

# **CUSTOMER PERCEPTIONS IN BUYING DECISION TOWARDS BRANDED BANGLADESHI LOCAL APPAREL PRODUCTS**

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## **Abstract**

The work reported in this paper is based on many Bangladeshi local apparel fashion brand outlets which are flourishing in a light-hearted way. As Bangladesh doing its RMG products business both in the international and the local market with praising fame and faith, so many local apparel brands are growing their business like a newly born baby. Understanding the customers desired requirements for local apparel branded products and satisfying the customers demand have become very difficult task for the brand management. Hence, an approach was made in this study to investigate the customer's perception in buying decisions toward local apparel products. The study was conducted among 200 respondents including ten local apparel brands among which Cat's Eye, Yellow, Westecs, Artisti, Aarong achieved better brand value and Anjans, Plus point, Rex, Artness achieved less brand value. The work also reported that customer desires the products quality, comfort, price, functional and aesthetic look, offer & discount and many others key buying factors suitable for them when visiting a brand showroom.

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**Keywords:** Branded products, Buying behavior, Customer's satisfactions, Products quality, Clothing's showrooms

## **Introduction**

The garment manufacturing sector earned \$19 billion in the year June 2012, one of the impoverished nation's biggest industries. Bangladesh is the world's second largest exporter of clothing after China. Readymade garments make up 80 percent of the country's \$24 billion in annual exports. Consultancy firm McKinsey & Company said that Bangladesh could double its garments exports in the next 10 years. Definitely it is a good news that our local apparel products are trying to satisfy the need of local customers along with strengthening the countries economical growth. So, knowing the customers desired requirements when they purchase such local apparel brand products are mandatory to better clothing's brand developments. Brand management holds the key in the modern markets, particularly in case of Bangladeshi local apparel markets. Bangladeshi people are very traditional in clothing's choice. The traditional dress for men is Lungi, Panjabi, Gengi, and Shirt and for women is Shari. Due to the globalization process, people are getting attracted to readymade dresses, particularly multinational brands (Jayashree, Y. 1998). The growth of readymade men's wear business in Bangladesh was very slow till the early -1990's. The main reason for this was that Bangladeshi people were used to buying cloth and getting their outfits tailored -mainly through local tailoring shops from the unorganized segment. Consequently there were no national level brands in this category for a long period. By the mid -2000's, however, customer mindset seemed to have started changing gradually, along with increasing urbanization, and changes in the social and economic status and life styles. As in many other industries in the nation, the move towards 'branding' soon took momentum in the clothing's wear market. Both listed and unlisted players cater to the branded apparel market. Many local apparel products brands such as Cat's Eye, Yellow, Westecs, Artisti, Aarong, Kay Kraft, Richman, Dorjibari, Anjans, Ecstasy, Plus point, Rex, Artness etc are trying to expand their clothing business to satisfy the local customers' demand of clothing.

## **Understanding of Brand and Brand value**

A brand, as defined by Keller, is "a product, but one that adds other dimensions that differentiate it in some way from other products designed to satisfy the same need (Biplab, S. B., 1998). These differences may be rational and tangible – related to product performance of the brand – or more symbolic, emotional, and intangible – related to what the brand represents". Mariotti (1999) defines a brand as "a simplified 'shorthand' description of a

package of value upon which consumers and prospective purchasers can rely to be consistently the same (or better) over long periods of time (Biplab, S. B., 1998). It distinguishes a product or service from competitive offerings”. Khalid Mahmood Khan, director of Kay Kraft, an emerging local brand said that the key to ensure brand loyalty is to increase the value of the brand in the mind of the consumer. He also argued that to build brand value, factors such as product improvements, package design, communicating the competitive positions and promotion.

### **Why Branding required?**

- Branding is a tool for sales promoting in the market.
- Branding aid in knowing the customer’s requirements
- It facilitates easy advertisement and publicity
- It creates special consumer preference over the product.
- To identify key competitive issues in the textile and apparel industry
- To satisfy the customers demand towards a branded products.

