

Factors Influencing Purchase Behaviour of Branded Sports Shoes

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This study offers and validates a comprehensive approach to explain factors influencing the attitude of respondents towards various characteristics of branded sports shoes. In order to attain these objectives a sample of 322 respondents belonging to three cities of Punjab: Jalandhar, Amritsar and Ludhiana, was drawn. Non-probability convenient sampling was adopted for selecting the respondents. It was however; found that brand loyals preferred buying shoes of their fancied companies whereas innovators preferred shoes with the latest state-of-the-art trends and technologies. Consumers desired sports shoes to be colourful and stylish and happened to relate traits of shoes to their personality.

Key words: *Purchase behaviour, consumer behaviour branded loyalty, sports shoes.*



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Indians are becoming mindful about their fitness and this is apparent in the number of health care and fitness centers that have proliferated in the current times. Exposure to various health issues has led to this awareness creation. The Indian shoe market has undoubtedly emerged as a clear winner from this mounting realization about maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

India's sportswear market has evolved from a niche segment, which was exclusively aimed at sportspersons, to a burgeoning consumer sector. The sportswear retail market in India is estimated at INR 365.8 billion and is expected to grow at a robust CAGR of 33% during 2010–2014. The market includes sports apparel, footwear and accessories, with footwear being the largest segment, accounting for around 60% of the total market (www.ey.com). The market is ruled by the four main brands; Adidas, Reebok, Nike and Puma. These are global players and possess over 80% market share of the market, with numerous other brands such as Fila and Lotto escalating their presence by the day. Brands such as Liberty, Woodland and Lotto also have a moderate presence in the market. The segment serves all sections - men, women and children.

The sector is highly unorganised where 80% to 85% of the industry falls under very small micros, small and medium enterprises and hardly any brand names exist (www.economic-times.indiatimes.com). The average customer is unable to distinguish between clutters of brands. Reebok is a well-known and popular brand and is more preferable as compared to Nike, Puma and Adidas as it offers affordable shoes, which can be worn with casual attire too.

Review of Literature

Endalew Adamu (2011) expressed that like any other product, consumers see a shoe as a bundle of attributes capable of fulfilling their expectations. He further emphasized that these attributes are mainly the style, quality and price. He also suggested that in order to design competent marketing programs it is essential for companies, especially in foot wear and garment industry, to identify the product attributes that the consumers pay the most attention to.

Banerjee, Bagchi and Mehta (2014), conducted a study in which they explored the influence of twenty-one attributes on consumer purchase behaviour in the footwear segment. They expressed that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors like the price, fit, comfort, variety, design had an effect on a consumer's purchase intentions. The study also suggested that consumers look for convenience and accessibility in their shopping options. Apart from these factors like odour free and lightweight material also mattered up to a certain extent.

Mulugeta Girma (2016) conducted a research aimed to explore the pattern of brand preference towards domestic and foreign footwear products and its antecedents. Age and gender were taken as variables. The study was conducted on 319 usable samples and relevant data was obtained on purchase preference, brand consciousness, normative influences, emotional values and perceived quality using both inferential and descriptive statistical techniques. The finding disclosed that the emotional value of the brand and normative influences are the most and least significant antecedents respectively for brand preference. The study concluded that the emotional value of the brand significantly affected both genders; male and females significantly. It also pointed out that with rising age, their seemed to be a preference towards local brands.

Anand and Akelya emphasized that the mindset of the emerging Indian middle class has changed. They have high ambitions and a desire to improve their standards of living. Their spending patterns are changing and priorities have changed. Their inclination to incur higher expenditure on education, health, and personal care and apparels has increased (Anand and Akelya).

The literature review emphasizes the need to understand the mindset of the customers. Their lies a need to explore the aspirations, preferences and self esteem needs of the consumer. An effort also needs to be made of understanding the role of feel good factor in shaping the buying preferences of the consumer. In the light of the gaps in the review the objectives of the study are mentioned below.

Objectives of the study

The current study explores characteristics of branded sports shoes that have an influence on the Purchase Behaviour of the customers.

Methodology

This is an endeavor to study characteristics of branded sports shoes that have an influence on the purchase behaviour of the customer's preference and decision-making for purchasing sports shoes among the consumers. The population of the study is comprised of three cities of Punjab: Amritsar, Ludhiana and Jalandhar. A sample of 350 respondents comprising of 100–120 from each city was planned. However, after scrutiny of the filled questionnaires, 322 were found fit for analysis; others were not complete or lacked seriousness in response and hence weeded out. Thus, the final sample was 322 respondents comprising 126 respondents from Jalandhar, 123 from Amritsar and 73 from Ludhiana. For selecting the respondents, non-probability convenient sampling technique was adopted as it well suits exploratory studies like this (Tull & Hawkins, 1996, p. 544). However, an effort was made to include respondents across different demographic variables to make the sample representative. The unit of the study was an individual.

