Analyzing Customer Experience Constructs that Induce Apparel Product Attachment in Young Consumers

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Abstract

Most products are discarded while they are still in their functional state. Researchers identified 'lack of attachment' with products as one of the major contributors of this quick, unwarranted disposal of products. The current study identifies factors that induce attachment to apparel products, and maps them to the specific types of customer experiences. It also examines the differences in the importance that consumers of different demographic profiles give to these factors for feeling attached to apparel products. Five constructs, namely, Product, Brand / Store, Consumer moderators, Social environment and Innovation for reuse / Environment sustainability were used. Statistical tests were used for analysis. The study concluded that four factors- Store attributes, Product attributes, Social influences and Emotional connections, were the most important determinants of attachment to apparel products in young consumers. The importance of store attributes, product attributes and emotional connections was found to be significantly different across consumer categories (according to gender, age-groups and monthly income or allowance). The extracted factors were then mapped with customer experience categories. Three types of experiences – Lifestyle, Relational (Social) and Emotional emerged as the most significant categories of customer experiences for inducing attachment to apparel products.

Keywords: Product attachment; Longevity; Customer experience; Product-attachment framework; Sustainability.

1. Introduction

Products are generally purchased for their functional, hedonic or psycho-social benefits. But many times due to reasons such as the old-fashioned look or incompatibility with newer products or availability of better options in the market, they are discarded even while in a functional state at the time of disposal [1-2].

As a result of fast changing fashion trends and declining apparel prices, consumers tend to renew their wardrobe more frequently, buying more garments than ever before [3]. This trend leads to a continual growth in production of textiles, use of non-renewable resources, and increasing disposal rate [4]. Designing longer lifetimes for products is a prerequisite for a sustainable future [5]. It is an interesting fact that due to certain associated experiences consumers tend to hold or retain certain products for longer times whereas they dispose many other products more quickly. In today's times of changing consumer psychology and increasing disposable incomes, consumption has changed its meanings and dimensions. Over consumption has reduced product lifespans, inducing quick discards and huge disposals. The trend is more common amongst young consumers. Mugge et al. [6] argue that if a consumer feels attachment to some product s/he will handle it with good care, repair it and even postpone its replacement. Niinimäki and Koskinen [7] identified the elements of proactive sustainable fashion design and explored person-product relationships.

2. Product attachment

Ball and Tasaki [8] define object attachment as "the extent to which an object which is owned, expected to be owned, or previously owned by an individual, is used by that individual to maintain his or her self-concept". Their definition implies that attachment is identical to self-extension. Similar to this Kleine, Kleine and Allen [9] propose attachment as "a multidimensional signifier of self-extension". People develop feeling of attachment to objects irrespective of the primary functions these products perform. Mugge [10] defines product attachment as the strength of the emotional bond a consumer experiences to a specific product. The strength of this emotional bond determines the degree of attachment. This concept of product attachment suggests that when experiencing attachment to a product, a strong relationship is developed between the individual and the object. It also implies that the object to which a person experiences attachment triggers one's responses. Experiencing attachment to products is a matter of degree [11-12]. People may experience relatively strong emotional bonds with their most favorite or special possessions, whereas other products are less significant to them.

According to Mugge, Schifferstein and Schoormans [13], if people feel strongly attached to a product, they are more likely to handle the product with care; to repair it when it damages and put in their best efforts to postpone its replacement as long as possible. Consumers become attached to certain products, because these products convey a personal and special meaning over and above the utilitarian value. Consumers' attachment to products can increase product lifespan and this can prove valuable in context of environmental damage due to quick disposals before completion of active life of product. Therefore, it is worthwhile to attempt to lengthen the psychological life span of consumer products [14-15]. One possible strategy to slow down product life cycles is by increasing the attachment people experience towards the products they use and own [16].

2.1. Factors influencing product attachment

Individuals do not deliberately seek to form attachments to objects [12]. The experience of attachment tends to develop over time as a result of recurring interactions between an individual and the attachment object [11, 17-18]. Experiences play a significant role in product attachment. People experience positive emotions towards the products to which they feel attached. Schultz, Kleine and Kernan [12] identified various types of feelings that consumers experience in context of product attachment. These are positive feelings of happiness, fun, pride, security, and comfort or negative feelings of sadness, memories of tough times etc. A personal or special meaning can bring about the experience of attachment to products [19-20].

