.^{46,50,51} Informational influence affects consumer decision making with reference to product attributes. Consumers' susceptibility to influence is a personality trait⁵² and varies with a person's status in society.^{53–55}

Rook and Fisher⁵⁶ studied the impact of social influence on consumers' impulsive buying behaviour. The consumers' impulsive buying behaviour is moderated by social influence. Orth and Kahle⁵⁷ studied normative influence on consumers' purchase decision of wine brands. Consumers with strong internal values and complex social identities were less susceptible to normative influence and gave importance to social brand benefits. People with low self-esteem are likely to be affected by group pressures.⁵⁸ Postmes *et al*⁵⁹ state that depersonalization occurs in social groups. Depersonalization increases social influence when groups provide deductive identity to individuals.

Ebren⁶⁰ studied the applicability of the susceptibility scale developed by Bearden *et al*⁴⁵ in Turkey. The results indicate that susceptibility to influence is a universal trait and applicable to Turkish students. The collectivist cultures show a higher degree of susceptibility to normative influence.^{61,60} White *et al*⁶² studied the predictors to recycling behaviour. The consumers' behaviour relations and 'group norms predicted recycling intentions, particularly for individuals who identified strongly with the group' (White *et al*, 2009, p. 135). Roberts *et al*⁶³ examined adolescents' susceptibility to parental influence and its impact on materialistic values and compulsive buying. Parents are a source of informative influence whereas peers are a significant source for normative influence. Peers' normative influence had a greater impact in determining adolescents' materialistic values and compulsive buying behaviour. Hoffman and Broekhuizen found that consumers' investment choices are influenced by informational values of others.⁶⁴

For the current research the susceptibility to interpersonal influence scale developed by Bearden *et al*⁴⁵ was used. The purpose was to examine the effect of normative and informative influence on Indian consumers' fashion clothing involvement, and to understand if normative influence is more important in determining consumers' involvement with fashion wear in collectivist cultures. Indian society exhibits traits of collectivist culture^{16,65} and research states

that in collectivist societies normative influence is more on consumer behaviour.^{60,66}

Hypothesis 3: Indian consumers' normative and informative influence would affect the fashion clothing involvement.

Hypothesis 4: Normative influence would have a greater impact on Indian consumers' fashion clothing involvement than informative influence.

Collective self-esteem

Individuals are motivated to engage in in-group favouring behaviour to improve their social identity.⁶⁷ The social identity theory states that people are motivated to behave according to group norms and self-concept is derived from social group interactions.⁶⁸ The collective self-identity is derived from individuals' group memberships with social groups like families, teams, cliques, schools, cities and countries.^{69–71} The comparisons with groups help individuals to adjust and conform to social groups. These comparisons are motivated towards attaining high CSE and define themselves in terms of group memberships.⁷² CSE is derived from the importance given by an individual to the social groups.⁷³

The CSE scale measures individuals' identity with reference to their affiliation and interactions with social groups. It consists of four sub-scales: membership self-esteem, private CSE, public CSE and importance to identity.⁷⁴ The *membership esteem* sub-scale of CSE measures individuals' perceptions about themselves with reference to social groups. *Private CSE* measures the individual's personal judgement about social groups, while *public CSE* assesses the quality of social groups to which he/she belongs.⁴⁹ The individual self-esteem refers to feelings and evaluations of self-worthiness and CSE are feelings and evaluations of worthiness of a social group.⁷⁵ The sub-scale *importance to identity* measures the influence of social groups on the self-concept of the members.

Ashmore *et al*⁷⁶ state that individual identity comprises of seven dimensions: self-categorization, evaluation, importance, attachment, social embeddedness, behavioural involvement and cognitive awareness. An individual's self-identity

is a psychological construct derived from his/her relationship and association with social groups.^{76–79}

The expression of individuality within the group does not minimize the desire for social attachment with the social group^{80–82} and diversity is an expression of group solidarity.⁵⁹ Foels and Tomcho⁷² studied differences between men and women with reference to their relationship with social groups. Women were found to prefer close relationships while men preferred large group memberships.