Data were collected personally from the respondents by using a pre-tested, structured and non-disguised questionnaire. The information was gathered from the consumers visiting various shoe outlets. The questionnaire was personally administered to the consumers coming out of these stores.

Tools and Techniques

It has been attempted to explore the attitude of respondents towards various characteristics of sports shoes that influence their purchase behaviour. Income variable has been considered for analysis. The four income categories considered for analysis are I_1 (respondents having monthly income below ₹ 20,000); I_2 (respondents having monthly income between ₹ 20,000 and 40,000); I_3 (income between 40,000 and 60,000); and I_4 (income above ₹ 60,000). Respondents were asked to give their responses, to a set of thirty statements that were framed on the basis of intuition

and discussion with experts. These statements reflected the attitude of respondents towards sports shoes in general. Each statement was measured on five-point Likert scale with 5 representing, “strongly agree” and 1 signifying, “strongly disagree”. Mean values of the four income categories were determined. F-ratios were also calculated. After checking whether significant differences exist between the opinion of different income groups, Factor analysis was employed on the aggregate group of respondents. The reliability of scale was measured with the help of Cronbach's Alpha.

The list of statements is given in Table 1.

Table 1
List of Statements Depicting Characteristics of branded sports shoes influencing Purchase Behaviour

Labels	Statements
(S1)	I am most enthusiastic to buy the most reputable brand.
(S2)	I prefer shoes with the most comfortable material.
(S3)	I select the brand name irrespective of its price.
(S4)	I like to try newly launched shoes to try something innovative.
(S5)	I prefer to try shoes that are the most durable.
(S6)	I believe that a well-designed shoe reflects a good quality product.
(S7)	While purchasing, I always pay attention to the difference in the price of the available shoes.
(S8)	I favor a shoe that offers unique features.
(S9)	Sports shoes are more preferable than formal shoes.
(S10)	I have a tendency to pick up shoes, which have the attractive look.
(S11)	I prefer a brand that offers good color choice.
(S12)	I feel that a shoe exposes my personality.
(S13)	An increase in the price of my preferred brand will not effect my buying intent.
(S14)	I prefer a brand which is the most cool and stylish.
(S15)	I prefer the most advertised brand of shoe.
(S16)	I prefer usage of a brand that is widely and easily available.
(S17)	I am loyal to particular brands of shoes.
(S18)	I prefer buying a different brand of shoe in each purchase.
(S19)	I favor a brand that fulfills my expectations.
(S20)	If satisfied with a brand only then I buy it in my next purchase.
(S21)	If there is a wide choice, I buy the shoe of the most popular company.

(S22)	I decide to buy a well-known brand of a shoe because I find it reliable.
(S23)	I prefer buying a brand that justifies my personality.
(S24)	I prefer buying a shoe of a particular brand.
(S25)	Extensive advertising by a competitor company does not effect my choice of shoes.
(S26)	While purchasing I pay the most attention to the economy provided by the brand.
(S27)	I am easily able to identify the brand I purchase amongst all displayed brands.
(S28)	I can easily identify the logo of my preferred brand
(S29)	I feel my brand satisfies my expectations.
(S30)	I prefer a brand that is well displayed.

In order to find the level of agreement/disagreement with the various statements on the basis of income status of respondents, mean scores were calculated. Weights of 5,4,3,2 and 1 were assigned respectively to the responses.

Mean scores are cumulative averages of the responses of the respondents. These help to assess and analyze the level of customer satisfaction on all the selected 30 statements separately. A moderate level of satisfaction is available in the mid- point of the scale, (i,e) 3 and this may be taken as an average. Based on this, variables which have a mean value above 4 depict a high level of respondent agreement, mean value above 2 and up to 3 shows moderate agreement level, above 1 and up to 2 shows less agreement level and mean value below 1 shows a high level of disagreement.

In order to examine whether any significant differences exist among the respondents belonging to various income categories with respect to characteristics of sports shoes influencing purchase behaviour the following null hypothesis has been tested

H_0 : There is no significant difference among the respondents belonging to different income groups regarding their preferences for various statements depicting characteristics of sports shoes influencing their purchase behaviour.