Several authors have pointed out that people use objects to define the self, to create a sense of identity, to remind themselves and others of who they are or who they would like to be, and to protect and enhance their self-concept [8, 20-21]. According to Greenwald [22], four facets can be distinguished in a person's self-schema: the diffuse self, the private self, the public self, and the collective self. The diffuse self aims at hedonic satisfaction and utilizes product enjoyment (innate pleasure) as a driver of attachment. The diffuse self-strives for sensory experiences that come from product appearance, usage and familiarity with a well-known product. The private self aims at individual achievement by meeting personal standards. The private self becomes attached to products that reflect the person's identity, individuality, goals, independence, uniqueness, skills and achievements. The public self looks for approval from others. The public self gets attached to products that symbolize one's relationship to family members, friends, social groups, reference groups and are approved by the person's social connections. The public self-values gifts and token of approval from significant others, and gifts received on special occasions.

Schifferstein and Zwartkruis-Pelgrim [23] identified seven possible determinants of product attachment, namely, enjoyment, memories associated with people, places, and events, support of self-identity, life vision, utility, reliability and market value. Their study concluded that only memories and enjoyment contribute positively to the degree of attachment. Other attachment factors identified in different studies are (i) Self-expression - Distinguishing oneself from others through the product, getting associated with the product personality, (ii) Group affiliation - Establishing social connections and obtaining social approval through product ownership, (iii) Memories - Unique and lasting

remembrances related to the product and its purchase and (iv) Pleasure - Enjoyment obtained during purchase and consumption [9, 24-25]. In context of retail, various factors related to product features, usage, retailer or brand name, retail environment, service interface, and social environment affect consumers' psychology towards the product.

3. Introduction to customer experiences

Customer experience is the sum of all experiences a customer has with a supplier of goods and services, over the duration of his/her relationship with that supplier [26]. Customer experience is "the takeaway impression formed by consumer's encounters with products, services, and businesses—a perception produced when humans consolidate sensory information" [27]. It is the key factor for companies to use, in building loyalty to brands, channels and services [28].

According to Schmitt [29] customers encounter sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioral and social experiences during various phases of product purchase and use. These experiences have significant impact on consumers' psychology and behavior towards the product, and can result in attachment. Product features, store attributes, retail environment and service-scape act as experience determinants. Experience clues also emerge from the social environment (need of social acceptance, social status, reference group opinion) and from the natural environment (awareness of environmental issues, and customers' psychological and behavioral responses). The study by Gentile et al. [30] identified constructs of customer experience as –Sensorial (senses), Emotional (affective system of generation of mood, feelings, emotions), Cognitive (mental processes, problem solving), Pragmatic (practicality, usability), Lifestyle (values, beliefs related to lifestyle & behaviour) and Relational (social context, relationship with other people).

Customer experiences play an important role in developing associations between consumers, products, brand and elements of the retail environment. There is growing confirmation that, during a person's interaction with a product, this product should elicit positive feelings to create an optimal product experience. Knowledge on the experience of attachment to products can contribute in achieving this goal. In addition, the consumer-product relationship plays an important role in replacement purchases. People's tendency to replace the product they own by purchasing a new one depends in part on their experiences with and feelings toward their old product [31].

4. Apparel products and concept of attachment

Fashion products, especially apparels are greatly influenced by evolving concepts, climatic conditions, body measurements etc. Product attachment and sustainability have difficult enactment in the fashion world where people indulge in over-consumption and throw-away activities due to psychological and social pressures underlined by changing trends. The challenge is not just to increase the physical lifespan of apparels but also to extend the psychological life by maintaining high level of consumer approval and acceptance for the aging apparel product that does not thin down with new offerings in market.

Apparels are a form of self-expression and reflect consumer's lifestyle and personality. Apparels purchase decisions are characterized by high degree of consumer involvement and depend on various crucial attributes such as look and feel, fit and comfort, relevance to the latest trends and styles, and various clues related to the retail store, services etc. Apparel brands and retailers are interestingly and innovatively using customer experience constructs to explore the different dimensions of experience and constructing enthralling and intriguing experiences.