### **Customers Behavior towards Buying:**

Variations in customers like and dislike, the cognitive growth and motivation force them to act in various ways in purchasing clothing’s products (Lalitha. A, Ravikumar, J.and Padmaivali, K., 2008). Individual may not act in the same way always, customers act consistently and we have tried to figure out the customers in below groups according to their buying behavior.

- A habit – determined group of brand loyal consumers who tend to be satisfied with the product or brand last purchased.
- A price – cognitive group of consumers who decide principally upon the basis of price or economy comparison.
- Group of customers who emphasize on products quality like design, style, raw materials etc.
- Group of customers who buy products being attracted on aesthetic and functional properties of those products.
- A cognitive group of consumers who are sensitive to rational claims.
- An impulse group of consumers who buy on the basis of physical appeal and are relatively insensitive to brand name.
- A group of emotional reactors who respond to product symbols and are heavily swayed by images.
- A group of new consumers who haven’t yet stabilized the psychological dimensions of their behavior

## **Statement of the Problem and Necessity of the Project Work**

Bangladesh has witnessed a frantic pace of retail development over the past ten years. Readymade garments make up 80 percent of the country's \$24 billion in annual exports. Consultancy firm McKinsey & Company has said Bangladesh could double its garments exports in the next 10 years. It is believed that the country has potential to deliver the faster growth over the next 50 years. There is increased sophistication in the shopping pattern of customers, which has resulted in the emergence of big retail chains in most metros; Mini metros and towns are in the next target. Customer taste and preferences are changing, leading to radical transformation in life style and spending patterns, which in turn is giving rise to new business opportunities. The generic growths likely to be driven by changing life styles and strong surge in income which in turn will be supported by favorable demographic patterns (Shainesh, 2004). Customers include the present customers consuming the products of a brand and also the prospective customers who are presently consuming the products of competitors. Customers must be periodically analyzed from several perspectives such as who constitute the customer inventory, level of customer retention, what makes them buy, what their level of satisfaction is, where they are placed in the loyalty ladder, what makes them disloyal, and so on, (Kamalaveni. D., Kalaiselvi, S. And Rajalakshmi, S. 2008). This analysis is to be performed not only on the existing customers but also on the former customers so that corrective actions may be instigated to retain current customers. Periodical customer satisfaction audit program would provide a meaningful insight into the customer attitude and their behavior and also would form the basis for developing appropriate strategies to retain relationship.

## **Review of Literature**

Lalitha et al., (2008) made a study entitled "Brand Preference of Men's wear". Scope of the study focuses on the brand preference regarding shirts and pants of select consumers living in two cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. It is confined to the customers visiting the select showrooms in Hyderabad and Secunderabad. The objectives of this study were to know the reason why customers prefer branded shirts and pants to unbranded ones, to find out the influence of advertisement for branded clothing for the purchase behaviour of the respondent and to know the factors influencing customers while choosing branded shirts or pants. It is concluded that educational qualifications, employment status, age group, convenience of shops, and advertisement are influencing factors for purchasing the branded shirts and pants by the respondents. 94 percent of the respondents are highly educated and purchased