Zhang and Leung⁸³ analysed the effect of individual and CSE in predicting life satisfaction of Chinese consumers. The results suggest that there is a positive relationship between CSE and life satisfaction among more males than females. The effect of individual self-esteem on life domain satisfaction was higher among males than females. Bailis and Chipperfield⁸⁴ found that older people with high CSE reported positive feelings of self-evaluations. The CSE gave individuals positive feelings of self-worth and social identity.

Kim and Omizo (2005) examined American Asian students' adherence to Asian and European cultural values and its relationship with CSE, acculturative stress, cognitive flexibility and general self-efficacy. They found that Asian and European cultural values were positive predictors to membership and private dimensions of CSE. Asian cultural values can be defined as collectivism, conformity to social norms, deference to authority, emotional restraint, hierarchical family structure, humility and maintenance of interpersonal harmony.⁸⁵ These play a prominent role in determining an individual's collective self-identity and affiliation with social groups.

Hypothesis 5: Collective self-esteem would have a moderating influence on Indian consumers' susceptibility to interpersonal influence and would consequently influence their fashion clothing involvement.

Hypothesis 6: The demographic factors would have a moderating influence on Indian consumers' susceptibility to interpersonal influence and would consequently influence their fashion clothing involvement.

METHODOLOGY

Instrument design

The questionnaire contained measures for age, income levels, marital status and education. It contained items to measure CSE,⁷⁴ normative and informative values,⁴⁵ and fashion clothing involvement.¹² The CSE scale⁷⁴ has 16 items (four membership esteem, four private CSE, four public CSE and four items for importance to identity). The CSII scale had 12 items to measure normative and informative influence⁴⁵ (four utilitarian, four value-expressive and four informational). The utilitarian and value-expressive items comprise the normative sub-dimension and remaining four comprises the informational sub-dimension. The fashion clothing involvement was measured using the fashion clothing product involvement sub-scale developed by O'Cass.¹² In total there were 16 items in the fashion clothing involvement scale. The responses of the consumers were taken on a five-point Likert scale with responses varying on the scale of 1 for strongly agree and 5 for strongly disagree.

Sample

A self-administered questionnaire was administered through mall intercept survey technique in eight cities of India, viz. Delhi, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Kolkata, Allahabad, Aligarh, Noida and Gurgaon. The mall intercept method is perceived to provide complete in-depth response to a research objective.⁸⁶ Mall intercept technique has been used widely in research studies for data collection.^{87–89} Twenty four malls were selected (three in each city). The respondents were contacted on weekends and were requested to participate in the survey. Different periods of time in a day were used in order to reduce sampling bias and get a varied mix of respondents. Data collection was completed in 4 months and comprised in total of 773 respondents of which 51.7 per cent were females and 48.3 per cent were males. A number of mall shoppers refused to participate in the survey and expressed doubt in providing information. Mall intercept technique helps to collect a random unbiased sample. However,

50.4 per cent of the sample collected for the present study comprised of the young consumer group (age ranging from 18 to 26 years), 31.8 per cent were aged between 26 and 40 years, and 17.7 per cent were above 40 years (see Table 1 for details about respondents).

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Table 1 shows the demographic profiles of the respondents. 93 per cent of the sample had obtained graduation and post graduation degrees.

In the female sample, most of the respondents were studying or working. In the working category, women were teachers in schools, universities and colleges or were working in business organizations. Among the females, 10.9 per cent were housewives and unemployed. In the male sample about 89.2 per cent of the respondents reported that they were working and owned a professional degree. The sample mix comprised engineering, management and

Table 1: Demographic description of respondents

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	400	51.7
Male	373	48.3
<i>Age (years)</i>		
18–21	201	26.0
22–25	189	24.5
26–30	160	20.7
31–40	86	11.1
41–50	62	8.0
50 and above	75	9.7
<i>Marital status</i>		
Married	330	42.7
Single	443	57.3
<i>Education</i>		
Higher secondary	3	0.4
Senior secondary	54	7.0
Graduation	359	46.4
Post graduation	319	41.3
PhD	38	4.9
<i>Household income</i>		
Below 10 000 (below \$218)	86	11.1
10 000–20 000 (\$218–445)	184	23.8
21 000–30 000 (\$446–667)	168	21.7
31 000–40 000 (\$668–889)	123	15.9
41 000–50 000 (\$890–1112)	75	9.7
Above 51 000 (\$1113 and above)	137	17.7
Total	773	—