The attachment factors resulting from self-expression, group affiliation, memories and pleasure have strong and meaningful connotations in context of purchase and consumption of apparel products. People express them through their clothes. Their attire is a significant element of their personality. Preference for customized clothing, designer-wear, organic products is an elucidation of expressing oneself in a

unique and distinctive manner. Sporty people get attracted towards Nike products and adventurous people value Patagonia products due to product personality. Apparel product reviews and recommendations (more through online and social media than the conventional word-of-mouth) have become an essential element of consumer decision making. A considerable portion of our clothing carries some memories of special moments and special people associated with them. Pleasure is one important aspect of consumers' purchase and consumption behavior because of which clothing purchase invites intense consumer involvement. Pleasure may be acquired through purchasing an apparel product from a reputed store or brand, or through a specific retail channel; or from wearing a particular fabric, color or style.

5. Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework for the study was developed using the concept of Greenwald's four facets of the consumer's self-schema: the diffuse self, the private self, the public self, and the collective self [22] along with the attachment factors of self-expression, group affiliation, memories and pleasure [9, 24-25], identified in previous studies and then including elements of retail customer experience (such as product attributes, store or brand attributes) that impact apparel purchase and consumption and may induce apparel product attachment (Figure 1).
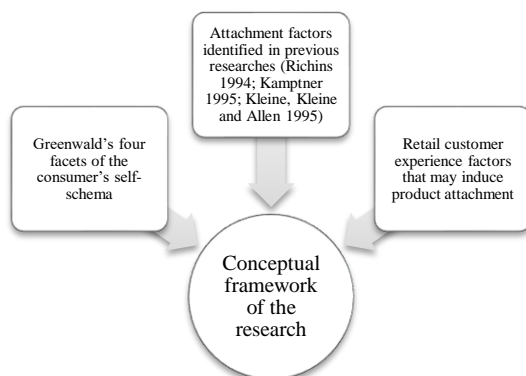

Figure 1. Conceptual framework

The mapping of identified constructs for developing the questionnaire scale for the study is given (Figure 2) below.

Greenwald's four facets of the consumer's self-schema	Attachment factors identified in previous researches (Richins 1994; Kamptner 1995; Kleine, Kleine and Allen 1995)	Retail customer experience factors
Diffuse self	Pleasure	(a) Consumer moderators (involvement, emotions, pleasure)
Private self	Self-expression / Memories	
Public self	Group affiliation	(b) Social environment
Collective self		(c) Innovation for reuse / Environmental sustainability

(d) Product attributes
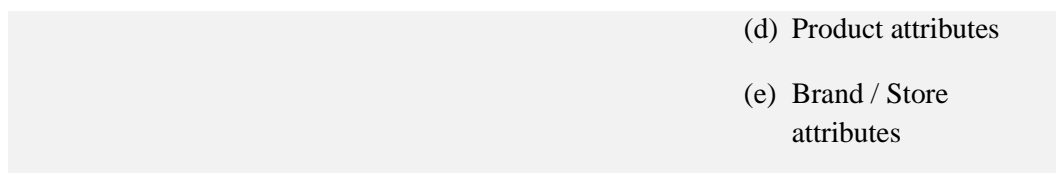
(e) Brand / Store attributes

Figure 2. Mapping of identified constructs for questionnaire development

6. Objectives

The objectives of the study were-
1. To identify the factors that induce attachment to apparel products, and map them to the specific types of experiences
2. To examine the apparel product attachment factors with respect to consumers' demographic profile

7. Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were framed for testing through statistical techniques. Hypothesis H1 was framed to test if there exist certain experience attributes that are significant in inducing apparel product attachment in young consumers. In order to be tested, the following 5 sub-hypotheses were made for H1.

H1: Factors such as apparel product attributes, store / brand attributes, consumer factors, social factors and innovation factors for environment sustainability do not play significant role in inducing attachment to apparel products in young consumers.

H1a: Apparel product attributes do not play significant role in inducing attachment to apparel products in young consumers.
H1b: Store or brand attributes do not play significant role in inducing attachment to apparel products in young consumers.
H1c: Consumer factors do not play significant role in inducing attachment to apparel products in young consumers.
H1d: Social factors do not play significant role in inducing attachment to apparel products in young consumers.
H1e: Innovation factors for environment sustainability do not play significant role in inducing attachment to apparel products in young consumers.