branded ready wears. Age group of 20-50 years are income earning people and spending on the branded wears. The study reveals that the advertisements play a limited role to choose the brand among ready - made dresses available in the market. 54 percent of the customers are buying branded ready wear because of quality and status symbol. Ritu Narang (2006) in a study entitled “A Study on Branded Men’s wear”, was taken up in the city of Lucknow with an intention to explore the purchase behavior of the buyers of branded men’s wear. The objectives of this research are to study the purchase behaviour of the buyers of branded men’s garments, to study the impact of advertising on the purchase decision of buyers, to study the impact of promotional activities on purchase behaviour of buyers (Kazmi, 2001; Mathur, 2002). The research type was exploratory as it was conducted to develop a concept about the purchasing behaviour of buyers of branded men’s garments and the impact of advertising on their purchase decision. This study concluded that most of the times buyers visit the showrooms of branded garments with the purpose of shopping (Jaishri and Jethwaney, 1999). Pathak and Tripathi (2009) made a study entitled “Customer Shopping Behaviour among Modern Retail Formats: A Study of Delhi & NCR”. The Study is an exploratory research conducted in Delhi & NCR. It specifically focuses on customer shopping behaviour in Indian scenario among the modern retail formats (Sumathi, 2003). Objectives of the study are to find out the factors that affect the buyer's decisions among the modern retail formats and to evaluate the comparative strength of these factors in buying decision of the buyers. Today's young consumers are inclined more towards leading a comfortable and hassle free life. They have come in possession of money and wish to spend it on trusted goods and services, which are well worth the money that they would pay. ‘Brands’ cost them dearly and yet, they prefer the same as they are conscious of the fact that branded products give them their money's worth. This generation of consumers may, therefore, be labeled as 'the brand conscious generation' (Sherlaker, 1995). Cats-Eye, Yellow, Richman, Aarong, Kay-Kraft are trusted brands to the customers. The problem is that when they started they were pioneers in their line, whereas today, there are multiple brands that are able to deliver the same quality at a lower price perhaps. A rational approach to clothing needs and expenditure makes the consumer more effective participate in entire market economy”. Gender has been identified in much literature on consumer shopping behavior as a significant factor in understanding consumer behavior and as a fundamental market segmentation index for companies to meet their customers’ needs and wants. Marketers should strive to understand the gender differences in decision-making. Research addressing the issues of gender differences in decision-making styles

could help marketers to find better ways of communicating with both sexes and to guide marketing mix decisions (Mitchell and Walsh, 2004). Numerous studies in the past have provided evidence that gender relates to consumers' perceptions, attitudes, preferences and purchase decisions (Bakewell and Mitchell 2006).

### **Aims of the Study:**

This paper work aimed to find out some outcome regarding the branded apparel products as like-

- Identify the clothing's local brand most preferred by customers.
- Determine the various positive attributes of popular local brands
- Ranking the factors on buying clothing's to go for branded clothes.
- Know demographic and purchase pattern related factors influencing the choice retail outlet.
- To identify the showroom specific factors influencing the choice of retail outlet.
- Provide proper suggestions to the local branded showroom franchisees owners.
- To find out the suggestions for future local clothing brand who want to start his clothing brand business.

### **Working methodology**

After an extensive literature review this project is conducted with the objective of assessing the buying behavior in respect with Bangladeshi local clothing brands especially in Dhaka city. For the purpose of assessing the level of various satisfaction issues, primary data have been collected from respondents and secondary data have been collected from books, magazines and websites. Samples of 200 respondents were interviewed during the period January to April 2013. People who used readymade clothing's have been chosen as respondents purposively (non-random sampling method), as the main objective of research is to study the buyer behaviour in respect of local clothing's brand. Due care has been taken to include people of various age groups hailing from different socio-economic background. Percentages, ranks and various scores have been computed to fulfill the objectives of the study. Rank analysis has also been carried out to rank six important reasons behind the purchase of branded clothes. They are quality, status symbol, official purpose, good colors & designs, smart look & comfortable and different style. Overall mean scores have been calculated for eight showrooms specific factors with five point scale via, best, good, neutral, poor, very poor for various brand showrooms. The factors are: location of shops, salesmanship & courtesy, wider choice in color, design & material, price range, offers & discounts and facility

for use of credit card and so on. Finally based on observed outcome suggestive action plan has been developed for strong apparel brand creation.

