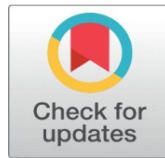


CONSUMER PERCEPTION OF FAST FASHION QUALITY AND DURABILITY

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ABSTRACT

This research paper explores how customers view the quality and long-lasting nature of fast fashion items, it also examines how these views impact their mindset and buying behavior. Given the quick surge in popularity of budget-friendly clothing labels, grasping what customers anticipate is now especially critical for businesses wanting to remain relevant for a sustained period of time. The study utilizes firsthand information obtained through questionnaires and casual conversations with regular fast fashion consumers, alongside existing research taken from industry publications and scholarly articles. It investigates the major aspects that how consumers perceive the fast fashion, focusing on texture of fabrics, expected value for the price, brand image, and prior experiences using the products. The paper also considers the ways regarding resilience, ecological impact, and the life expectancy of products influence how much customers trust brands and whether they buy from them repeatedly. It also brings attention to the growing importance of digital comments, opinions shared on social networks, and product scores on the internet when it comes to shaping beliefs about quality. The goals of the findings are to assist fast fashion companies in improving their strategies for their products, refining how they communicate about quality, and strengthening the trust customers have in them within a market that is becoming ever more competitive.

Keywords: Fashion, Quality and Durability

1. INTRODUCTION

In the modern, fast-evolving world of fashion, the importance of consumer judgment regarding quality has gained unparalleled momentum. Though different trends may come and go, fast fashion retailers focus on rapidity and low prices. However, customers still prefer garments that make them feel good, wear well, and result in value for money. "Consumer Perception of Fast Fashion Quality and Durability" explores, beyond price and fashion appeal, it explores the nature of people's view of products they purchase. Understanding consumer perception is important because it builds trust, loyalty, and overall brand reputation. Quality is not just about stitching or the fabric it also shows how responsibly a brand produces its garments and how well those products maintain their usability over time. On the other hand, durability shows whether fast fashion items can handle regular wear or if they quickly lose shape, color, or comfort. Rather than speculation, this study explores how actual shoppers experience fast fashion clothing and how they judge quality, what they expect, and what disappoints them. By connecting everyday

buying behavior with deeper insights, the research shows how customer opinions influence purchasing choices and long-term satisfaction. The practical link between product quality, consumer trust, and market competitiveness stands out. Understanding these perceptions is key for any fashion company wanting to stay relevant and responsible in today's marketplace, where customers increasingly compare brands online, share feedback, and demand more transparency.

2. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Consumer perception about the quality and durability of fast fashion is important for brands and the fashion industry as a whole. As fast fashion sector is growing so rapidly, customers are more aware of what they want from the products they purchase. This study helps indicate what consumers actually value. They see whether it's a long-lasting clothing, better fabric, responsible production and fair pricing. These findings are important because they guide fast fashion companies for the improvement of both their products and customer experiences. Knowing how consumers make judgments about quality can help brands at the time of selection of materials, manufacturing processes, and designing of the products. This will also help the companies to identify the gaps between what customers expect and what they are presently getting, which will help them in building trust and loyalty among customers. In addition, this research is also important for consumers, as it calls for attention to issues such as product life, wear-and-tear, and transparency within the fashion industry. Understanding these perceptions should also encourage more responsible buying behavior. Overall, the research contributes to better decision-making for the brands, enhancing customer satisfaction, and a more sustainable fashion industry future.

3. RESEARCH GAP

While consumer behaviour in fashion has been widely explored, research focusing on Indian consumers perceptions of fast fashion quality and durability is still largely insufficient. Most of the existing literature looks at fast fashion from broader perspectives related to sustainability, price, or trend adoption, rarely exploring in any detail like how customers judge product life span, material performance, and long-term usability. Past studies tend to treat these two variables independently, without analyzing how quality and durability interact in shaping the overall satisfaction and purchase decisions of customers. Furthermore, most of the research has been focused on global fast-fashion brands, and very little attention has been paid to the unique expectations and experiences of Indian consumers shopping from international brands along with the emerging local ones. Another gap lies in how digital platforms such as online reviews, influencer opinions, and social media feedback directly influence consumer perception about product quality. This paper, therefore, seeks to fill these gaps by analyzing the specific factors that influence consumer perception of the quality and durability of fast fashion, as well as investigating how such perceptions influence buying decisions, satisfaction and trust in fast fashion brands.