Hypothesis H2 tested if there exist significant differences in the importance given to apparel product attachment factors according to respondent's demographic profiles (considering gender, age groups and monthly income or allowance as independent variables). H2 was tested through 3 sub-hypotheses.

H2: There is no significant difference in the choice of apparel product attachment factors for consumers of different demographic profiles.

H2a: There is no significant difference in the importance of apparel product attachment factors for male and female consumers.
H2b: There is no significant difference in the importance of apparel product attachment factors for consumers of different age groups.
H2c: There is no significant difference in the importance of apparel product attachment factors for consumers having different monthly income or allowance.

8. Methodology

Ball and Tasaki [8] distinguished between five stages in the development of attachment and dis-attachment for a particular product, namely pre-acquisition, early ownership, mature ownership, pre-disposal and post-disposal. Although the length of these stages may differ considerably for different products, they seem to apply to all types of products.

8.1. Research approach

The current study aims at understanding consumer behavior associated with the first three stages of development of product attachment / dis-attachment, i.e. pre-acquisition, early ownership and mature ownership [8]. An empirical and cross-sectional study was undertaken. Attributes creating attachment to apparel products and the related customer experience constructs were identified through consumer survey. Purposive sampling technique was used to identify schools, colleges, offices and shopping malls to conduct the survey. In the identified survey locations, respondents were selected in a random manner. The aim was to acquire responses from male and female apparel consumers in the age group of 15 to 35 years. Data was analyzed using quantitative techniques.

8.2. Research Tool

From extensive review of extant literature elements that could possibly induce apparel product-attachment were identified for using in the study as questionnaire elements. A structured questionnaire was used to collect responses for 5 constructs of product attachment. These were apparel product attributes (scale of 6 items), brand / store attributes (scale of 6 items), consumer attributes (scale of 4 items), social environment attributes (scale of 3 items) and environmental sustainability attributes (scale of 3 items). The constructs and their respective items are depicted in Table 1. The second section of the questionnaire was designed to gather demographic data from the respondents.

Table 1. Customer Experience & Product-attachment attributes identified from Literature Review

	Determinants		Specific attributes used in consumer survey
1	Apparel Product attributes	1	Unique and distinct features
		2	Quality (fabric, color)
		3	Excellent fit, finish and feel
		4	Valuable due to high-price
		5	Timeless and classy style
		6	Easy use and maintenance
2	Store / Brand attributes	7	Purchased from a reputed brand or store
		8	Excellent store experience and memories (ambience, location, display, entertainment)
		9	Excellent information about product features and use provided by store staff
		10	Services provided by store staff in maintaining the clothes
		11	Interesting suggestions by store staff for reuse and renewal of clothes
3	Consumer moderators	12	Consumer involvement in product design
		13	Gifted by someone dear / special
		14	Made or bought for a special occasion (Wedding, birthday, other special occasions)
		15	Personal liking or attraction towards the endorser / model
4	Social environment	16	Social acceptance, approval & appreciation
		17	Feeling of looking confident and presentable
		18	Recommended by friends and family
5	Innovation for reuse /	19	Using organic or sustainable natural apparel products to seek customer approval

Environmental sustainability	20	Possibility of product reuse (alternate use) and renewal (refurbishment)
	21	Possibility of delayed disposal as a concern towards environmental damage
	22	Eco-friendly practices of the store

8.3. Respondents

The questionnaire was administered to respondents in the age group of 15 to 35 years. 350 questionnaires were distributed. From the filled questionnaires 318 questionnaires were found complete and valid for the study. There were 137 male and 181 female respondents classified into 5 categories - students, salaried professionals, entrepreneurs, home-makers and others.

9. Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using SPSS version 22. The aim was to identify determinants of apparel product attachment and their specific attributes related to apparel products purchase and consumption and the associated experiences. The questionnaire scales were checked for consistency and reliability. Exploratory Factor Analysis with Principal Component Analysis was used. Factor analysis determined the significant factors and experience determinants that affect customers' attachment to their apparel products which may motivate them to use the apparel products for a longer period of time. Independent samples t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to find if the importance of these attachment factors differ for consumers with different demographic profiles.