Table 2: Cronbach α for CSII scale items

CSII	Scale items	Cronbach α
<i>Normative</i>	I rarely purchase the latest fashion until I am sure my friends approve of them It is important that others like the product and brands that I buy When buying products I generally purchase those brands that I think others will approve of If other people can see me using a product I often purchase the brand they expect me to buy I like to know what brands and product make good impressions on others I achieve a sense of belonging by purchasing the same product and brand that others purchase If I want to be like someone I often try to buy the same brand that they buy I often identify with other people by purchasing the same products and brands they purchase	0.757
<i>Informative</i>	To make sure I buy the right product or brand I often observe what others are buying and using If I have little experience with a product, I often ask my friends about the product I often consult other people to help choose the best alternative available from a product class I frequently gather information from friends of family about a product before I buy	0.658

Table 3: Cronbach α for collective self-esteem

CSE	Scale items	Cronbach α
<i>Membership esteem</i>	I am a worthy member of the social groups I belong to I feel I don't have much to offer to the social groups I belong to I am a cooperative participant in the social groups I belong to I often feel I'm a useless member of my social groups	0.665
<i>Private CSE</i>	I often regret that I belong to some of the social groups I do In general, I'm glad to be a member of the social groups I belong to Overall, I often feel that the social groups of which I am a member are not worthwhile I feel good about the social groups I belong to	0.708
<i>Public CSE</i>	Overall, my social groups are considered good by others More people consider my social groups, on average, to be more ineffective than other social groups In general, others respect the social groups that I am a member of In general, others think that the social groups I am a member of, are unworthy	0.698
<i>Importance to identity</i>	Overall, my group memberships have very little to do with how I feel about myself The social groups I belong to are an unimportant reflection of who I am The social groups I belong to are unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am In general, belonging to social groups is an important part of my self-image	0.778

arts graduates, while teachers had taken up courses in vocational training and had post graduation degrees. 42.7 per cent were married and 57.3 per cent reported that they were single. The average household monthly income was \$500.

To test the reliability of the scale items, Cronbach α values were calculated for the CSII sub-scale (Table 2). High levels of alpha score indicate that constructs are consistent and measure the underlying construct of the research (Churchill, 1979). Nunnally⁹⁰ states that scale item reliability values of 0.50 and 0.60 suffice in early stages of

questionnaire development. Factor analysis was not run for CSII scale and original scale items were used. The alpha value for normative sub-scale was 0.757 and for informative, it was 0.658. The CSII scale was applicable in the Indian context. However, low alpha score for informative sub-scale indicates that informative influence varies across western and Asian cultures.

Similarly, Cronbach α values were calculated for the CSE scale (Table 3). The CSE scale comprised of four sub-scales, and alpha value for the sub-scales ranged between 0.665 and 0.778 indicating that it was applicable in Indian

Table 4: Factor loadings for fashion clothing involvement

Variable	Fashion clothing involvement items	Factor loadings
Fashion clothing	Fashion clothing mean a lot to me	0.651
	Fashion clothing is a significant part of my life	0.714
	I have a very strong commitment to fashion clothing that would be difficult to break	0.594
	I consider fashion clothing to be a central part of my life	0.655
	I think about fashion clothing a lot	0.672
	For me personally fashion clothing is an important product	0.680
	I am very interested in fashion clothing	0.666
	Fashion clothing is important to me	0.688
	Fashion clothing is an important part of my life	0.721
	I would say fashion clothing is central to my identity as a person	0.693
	I would say that I am often pre occupied with fashion clothing	0.627
	I can really identify with fashion clothing	0.711
	I am very much involved in/with fashion clothing	0.677
	I find fashion clothing a very relevant product in my life	0.770
	I pay a lot of attention to fashion clothing	0.717
	Cronbach α	0.919

Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 5: ANOVA between age categories for CSII, CSE and fashion clothing

Variables		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Significance
Normative influence	Between groups	216.160	5	43.232	1.154	0.330
	Within groups	28723.540	767	37.449	—	—
	Total	28939.700	772	—	—	—
Informative influence	Between groups	559.061	5	111.812	10.314	0.000**
	Within groups	8315.271	767	10.841	—	—
	Total	8874.331	772	—	—	—
Membership esteem	Between groups	242.117	5	48.423	6.587	0.000**
	Within groups	5638.204	767	7.351	—	—
	Total	5880.321	772	—	—	—
Private CSE	Between groups	41.330	5	8.266	1.270	0.275
	Within groups	4993.672	767	6.511	—	—
	Total	5035.001	772	—	—	—
Public CSE	Between groups	115.963	5	23.193	3.950	0.002**
	Within groups	4503.165	767	5.871	—	—
	Total	4619.128	772	—	—	—
Importance to identity	Between groups	97.032	5	19.406	2.530	0.028*
	Within groups	5882.621	767	7.670	—	—
	Total	5979.653	772	—	—	—
Fashion clothing involvement	Between groups	6383.943	5	1276.789	8.512	0.000**
	Within groups	115043.224	767	149.991	—	—
	Total	121427.167	772	—	—	—

**Significant at 0.01 level; *significant at 0.05 level.

conditions. The scale fulfilled the minimum desired criteria of 0.6 for scale validation.⁹⁰

The fashion clothing product sub-scale consisted of 16 items. Factor analysis test was run. The

16-item scale was factor analysed using the principal component method with Varimax rotation. The results are shown in Table 4. Initial extraction of components gave one factor with 15 items.

The loadings were lower than obtained on Western sample. It indicates that Indian consumers' definition of fashion clothing involvement was different from Western consumers. One item with factor loading less than 0.5 was removed. The final component matrix comprised of 15 items segregated under one component, that is Fashion Clothing Involvement. The item removed from the scale was – 'Some individuals become completely involved or engrossed in making purchase decisions for fashion clothing. For others, purchase decisions for fashion clothing are not that involved. How involved do you feel in making purchase decisions for fashion clothing?' For further analysis, the fashion clothing involvement items were taken as one variable.

To understand the difference among Indian consumers with respect to CSII, CSE and fashion clothing involvement, ANOVA test was run (Table 5).

The results of the ANOVA between age groups suggest that Indian consumers differ on informational influence of CSII ($F=10.314$; P is significant at 0.01 level). This may be understood in the light that younger generation seeks information about brands from friends, family and work groups in order to make correct purchase decisions. For the CSE sub-scales, the differences were on membership esteem ($F=6.587$; P is significant at 0.01 level), public self-esteem ($F=3.950$; P is significant at 0.01 level) and importance to identity ($F=2.530$; P is significant at 0.05 level). For fashion clothing involvement, the ANOVA test was significant at 0.01 levels. The difference between age groups may be understood in the light that CSE is more relevant for older consumers while the younger consumers seek to assert their individuality. In collectivist societies, responsibilities towards family and social groups increase with age. To understand which groups differed on the above mentioned variables, Tukey's *Post hoc* test was run (Table 6).

For the informative influence, the *Post hoc* tests revealed that younger consumers differed from older consumers (differences were between 18–25 and 26 and above). The result may be interpreted in the light that younger consumer groups seek

information from their peer groups. The older consumers are influenced by norms and less likely to seek information about products from others. In India, adherence to social norms is important^{16,65} and findings can be related to Indian cultural values. *The results indicate that young consumers are more fashion conscious, and Hypothesis 2 was rejected.*

For the CSE scale, the results suggest that there are differences among Indian consumers on membership esteem, public self-esteem and self-identity sub-scales. The younger consumers are more conscious about their self and purchase products that improve their self-identity. As one grows older, self-identity gets merged with group identity. This can be related to earlier research that suggests that for Indians the self-identity is made of group and family identities. The achievements of the individuals are not theirs but are ascribed to social groups and family.¹⁶ When one is young, groups may only relate to friendship groups. However, as one grows older the membership to social groups helps in creating a place in society and connoting symbolic affiliations. This is more apparent in collectivist societies where individuals ascribe membership to influential social groups. It also helps in improving social status and position.