### **Results and Discussion**

According to Table 1: 31 percent of the respondents are 17 years old or less. 50.5 percent of the respondents belong to the category of 18-30 years and the rest 18.5 percent of the respondents are above 30 years. 4.5 percent of the respondents are educated up to School level; 58 percent of the respondents belong to the category of Arts & Science graduates / Post graduates and the rest 37.5 percent of the respondents are pursuing Professional course or have completed such a course. 50 percent of the respondents are students, 34.5 percent of the respondents are employed and the rest 15.5 percent of the respondents are either professional or self employed. Again 22 percent of the respondents are married and the rest 78 percent are unmarried. 35 percent of the respondents' families have monthly income below TK.15000. 33 percent of the respondents belong to the category of TK.15000 and Tk. 25000 and the rest 32 percent of the respondents belong to the families with monthly income more than TK.25000. 64 percent of the respondents belong to urban area, 29.5 percent of the respondents hail from the semi urban area and the rest 6.5 percent of the respondents are from rural area. It is evinced further from table 1 that 16 percent of the respondents always use branded clothes; 35.5 percent of the respondents buy branded clothes most of the times and the rest 48.5 percent of the respondents buy it occasionally. 38.5 percent of the respondents get information from friends & relatives; 37 percent of the respondents through advertisements and the rest 24.5 percent of the respondents get it from showrooms / shops. 20 percent of the respondents buy during off-season sale. 51 percent of the respondents are mainly buying during festival time and the rest 29 percent of the respondents buy mainly for functions. Selection factor reveals that 53 percent of the respondents go for self-selection; 22.5 percent of the respondents get the help of friends for selection and the rest 24.5 percent select dresses through family members. 'Showroom preferred' factors reveals that 37.5 percent of the respondents buy most of their clothes in single brand showrooms and the rest 62.5 percent of the respondents buy clothes in any multiband shop.

Table 1: Responded customers depending on demographic and purchase pattern

	Various Factors	Single Branded Showrooms	Multi-Branded Shops	Total Respondents	Percentage of Total (200)
Age (Years)	17 and below Years	29	33	62	31
	18 – 30 Years	38	63	101	50.5
	Above 30 Years	15	22	37	18.5
Educational Qualification	School	3	6	9	4.5
	Arts & School	48	68	116	58
	Professional Course	32	43	75	37.5
Occupation	Student	47	53	100	50
	Employed	20	49	69	34.5
	Professional	11	20	31	15.5
Marital Status	Married	30	34	44	22
	Unmarried	59	97	156	78
Family Income per Month	Upto TK.15000	29	41	70	35
	TK.15000 –	20	46	66	33
	Above TK.25000	22	42	64	32
Location of Residence	Urban	41	87	128	64
	Semi-Urban	20	39	59	29.5
	Rural	4	9	13	6.5
Frequency of Purchase	Always	7	23	32	16
	Most of the Times	19	52	71	35.5
	Occasionally	32	67	99	48.5
Information about Brand by Source	Friends /Relatives	35	52	77	38.5
	Advertisement	27	47	74	37
	Showroom / Shop	18	31	49	24.5
Occasion of Purchase	Off-Season Sale	12	28	40	20
	Festival Times	29	73	102	51
	Functions	20	38	58	29
Persons Finalizing Selection of Shirts	Self	38	68	106	53
	Friends	18	27	45	22.5
	Family Members	33	26	59	24.5
Place of Purchase	Dhaka city	57	89	146	73
	Other Towns	25	29	54	27
Total		37.5 %	62.5 %		100 %



**Table 2:** Most popular Clothing’s Brand

Various Clothing’s Brand	Respondents No.(Out of 200)
Cat's Eye	38
Artisti	27
Westecs	23
Estacy	21
Aarong	16
Kay Kraft	13
Yellow	11
Richman	9
Anjans	8
Plus point	6
Rex	4
Dorjbari	3
No specific preferred	21
Total	200