9.1. Reliability Analysis

Reliability of all the five scales of determinants was computed using SPSS software. Chronbach's Alpha and split half reliability coefficients were calculated to establish the reliability of measures. Malhotra [32] indicated limit of 0.6 for acceptable reliability in terms of internal consistency, hence Chronbach's Alpha value of more than 0.6 was considered good for reliability of the measures. All the five scales had Cronbach Alpha greater than 0.6 showing that the scales were reliable. Within each scale, the consistency of various statements pertaining to each scale in the questionnaire was checked through item-total correlation. The computed value of every item-total correlation was compared with the standard value of 0.4 [33]. The items having their item-total correlation value less than 0.4 (critical value) were considered inconsistent and were dropped from the questionnaire. Items at Serial No. 4, 6, 13 were found inconsistent and were not considered for Exploratory Factor Analysis. The results of Reliability and Consistency Analysis are given in Table 2.

9.2. Identification of significant experience factors that induce apparel product attachment through Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory Factor Analysis was performed in SPSS using the Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation. The result of Bartlett's test of Sphericity was significant (0.00) (Pallant, 2005) [34]. KMO value (0.815 > 0.5) indicated that data was appropriate for factor analysis. Seventeen items were extracted by four factors. Only the factors having eigenvalue greater than one were considered significant; others were discarded. The four extracted factors were termed as store attributes, product features, social environment and emotional connections. All the four factors together accounted for 59.201 percent of the total variance. None of the items were cross-loading in the Rotated Component Matrix. Purifying the scale involved excluding items with factor loadings of 0.4 or below and items that strongly loaded on more than one factor [34]. Items having factor loading more than 0.4 were included in the interpretation. The maximum variance was explained by store attributes, followed by product attributes, social environment and lastly, emotional connections. Table 3, 4 and 5 summarize the Factor Analysis results.

Table 2. Reliability and Consistency Analysis

	Scale	Cronbach Alpha	Item-total correlation	Consistency
I.	**Apparel product attributes**	**0.646**		
a.	Unique & distinct features		0.522	Consistent
b.	Quality		0.473	Consistent
c.	Fit & finish		0.537	Consistent
d.	Timeless & classy style		0.535	Consistent
II.	**Store / Brand attributes**	**0.852**		
a.	Purchase from reputed brand / store		0.514	Consistent
b.	Store experiences & memories		0.670	Consistent
c.	Store staff information for product use		0.755	Consistent
d.	Store staff services for product maintenance		0.726	Consistent
e.	Store staff suggestions for product reuse and renewal		0.665	Consistent
III.	**Consumer moderators**	**0.683**		
a.	Gifted by someone special		0.533	Consistent
b.	Made or bought for special occasion		0.520	Consistent
c.	Fondness for the model who advertises		0.430	Consistent
IV.	**Social environment**	**0.782**		
a.	Social appreciation		0.661	Consistent
b.	Feeling of confidence and presentability		0.662	Consistent
c.	Recommended by family and friends		0.477	Consistent
V.	**Innovation for reuse / Environment sustainability**	**0.601**		
a.	Environmental concern		0.547	Consistent
b.	Eco-friendly practices of the store / brand		0.490	Consistent

Table 3. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.815
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1831.12
	Df	136
	Sig.	0.000

Table 4. Total Variance explained

Compo nent	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulativ e %	Total	% of Variance	Cumula tive %	Total	% of Variance	Cumula tive %
1	4.909	28.877	28.877	4.909	28.877	28.877	4.429	26.054	26.054
2	1.879	11.052	39.930	1.879	11.052	39.930	2.146	12.625	38.679
3	1.812	10.659	50.589	1.812	10.659	50.589	1.883	11.079	49.758
4	1.464	8.613	59.201	1.464	8.613	59.201	1.605	9.443	59.201
5	0.892	5.246	64.447						
6	0.838	4.928	69.376						
7	0.800	4.704	74.080						
8	0.668	3.927	78.008						
9	0.646	3.803	81.810						
10	0.578	3.398	85.208						
11	0.455	2.674	87.883						
12	0.446	2.624	90.506						
13	0.412	2.424	92.930						
14	0.381	2.244	95.174						
15	0.330	1.939	97.113						
16	0.272	1.597	98.710						
17	0.219	1.290	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component
Analysis.