4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Fast-fashion brands are still developing rapidly, and their business strategy is based on providing fashionable products at a low price. However, there is a growing skepticism over whether the quality and durability of such merchandise meet consumer expectations. Consumers often complain about low fabric strength, quick

wear and tear, color fading, and a shortened life span of a product. Meanwhile, brands are promoting fast-fashion merchandise as stylish yet inexpensive, which creates a disparity between consumer expectation and reality. While consumers make more and more purchases of fast fashion, long-term satisfaction often comes with the perception of quality and durability of the products. However, few studies have examined how customers form these perceptions, what factors influence their judgment, and further in what manner these perceptions affect buying behavior, loyalty, and trust. This issue becomes particularly important since digital reviews, opinions on social media, and peer recommendations increasingly drive consumer expectations. The study, therefore, seeks to identify the major issues behind consumer dissatisfaction, understand how customers assess the quality and durability of fast fashion, and establish how such perceptions influence their key shopping decision making. This infers a consumption gap that indicates a severe need for further investigation into the relationship between the performance of fast fashion products and consumer expectations.

4.1. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To assess the gap between consumer expectations and actual experiences with fast fashion products.
- To identify the key factors that influence consumer judgments of product quality, such as fabric, fit, price, brand reputation, and usage experience.
- To study the role of online reviews, social media feedback, and peer recommendations in shaping consumer perception of fast fashion quality.
- To explore how sustainability concerns influence consumer expectations about product quality and longevity.

4.2. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1) Null Hypothesis

The buyer's perception of quality and durability in fast fashion significantly affects the satisfaction of a purchase and purchasing decisions.

2) Supporting Hypothesis

Key factors such as fabric, fit, price, brand reputation, and digital feedback (online reviews, social media, peer opinions) significantly shape consumer judgments of fast fashion product quality and longevity.

3) Null Hypothesis

According to the findings, consumers' perceptions of the quality and durability of fast-fashion products do not significantly influence their purchase decisions or satisfaction, independent of any quality factors or digital influences.

5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research is relevant because it gives valuable insights into how buyers perceive the quality and durability of fast-fashion products and how such

perception influences their purchasing behavior. Understanding whether quality and durability really impact customer satisfaction and buying decisions, fast-fashion companies can work on upgrading their product standards and make strategic adjustments in relation to the expectations of the target consumer segment. It further reveals that factors such as fabric feel, fit, price, brand reputation, and digital feedback play an important role in the formation of quality perception. This research will also help brands understand the increasing influence of digital platforms in creating trust and opinions toward certain products, since online reviews, social media content, and peer recommendations influence consumer choices. Finally, by comparing perceived versus actual product performance, the study will help the brands identify the gaps that need improvement. The insights gathered allows the company to build better product design, enhance quality, and offer more durable products. Overall, this research contributes to higher customer satisfaction, stronger brand credibility, and enable brands to make more informed and strategic marketing and manufacturing choices.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A descriptive and analytical research methodology was applied to understand how consumers perceive the quality and durability of fast-fashion products and how such perceptions shape buying behavior, satisfaction, and trust. The methodology combines insights from both qualitative and quantitative data in order to gain full understanding of consumer behavior.

- **Research Design**

A descriptive research design is adopted to systematically capture consumer opinions, expectations, and experiences related to fast-fashion apparel. This design is suitable because the study aims to explore existing attitudes rather than manipulate variables or test interventions. The research also incorporates qualitative elements to interpret consumer experiences, narratives, and reasoning behind their judgments of quality and durability.