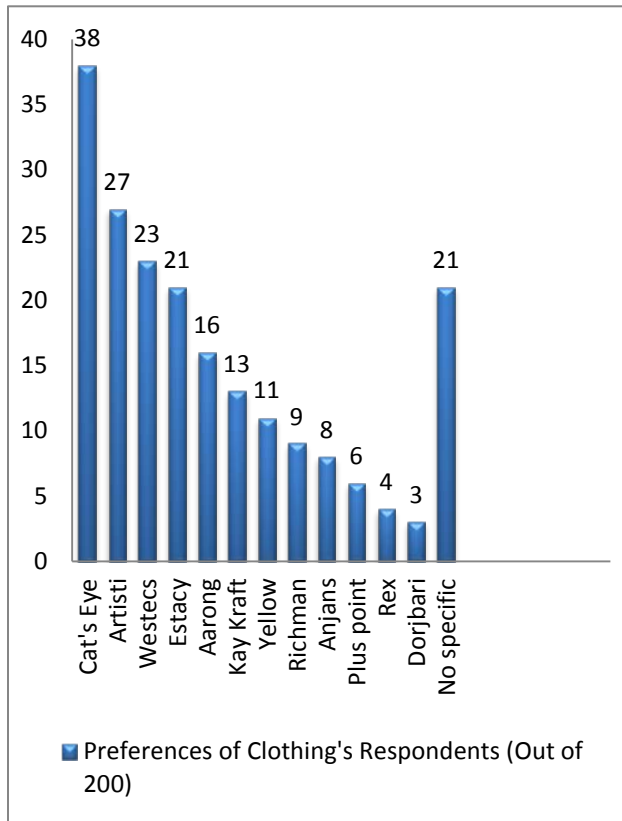


Figure 1: Preferred Apparel Brand Percentage Wise

**Preference of Brands by Consumers:**

Figure 2: Indicates the brand choice of the consumers. It is evidenced from the figure 2 that, Cats-Eye, Artisti, Aarong Westecs, Estacy, the leading brands are preferred by the highest number of respondents and secured a high score of 168, 151, 136, 131, and 126. ‘No Preference for any specific brand’ secures the third place with 148 scores. This shows that many consumers are purchasing clothes according to their financial positions and perception about smart look, style and comfort.

**Process of Brand Choice:**

The process of brand choice is an important action plan of selecting a specific brand from the wide range of brands available. The criterion that guide is matching the expectations of customer with what the brand could offer. Five important factors relating to the brand have been considered in this study as factors ultimately attracting the consumer towards a brand of clothing’s and they are: (i) Offers & discounts provided, (ii) Attractive

range of colors and designs, (iii) Reasonable product price, (iv) Frequency of advertisement in print and electronic media and (v) The attractiveness of advertisements. The responses obtained in respect of these factors with reference to various brands of their choice have been tabulated and presented in Figure 2. The favorable responses for each brand have been showed. It is seen that Cat’s Eye brand emerged as the top position and this brand has secured the maximum score of 168 in respect of each of the five factors namely Offers & discounts, Range of colours & designs, Reasonable price and frequency of advertisement and better aesthetic and functional products. Artisti stands second having scores 151; Aarong stands third position with score 136. The other brands like Kay Kraft, Yellow, Richman, Anjans, Estacy, Plus point, Rex, Dorjbari have secured low scores respectively as showed in the figure 2.