From Exploratory Factor Analysis, store attributes, product attributes, social influences and emotional connections emerged as most significant factors explaining apparel product attachment and thus motivating customers to use the apparel products for a longer period of time. Hence Hypothesis H1a, H1b, H1c and H1d were found to be true. Hypothesis H1e could not be established. Thus, innovation attributes were not found to be significant for explaining apparel product attachment behavior.

9.3. Mapping of apparel product attachment factors with customer experience categories

The attributes obtained from Factor Analysis were mapped with the experience constructs which represent the different dimensions of customer experiences [30]. An adapted version of Attribute-Value Mapping (a Systematic Inventive Thinking method, adopted from Genrich Altshuller's TRIZ) [35] was used to map the significant attributes to the causal stimuli which further traced the respective experience dimension or construct responsible for its behaviour.

Figure 3 shows the Attribute-Experience construct mapping. Store attributes and product attributes converge to generate lifestyle values that construct lifestyle experiences, social environment generates relational values that construct relational experiences and emotional connections generate emotional values that construct emotional experiences. These experiences are created during apparel product purchase and consumption. The different experiences so created can be attributed to the inducement of attachment to the apparel product. Summarizing, the experience categories that emerged significant for inducing attachment to apparel products in the current study are 1) Lifestyle 2) Relational (Social) and 3) Emotional experiences.

Table 5. Rotated Component Matrix

Items with factor loadings > 0.4	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Unique & distinct features		0.718		
Quality		0.689		
Fit, finish & feel		0.761		
Timeless & classy style		0.623		
Gifted by someone special				0.879
Made or bought for special occasion				0.809
Like the model who advertises	0.694			
Social appreciation			0.802	
Feeling of confidence and presentability			0.825	
Recommended by friends, family			0.681	
Environmental concern	0.459			
Purchased from reputed brand or store	0.635			
Store experience & memories	0.782			
Eco-friendly practices of brand or store	0.761			
Store staff information for product use	0.854			
Store staff services for product maintenance	0.820			
Store staff suggestions for product reuse and renewal	0.748			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
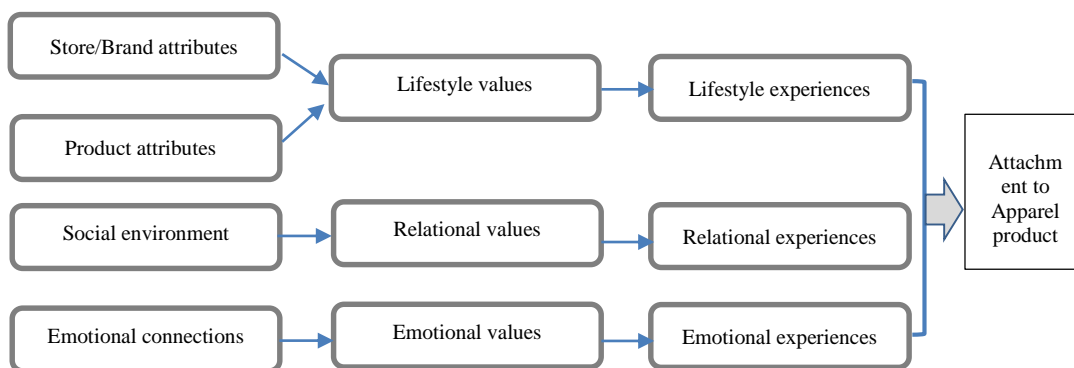a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Figure 3. The Product Attachment / Attribute-Experience construct mapping

9.4. Finding difference in the importance of apparel product attachment factors according to consumer demographic profiles

1) Difference in importance of apparel product attachment factors according to respondents' gender

Independent samples t-test was used to find the difference in choice of apparel product attachment factors for male and female consumers. Table 6 shows the results. Levene's test was found insignificant (p>0.05) showing that we do not have sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis that the difference between variances is zero; in other words we can assume that the variances are roughly equal and the

assumption is tenable. Hence, the variances in the choice of male and female consumers for store attributes and product attributes were almost equal. However, variances in the choice of apparel product attachment factors were found to be significantly different for social influences and emotional connections amongst male and female consumers (p <0.05).