- **Primary Data**

Primary data was gathered directly from consumers using structured questionnaires that explored their perceptions of fabric quality, durability expectations, price value assessment, brand trust, and the influence of online and social media reviews; additionally, informal conversations with frequent fast-fashion users enriched the responses by capturing their firsthand experiences, together allowing the study to collect meaningful insight into how consumers judge fast-fashion product performance and the factors shaping their purchasing decisions.

- **Secondary data**

Secondary data was collected from a range of sources, including industry reports on fast fashion, academic journals examining consumer behaviour, apparel quality, and sustainability, as well as online articles addressing the impact of digital media on purchasing habits. This information provided the foundation for situating the study within the broader body of research and highlighting existing gaps concerning consumer perceptions of quality and durability in the Indian market.

7. ANALYTICAL APPROACH

The study used a combination of qualitative content analysis and descriptive statistics to interpret the data. Qualitative responses from questionnaires and informal discussions were analysed to identify common patterns related to fabric quality, durability, price value, and digital influence. Quantitative responses were summarized using descriptive measures such as frequencies, averages, and graphs to highlight major trends. Together, these analytical methods helped compare consumer perceptions with existing research and provided a clear understanding of how fast-fashion quality and durability shape buying behaviour.

7.1. VARIABLES

1) Independent variables

- Factors shaping consumer perception of fast fashion such as fabric quality, perceived durability, price value balance, brand reputation, and digital influences (including online reviews, social media feedback, and peer recommendations)

2) Dependent variables

- Key outcomes influenced by these perceptions, like consumer satisfaction, purchasing decisions, trust in brands, and likelihood of repeat purchases.

3) Control variables

- Elements kept constant during the study, such as age, frequency of buying, sustainability awareness, and whether the fast-fashion brand is international or local.

8. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Consumers in the study have clear and changing views about fast-fashion quality and durability, recognizing that while fast fashion offers affordable, trendy styles, its products often fall short in long-term performance. Buyers are drawn in by appealing fabric and design, but dissatisfaction arises from issues like quick wear-and-tear, fading, and loss of shape. Increasingly, digital reviews and peer recommendations shape expectations and drive buying choices, though online portrayals often exaggerate product quality, resulting in disappointment after actual use. Customers see price value as tied to durability, with frequent replacements lowering perceived value and trust, especially when brands do not meet expectations. Raised brand reputation and transparency help assure buyers, but improvements in material quality and more authentic digital representation are still needed to boost satisfaction, loyalty, and competitiveness in the fast-fashion market.

9. LIMITATIONS

- The sample size was limited and may not represent all fast-fashion consumers.
- Findings are based on self-reported opinions, which may contain personal bias.

- The study did not include scientific or laboratory testing of garment durability.
- The short research period does not capture long-term consumer satisfaction.
- Differences between individual fast-fashion brands were not analysed separately.
- Digital influence (reviews, social media) changes rapidly, making perceptions unstable over time.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Reduce the gap between expectations and actual product performance by ensuring consistent quality standards and accurate product information.
- Improve core quality factors related to fabric, stitching, fit, and finishing to enhance overall customer satisfaction.
- Enhancement of products using online reviews and social media responses for honest digital marketing.
- Adopt sustainable materials and practices that enhance durability, meeting the consumer expectations for durability and sustainability in fashion.

11. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that consumer perception concerning the quality and durability of fast-fashion goods is essential and effectively influences satisfaction with a purchase, decision-making, and trust in a brand. While fast fashion successfully attracts buyers with affordability and trendy designs, the actual product performance often falls short of consumer expectations. Issues such as rapid wear-and-tear, fading, and inconsistent fabric quality create a noticeable gap between what consumers expect and what they experience. Digital channels, such as online reviews, social media, and influencer content, are now strong drivers of perception pre-purchase. Digital impressions form very strong expectations; thus, honesty and transparency in brand communication are primary. Overall, the study emphasizes that improvement in material quality, increased transparency, and digital messaging aligned with the actual performance of the product will help in restoring consumer trust. Such measures will allow fast-fashion brands to enhance consumer satisfaction, credibility, and competitiveness in a fast-changing marketplace.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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