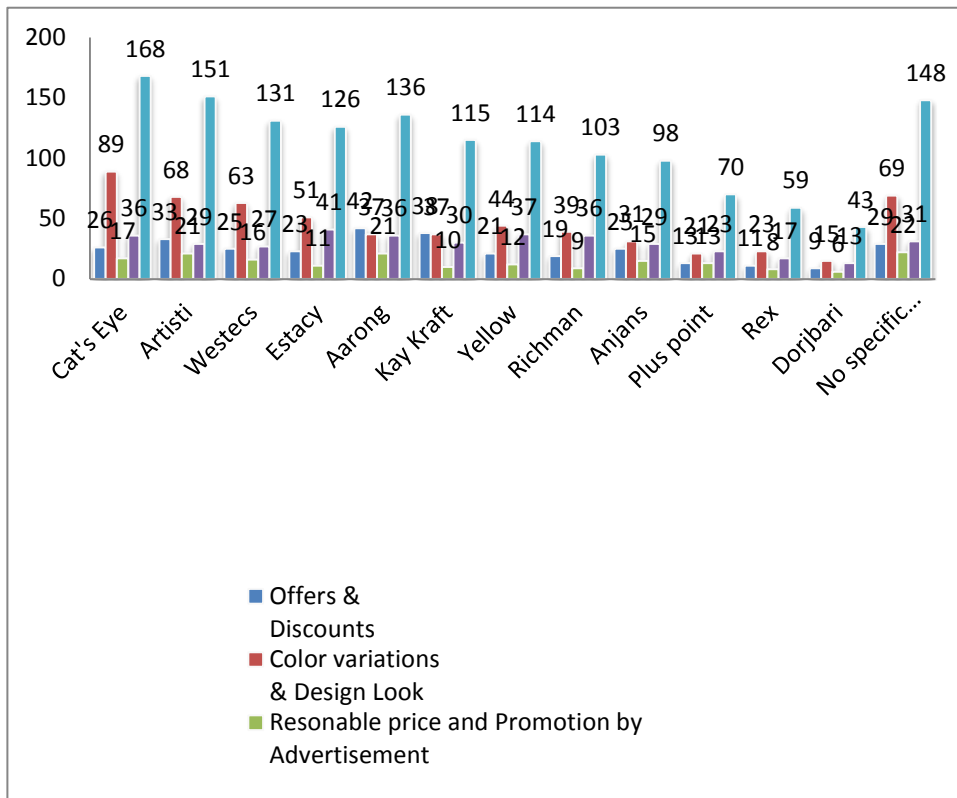


Figure 2: Positive Attributes & Preference Of Brands Various Aspects - Frequency Level

**Ranking of Various Aspects of Clothing Products by Cstomers:**

The branded clothing’s market is blooming with wide choice and all possible price ranges to suit consumers of different age groups and social status. In order to know what motivates them to buy branded clothing’s the respondents were said to rank the eight important

reasons behind the purchase of branded apparel. They are as (1) Quality aspects (2) Price (3) Official Purpose (4). Good Colors & Designs (5).Smart look & comfortable products (6) various Styles, (7).Status symbol, (8).Occasional purposes. A survey among 200 customers and then data analysis of the survey is carried out. It is seen from figure 3 that quality is the corner stone of a strong brand and a quality product delivers superior performance. Hence the quality factor has got over whelming response from the consumers and has obtained the top rank with the highest respondents no 69 and is almost 34.5 %. The availability of good colors and designs has a direct bearing on the brand strength. This factor has secured the second position with the total respondent no. 34 and is 17%. In the branded clothing's market, the products can be easily copied and improved. Almost all brands market apparel which enhance the smart look and give comfort. This factor occupies third position by obtaining 14.5 % value of 29 respondents. The products price also has an important impact toward customer as most of the customer has fascination for lesser price and this price factor has been ranked in the fourth position having 11.5 % by 23 respondents. The positive attitude of consumer towards branded products results in effective response in terms of increased sales. Consumers perceive that branded clothing's offer them a chance to wear clothing's with 'Different Style' and hence this factor stands fifth rank with 18 respondents and is 9 %. The others factors 'Official Purpose', occasional purpose and Status Symbol have scored sixth, seventh and eighth position having total respondents no are 15, 7,and 5 and are of 7.5 %, 3.5 % and 2.5 % respectively.