To understand if the two genders differ with respect to CSII, CSE and fashion clothing involvement, ANOVA test was run (Table 7). The results suggest that men and women differ only on CSII (normative and informative influence). This may be interpreted in the light that women are more conscious about social norms than men. Women in India appear to have a greater responsibility towards social commitments.

Hypothesis 1 was rejected and there was no difference between the two genders in fashion clothing involvement.

To understand the moderating influence of demographic variables and CSE on susceptibility to interpersonal influence in predicting fashion clothing involvement, step wise regression analysis was run (Table 8).

For the first model, normative influence emerged as the predictor variable for 'fashion

Table 6: Post-hoc analysis for CSII, CSE and fashion clothing involvement

Dependent variable	(I) age of respondents	(J) age of respondents	Mean difference (I-J)	SE	Significance
Informative influence	18–21	31–40	1.56485*	0.42426	0.003**
		41–50	2.42794*	0.47833	0.000**
	22–25	26–30	1.10450*	0.35372	0.023*
		31–40	1.95915*	0.42828	0.000**
		41–50	2.82224*	0.48189	0.000**
	26–30	50 and above	1.44783*	0.44935	0.017*
		22–25	–1.10450*	0.35372	0.023*
		41–50	1.71774*	0.49256	0.007**
	31–40	18–21	–1.56485*	0.42426	0.003**
		22–25	–1.95915*	0.42828	0.000**
	41–50	18–21	–2.42794*	0.47833	0.000**
		22–25	–2.82224*	0.48189	0.000**
		26–30	–1.71774*	0.49256	0.007**
	50 and above	22–25	–1.44783*	0.44935	0.017*
Membership esteem	18–21	22–25	–0.82421*	0.27471	0.033*
		26–30	–0.90199*	0.28726	0.022*
		31–40	–1.21827*	0.34935	0.007*
		50 and above	–1.86866*	0.36686	0.000**
	22–25	18–21	0.82421*	0.27471	0.033*
	26–30	18–21	0.90199*	0.28726	0.022*
	31–40	18–21	1.21827*	0.34935	0.007*
	41–50	50 and above	–1.55699*	0.46538	0.011*
	50 and above	18–21	1.86866*	0.36686	0.000**
		41–50	1.55699*	0.46538	0.011*
Public self-esteem	26–30	50 and above	–1.00167*	0.33908	0.038*
	31–40	41–50	1.22093*	0.40369	0.031*
	41–50	31–40	–1.22093*	0.40369	0.031*
		50 and above	–1.72667*	0.41591	0.001**
Self-identity	18–21	50 and above	–1.17871*	0.37473	0.021*
Fashion clothing involvement	18–21	50 and above	7.15483*	1.65714	0.000**
		26–30	4.22397*	1.31569	0.017*
		41–50	7.31934*	1.79243	0.001**
	22–25	50 and above	9.65439*	1.67137	0.000**
		22–25	–4.22397*	1.31569	0.017*
		50 and above	5.43042*	1.71386	0.020*
	26–30	22–25	–7.31934*	1.79243	0.001**
		41–50	–7.15483*	1.65714	0.000**
	41–50	18–21	–7.15483*	1.65714	0.000**
		22–25	–9.65439*	1.67137	0.000**
	50 and above	26–30	–5.43042*	1.71386	0.020*

**Significant at 0.01 level; *significant at 0.05 level.

clothing involvement' ($R^2=0.121$, $P<0.01$). The first model suggests that in the susceptibility to interpersonal influence, the normative influence accounted for 12.1 per cent of fashion clothing involvement. *Hypothesis 3 was partially accepted.* The consumers' susceptibility to influence scale partially affects consumers' fashion clothing involvement. The normative influence has an impact on Indian consumers' fashion clothing involvement, while informative influence does not affect Indian consumers' fashion clothing

involvement; thus *Hypothesis 4 was accepted.* This is in line with the research of Ebren,⁶⁰ which suggests that in collectivist societies normative influences have a greater impact on consumers' decision making than informative influences.