Next, we look at the value of the t-statistic. In this case the two-tailed value of p is less than 0.05 for store attributes and emotional connections and p is greater than 0.05 for product attributes and social influences. This implies that there is no significant difference between means of the two samples (male and female respondents) for product attributes and social environment (i.e., both are considered equally important for apparel product attachment by male and female consumers), whereas there are differences in the importance that male and female consumers give to store attributes and emotional connections.

Table 6. t-test analysis for importance of apparel product attachment factors according to respondents' gender

Apparel product-attachment factors		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Store Attributes	Equal variances assumed	2.682	0.103	2.802	316	0.005
	Equal variances not assumed			2.766	277.680	0.006
Product Attributes	Equal variances assumed	0.737	0.391	0.224	316	0.823
	Equal variances not assumed			0.228	306.177	0.820
Social Influences	Equal variances assumed	9.091	0.003	1.246	316	0.214
	Equal variances not assumed			1.289	315.768	0.198
Emotional Connections	Equal variances assumed	23.774	0.000	-4.716	316	0.000
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.477	225.731	0.000

2) Difference in importance of apparel product attachment factors according to respondents' age groups

ANOVA was performed to find if significant differences exists in the different consumer age groups for the importance of store attributes, product attributes, social environment and emotional connections for inducing apparel product attachment. The respondents were grouped into 5 age groups. Table 7 summarizes the ANOVA and Post hoc results for differences in importance of apparel product attachment factors age-group wise. The groups were constituted as –Group 1 (Age groups 15-17 years, School students), Group 2 (Age groups 18-21 years, Under-graduate students), Group 3 (Age groups 22-25 years, Post-graduate students), Group 4 (Age groups 26-30 years, Young professionals, home-makers, entrepreneurs), Group 5 (Age groups 31-35 years, Mature Professionals, home-makers, entrepreneurs with family orientation)

Table 7. ANOVA and Post hoc analysis for importance of apparel product attachment factors according to respondents' age-groups

Apparel product attachment factors	F statistic	Sig.	ANOVA Interpretation
Store attributes	13.004	0.000	p<0.05 so significant difference exists
Post hoc results: Group 1 differed significantly from group 3, 4 and 5 in the importance of store attributes for inducing apparel product attachment. Similarly group 2 and 3 also differed from groups 4 and 5. The mean importance of store attributes for inducing apparel product attachment was found to be highest for group 1 as compared to other groups. This was followed by group 2.			
Product attributes	3.227	0.013	p<0.05 so significant difference exists
Post hoc results: Significant differences exist between group 2 and 5 where the mean importance of product attributes was found higher for group 2 as compared to group 5.			
Social environment	1.811	0.127	p>0.05 so significant difference does not exists
No significant differences amongst groups were seen for social environment.			
Emotional connections	4.876	0.001	p<0.05 so significant difference exists
Post hoc results: Significant differences exist between age group 2, 3, 4 and 5 where mean importance for emotional connection was found low in these groups as compared to group 5.			

3) Difference in importance of apparel product attachment factors according to respondents' monthly income or allowance

Table 8 summarizes the ANOVA and Post hoc results for differences in importance of apparel product attachment factors according to monthly income or allowance. The groups were constituted according to monthly income/allowance as –Group 1 (< Rs. 5000), Group 2 (Rs. 5000 – Rs. 10,000), Group 3 (Rs. 10,000– Rs. 20,000), Group 4 (Rs. 20,000 – Rs. 30,000), Group 5 (Rs. 30,000 – Rs. 40,000), Group 6 (Rs. 40,000 – Rs. 50,000), Group 7 (> Rs. 50,000).