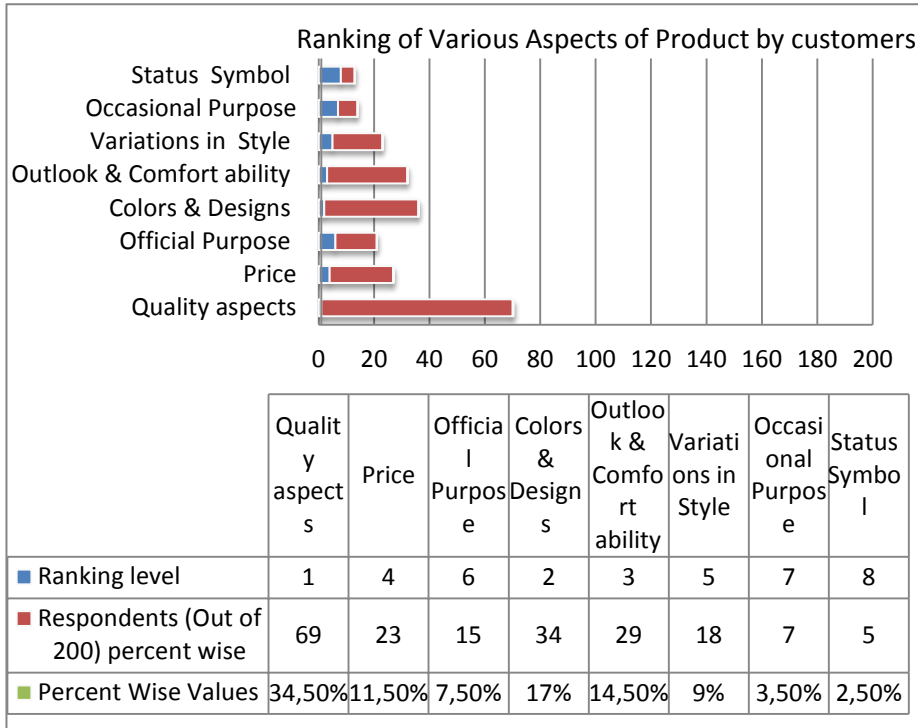


Figure 3: Ranking Of Various Aspects Of Products As Per Customer View

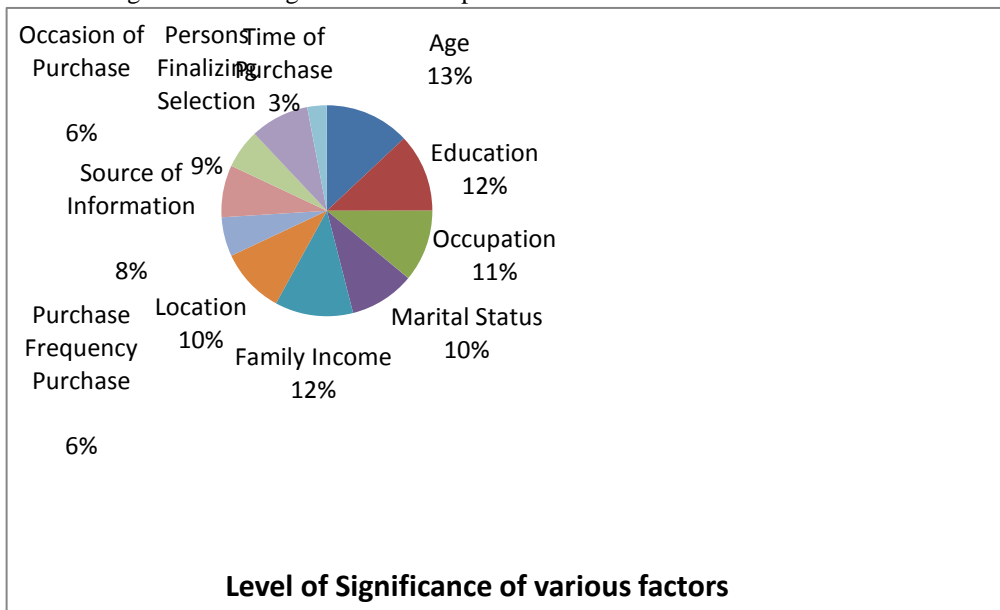


Figure 4: Level of significances of various factors and choice of retail outlets by customers