In the second model, normative influence and age emerge as predictors ($R^2=0.164$, $P<0.01$), and both of these variables account for 16.4 per cent of fashion clothing involvement. The β value for age was negative, which shows that as the age of the consumer increases their

Table 7: ANOVA between gender for CSII, CSE and fashion clothing involvement

		<i>Sum of squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance</i>
<i>Normative influence</i>	Between groups	223.921	1	223.921	6.012	0.014**
	Within groups	28715.779	771	37.245	—	—
	Total	28939.700	772	—	—	—
<i>Informative influence</i>	Between groups	103.618	1	103.618	9.109	0.003**
	Within groups	8770.713	771	11.376	—	—
	Total	8874.331	772	—	—	—
<i>Membership esteem</i>	Between groups	2.928	1	2.928	0.384	0.536
	Within groups	5877.393	771	7.623	—	—
	Total	5880.321	772	—	—	—
<i>Private CSE</i>	Between groups	13.495	1	13.495	2.072	0.150
	Within groups	5021.506	771	6.513	—	—
	Total	5035.001	772	—	—	—
<i>Public CSE</i>	Between groups	2.517	1	2.517	0.420	0.517
	Within groups	4616.611	771	5.988	—	—
	Total	4619.128	772	—	—	—
<i>Importance to identity</i>	Between groups	0.021	1	0.021	0.003	0.958
	Within groups	5979.632	771	7.756	—	—
	Total	5979.653	772	—	—	—
<i>Fashion clothing involvement</i>	Between groups	214.140	1	214.140	1.362	0.244
	Within groups	121213.027	771	157.215	—	—
	Total	121427.167	772	—	—	—

**Significant at 0.01 level.

Table 8: Step-wise regression for fashion clothing involvement

<i>Model</i>	<i>variable</i>	β	R^2	<i>Adjusted R^2</i>	<i>Significance</i>
1.	First regression (Dependent variable: Fashion clothing involvement) Normative influence $F=105.698$	— 0.347**	0.121 —	0.119 —	— 0.000**
2.	Second regression (Dependent variable: Fashion clothing involvement) Normative influence Age $F=75.624$	— 0.357** -0.209**	0.164 — —	0.162 — —	— 0.000** 0.000**
3	Third regression (Dependent variable: Fashion clothing involvement) Normative influence Age Self-identity $F=66.036$	— 0.320** -0.232** 0.206**	0.205 — — —	0.202 — — —	— 0.000** 0.000** 0.000*
4	Fourth regression (Dependent variable: Fashion clothing involvement) Normative influence Age Self-identity Marital status $F=50.700$ $n=773$	— 0.318** -0.168** 0.208** 0.090*	0.209 — — — —	0.205 — — — —	— 0.000** 0.000** 0.000** 0.048*

**Significant at 0.01 level; *significant at 0.05 level.

involvement in fashion clothing decreases. From all demographic factors, only age emerged as a moderator on normative influence. *Hypothesis 6 was partially accepted.* The results support earlier research that state that consumers' fashion clothing involvement is affected by age.^{11,12,14,35}

In the third model, self-identity was introduced. Normative influence, age and self-identity emerge as predictors to fashion clothing involvement and account for 20.5 per cent ($R^2=0.205$, $P<0.01$). The β value for age is negative, which suggest that younger consumers are more likely to be involved with fashion clothing than older consumers. Fashion clothing has prestige and status value attached, and results indicate that from the CSE scale, only self-identity attribute moderates the CSII and affects fashion clothing involvement. The other attributes of CSE, that is membership esteem, public self-esteem and private self-esteem, do not influence Indian consumers' fashion clothing involvement. *Hypothesis 5 was partially accepted, and self-identity emerges as an important moderator to CSII.* The Indian consumer may be affected by social norms but is equally conscious of his/her self-identity.