Table 8. ANOVA and Post hoc analysis for importance of apparel product attachment factors according to respondents' according to Monthly Income/Allowance

Apparel product attachment factors	F statistic	Sig.	ANOVA Interpretation
Store attributes	5.439	0.000	p<0.05 so significant difference exists
Post hoc results: The mean importance of store attributes for apparel product attachment for group 1 was higher than those of all the other groups. However, significant differences were found between group 1 and groups 2, 5 and 7. The mean importance of store attributes for group 2 was found to be lower than all the other groups.			
Product attributes	9.066	0.000	p<0.05 so significant difference exists

Post hoc results: Significant differences exist between group 1 and 5, where the mean importance of product attributes for apparel product attachment was extremely high for group 1 as compared to group 5. The same results were seen when groups 2 and 3 were compared with group 5.			
Social environment	0.408	0.874	p>0.05 so significant difference does not exists
No significant differences amongst groups were seen for social environment.			
Emotional connections	1.405	0.212	p>0.05 so significant difference does not exists
No significant differences amongst groups were seen for emotional connections.			

10. Findings & Discussions

*Finding 1***:** Store attributes, product attributes, social influences and emotional connections are the factors that create attachment to apparel products in young consumers; of these, store attributes are the most significant influencers, followed by product attributes.

Finding 2: The identified apparel product attachment factors were mapped with consumer experience categories. Lifestyle, relational (social) and emotional experiences emerged as most significant in influencing apparel product attachment in young consumers.

Finding 3: Difference in importance that consumers give to apparel product attachment factors according to their gender
No differences were found among the male and female respondents for the importance given to product and social environment factors in inducing apparel product attachment. However, there existed significant differences in the importance given by both the genders to store attributes and emotional connections.

Finding 4: Difference in importance that consumers give to apparel product attachment factors according to their age group
Significant differences existed. The importance that school students (age group 15-17 years) give to store attributes is much greater than given by other categories of respondents. They are followed by the undergraduate students (age group 18-21 years) in the importance given to store attributes.
Product attributes were found to be considered more important for apparel product attachment by undergraduate students (age group 18-21 years) followed by more mature people in the age-group 31-35 years. All the consumer categories gave almost equal importance to social environment attributes for inducement of apparel product attachment. However, importance for emotional connections was found to be greatest for the age group 31-35 years.

Finding 5: Difference in importance that consumers give to apparel product attachment factors according to their monthly income / allowance

Store attributes were found to be less important and product attributes were found to be more important for respondents with lower monthly incomes (less than Rs. 20,000) and lower monthly allowance (less than Rs. 2000). However, no significant differences could be detected in the importance of social environment and emotional connections with respect to respondents' monthly income or allowance.

11. Conclusion

The study concluded that store attributes, product attributes, social influences and emotional connections create stronger attachment to apparel products in young consumers; of these store attributes are the most significant influencers, followed by product attributes. Innovation for reuse / environment sustainability could not be established as a significant factor inducing apparel product attachment in young consumers.

The importance of store attributes, product attributes and emotional connections was found to be significantly different across consumer categories (according to gender, age-groups and monthly income or allowance). However the importance given to social environment was found to be almost same for all consumer categories considered in the study.

Product attributes were found to have different impact on respondents with different age groups and monthly income or allowance. This could imply a different interpretation of apparel product features and use for consumers with different age groups and incomes (from stylish to functional, simple to complex maintenance and so on). Social influences were found to be significant determinants of apparel product attachment but the study could not establish any difference in the importance that different consumer categories give to this construct for inducing the attachment. It was found to be equally important for all consumer categories in the study. Emotional connection as a factor for inducing apparel product attachment was found to be having varying impacts on respondents both, according to their gender and age groups.

The extracted factors were mapped to customer experience categories. Three types of experiences – lifestyle, relational (social) and emotional emerged as the most significant categories of customer experiences for inducing attachment to apparel products. The study implied that store elements, product features, social influences and the emotional connections could be utilized to create stronger apparel product attachment that increases product longevity and slows downs discard or disposal. This could be meaningful in concern with the issues of over-consumption, shortening product life cycle, increasing throw-away clothing culture and clothing disposals. Apparel product attachment can be enhanced for environment benefit by crafting appropriate lifestyle, relational and emotional experiences for the target consumers.

12. Future directions

The study can be further extended by identifying the specific attributes that can be held responsible for inducing apparel product attachment for consumers with different demographic profiles by exploring each of the factors (store, product, social environment and emotions) in more details. Similar studies can be done with different product categories and with consumers with other demographic profiles.

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