### Showroom Specific Factors – An Assessment by Respondents:

Six specific factors have been chosen which are though common for both single brands Showrooms and multi brand shops but will have definite influence on consumer behaviour. The factors are as like: (1). Location of shops, (2). Salesman ship & courtesy, (3).Wider choice in colour, design & material, (4). Reasonable price range, (5) Various offers and discounts and (6) Facility for use of credit card. The respondents were asked to indicate their opinion on these factors in respect of single brand showrooms and multi brand showrooms separately on five point's scale which are best, good, neutral, poor, very poor as shown in table 3. The resultant analysis indicates that there is a significant relationship among location of shops, the choice of retail outlet and others showroom specific factors as like salesman ship & courtesy, wider choice in colour, design materials, price range, offers & discounts and facility for use of credit card. Location of the shop will attract more consumers and helps to increase the sales of goods. Showrooms should be located in such a way that customers can find the location of the shop very convenient for access (Pathak. S.V. And Aditya P. 2009). The customer's concentration is also on the accompanying services offered at three different stages viz., presales, during sales and after sales. Any dissatisfaction as regards these services would cause him to move away. The customers' needs and wants are satisfied only through wider choice in colour, design and material and therefore his buying behaviour is based on this factor also (Simintiras, 1997). Price value factor has emerged as the important determinant of customers shopping behaviour. Again, customers were very much conscious of the value and they usually compared the value sacrificed and received. It played a very key role in their buying decision process. Offers and discounts at various times may increase the purchasing power of customer. Facility for use of credit card may change the buying behavior.

Table 3: Showroom specification factors – an evaluation by respondents

Various Factors		No. of Responses		Total
		Single Brand	Multi Brand	
Location of Shops	Best	77	62	139
	Good	92	83	175
	Neutral	17	37	54
	Poor	12	14	26
	Very Poor	2	4	6
Salesmanship and Courtesy	Best	63	45	108
	Good	84	92	176
	Neutral	35	43	78
	Poor	11	17	28
	Very Poor	7	3	10
Wider Choice in Colour, Design	Best	62	76	138
	Good	96	76	172
	Neutral	26	35	61

and Materials	Poor	11	8	19
	Very Poor	5	5	10
Price Range	Best	37	51	88
	Good	105	82	187
	Neutral	24	41	65
	Poor	23	22	45
	Very Poor	11	4	15
Offers and Discounts	Best	60	57	117
	Good	82	79	161
	Neutral	26	35	61
	Poor	23	16	39
	Very Poor	9	13	22
Facility for use of Credit Card	Best	80	58	138
	Good	74	77	151
	Neutral	35	39	74
	Poor	6	15	21
	Very Poor	5	11	16

### **Suggestions for Better Brand Development:**

Based on the resultant outcome of the project, the following suggestions have been highlighted. Brand preference should be created through effective good advertisement and brand loyalty programmers. Advertisement has been the major source of information for many respondents. There should have a tone of freshness, style and energy conveyed through the advertisement. Many respondents buy during off-season sale. Therefore, retailer has to provide more offers & discounts during off-season sale. Kay Kraft, Richman, Dorjibari, Anjans, Plus point, Rex secured low scores in positive attributes of brands. The manufacturers have to concentrate on these attributes to attract more consumers towards their brand. Most of the respondents do not have knowledge about the location of single brand showrooms. It must be boosted through advertisements. Offers and discounts provided to customers must be improved in single brand showroom compared to multibrand shops. There should be more brand specific showrooms in Dhaka city as well as others town to cater to the needs of Bangladeshi people for clothing's. As quality aspects of a product are ranked first position by customer, the product quality should be maintained always. Also seen from the project that customer prefer products with color variation and design look features. The manufacturers and brand management should have clear conception on various products aspects and customer requirements and they should place the products to the customer accordingly. Finally, Clothing's price also has an important impact on buying decision of customer. Product prices should have in a reasonable range so that customer from most of the level may buy.

## Conclusion

The study reflects that many demographic factors and others purchase pattern factors have a significant influence on the customer's choice of retail outlet and buying of apparel product. Showroom specific factors also have influence on the buying behaviour of retail outlet. Cat's Eye, Artisti, Aarong, Westecs, Ecstasy, Kay-kraft, Yellow are the leading brands and are the most preferred brands and possesses many better positive attributes. According to the ranking by customers, the quality factor prevails in the first position, color and design, comfort and style and price are securing successive ranks respectively. Finally, it can be concluded that it is important to know the customers buying behavior process and customers requirements properly. The brand developer should develop and place the products accordingly to the customer and that will help in sustainable apparel products development as well as better business performances.

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