In the fourth model, marital status was introduced as a moderating variable. Normative influence, age, self-identity and marital status are important predictors to fashion clothing involvement ($R^2=0.209$; $P<0.01$). The P value for marital status was significant at $P<0.05$ for marital status. The β values are negative for age, thus fashion clothing involvement decreases as age increases. The age, marital status and self-identity moderate normative value and influence Indian consumers' fashion clothing involvement. Marriage affects fashion clothing involvement. Family, career and children become more important after marriage and it affects consumers' fashion clothing involvement.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The major findings of the research suggest that Indian consumers' fashion clothing involvement is determined by normative influences, age and self-identity. Age emerged as the second major determinant of fashion clothing involvement.

Social norms, values and customs influence Indian consumers' preference for products and consumption behaviour. Consumers would prefer fashion wear if it is acceptable to society. In the Indian market, fashion clothing includes both traditional and western clothing. Though traditional clothes remain popular, international fashion trends are gaining prominence among Indian consumers.⁹¹ The apparel purchase decisions in India are influenced by television, Internet and clothing catalogues.⁹² While targeting Indian consumers, the fashion apparel companies must relate their advertising and promotions to local customs and values. The results support earlier research that social norms influence consumption decisions^{10,27,93,94} and enable consumers to gain social acceptance. Social acceptance is important for Indians¹⁶ and consumption decisions reflect their need for group acceptance. Consumers are willing to adopt new fashion only if it accepted by society. The findings support Fournier and Mick's⁹⁵ assumption that product satisfaction depends on how well a product fits in the social context.

The influence of age on fashion clothing involvement suggests that young consumers are more involved with fashion wear. Younger consumers are aware of global brands and present a large market share as compared to older age groups. Menon⁹⁶ states that global fashion brands are targeting Indian consumers and opening their stores in the country. The ready availability of brands like Calvin Klein, Tommy Hilfiger, Levis, Gap, Benetton and Gucci have contributed to the growing interest in fashion clothing. The change in the values of the Indian society is reflected by the fact that an increasing number of young urban Indians prefer western wear than traditional ethnic wear.⁹⁷

The purchase of fashion clothing enhances the self-image of buyers and gives them the social sanction of belonging to a more achievement-oriented, successful and global consumer group. The results support earlier research on fashion clothing involvement in India that clothes help consumers to improve self-identity.³³ The rising income levels and accessibility to global brands has affected Indian consumers' evaluation and

consumption of fashion brands. Fashion clothing connotes status and consequently enables consumers to enhance their self-image. The increased consciousness about the self is reflected in the choice of products that enhance self-image. Clothes help in identity construction and enable Indian consumers to improve their self-identity. The normative and social group influences affect consumption behaviour; however, self-identity is also found to be relevant for Indian consumers.

Indian men and women do not differ in their fashion clothing involvement. The results differ from earlier research, which suggests women are more fashion conscious.^{11,12,14,25,28,37,43} There appears to be a growing awareness of self and it is equally applicable to both genders. This may be attributed to globalization and increased availability of foreign brands in the country. In India, products reflect the success of an individual^{98,99} and fashion clothing may be perceived to symbolize status. Purchase of fashion clothing reflects consumers' affluent taste, education and good family background. Fashion clothing advertising should take into cognizance the 'material symbol' and relate it with an individual's self-identity.

LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The research did not take into account the working and non-working status of the consumers. This would have helped in understanding the fashion clothing involvement of the student and working population. There were no questions asked to understand the total money spent by Indian consumers on fashion wear. Further research could be undertaken to understand consumers' perceptions towards global fashion brands and Indian traditional clothing. This would help local and global fashion marketers in segmenting strategies.

CONCLUSION:

The Indian fashion industry is likely to grow in coming years. Growing income levels, consciousness towards self, globalization and a large young population can be considered as major forces fueling the growth in this sector. The global

fashion brands can use the research findings in targeting the young consumer groups and relating their products to social norms. Self-identity and social norms are important determinants of consumers' fashion clothing involvement, and must be used in advertising themes and messages. As the identity of Indian consumers is derived from social groups, fashion clothing advertising should support group values. Men and women differ on normative and informative influences, and this can be used for product targeting strategies.

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