In order to compare the income-wise mean scores, F-ratios have been calculated to the responses of each statement. Mean values along with F-ratios for various statements are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Attitude of Respondents towards Characteristics of branded sports shoes influencing Purchase Behaviour
(Overall and Income-wise Mean Scores and F-Ratio)

Labels	Statements	Overall Mean Value	I ₁ Mean Value	I ₂ Mean Value	I ₃ Mean Value	I ₄ Mean Value	F-ratio
(S1)	I am most enthusiastic to buy the most reputable brand.	2.70	2.68	2.71	2.69	2.72	0.77
(S2)	I like to try newly launched shoes to try something innovative.	2.83	2.83	2.81	2.84	2.85	2.00
(S3)	I prefer to try shoes that are the most durable.	2.74	2.75	2.73	2.74	2.74	2.12
(S4)	I prefer shoes with the most comfortable material.	3.12	3.12	3.11	3.12	3.13	0.72
(S5)	I select the brand name irrespective of its price.	2.99	2.98	2.97	3.00	3.01	0.76

(S6)	I believe that a well-designed shoe reflects a good quality product.	3.23	3.69	3.78	2.69	2.77	0.17
(S7)	While purchasing, I always pay attention to the difference in the price of the available shoes.	2.88	2.86	2.89	2.88	2.90	1.15
(S8)	I favor a shoe that offers unique features.	2.47	3.24	3.05	2.06	1.55	3.40*
(S9)	I feel that a shoe effect my image.	3.40	3.03	3.25	3.67	3.65	1.54
(S10)	I have a tendency to pick up shoes, which have the attractive look.	2.48	2.71	2.79	2.31	2.13	1.71
(S11)	I prefer a brand that offers good color choice.	2.60	2.56	2.63	2.62	2.59	1.42
(S12)	Sports shoes are more preferable than formal shoes.	2.40	2.33	2.40	2.47	2.42	2.08
(S13)	An increase in the price of my preferred brand will not effect my buying intent.	2.35	2.31	2.39	2.33	2.37	2.43
(S14)	I prefer a brand which is the most economical.	2.16	1.99	2.11	2.23	2.32	1.80
(S15)	I prefer a less advertised brand of shoe.	2.21	2.10	2.16	2.32	2.28	0.57
(S16)	I prefer usage of a brand that is widely and easily available.	2.22	2.09	2.22	2.31	2.29	0.93
(S17)	I am loyal to particular brands of shoes.	4.00	4.42	4.31	3.77	3.51	3.49*
(S18)	I prefer buying a different brand of shoe in each purchase.	3.96	3.82	3.99	4.03	4.02	1.07
(S19)	I favor a brand that fulfills my expectations.	3.98	3.98	3.96	4.01	3.99	2.50
(S20)	If satisfied with a brand only then I buy it in my next purchase.	3.97	3.90	4.01	3.98	3.99	1.97
(S21)	If there is a wide choice, I buy the shoe of the most popular company.	4.00	3.99	3.98	4.03	4.02	1.26
(S22)	I decide to buy a well-known brand of a shoe because I find it reliable.	4.03	4.03	3.99	4.07	4.05	1.61
(S23)	I prefer buying a brand that justifies my personality.	4.04	4.19	4.06	3.99	3.91	1.24
(S24)	I prefer buying a shoe of a particular brand.	3.38	3.39	3.41	3.51	3.22	1.61
(S25)	Extensive advertising by a competitor company does not effect my choice of shoes.	3.42	3.23	3.56	3.42	3.47	1.19

(S26)	While purchasing I pay the most attention to the economy provided by the brand.	3.57	3.45	3.42	3.72	3.69	2.40
(S27)	I am easily able to identify the brand I purchase amongst all displayed brands.	3.71	3.68	3.71	3.72	3.74	0.41
(S28)	I can easily identify the logo of my preferred brand.	3.33	3.23	3.42	3.33	3.36	1.24
(S29)	I feel my brand satisfies my expectations.	3.51	3.50	3.53	3.55	3.49	0.66
(S30)	I prefer a brand that is well displayed.	3.69	3.69	3.72	3.63	3.74	0.41

The table shows that the overall mean scores range from as high as 4.04 on statement S23 (I prefer buying a brand that justifies my personality) to as low as 2.16 on statement S14 (I prefer a brand which is the most economical). A high score of statement S23 indicates that most of the respondents consider a shoe as a reflection of their personality. This was validated by a high mean score of 3.40 of statement S9 (I feel that a shoe affects my image). This indicates that people consider a shoe as an essential part of their image and personality reflection. Statement S22 (I decide to buy a well-known brand of a shoe because I find it reliable.) is the next most agreed statement with a mean score of 4.03 thus highlighting the trust; the dependability a brand needs to create in the respondents' mind. The respondents have also shown high agreement with statements S21 (If there is a wide choice, I buy the shoe of the most popular company) and S17 (I am loyal to particular brands of shoes).

Most of the respondents are neutral to statements S2 (I like to try newly launched shoes to try something innovative); S3 (I prefer to try shoes that are the most durable) and S4 (I prefer shoes with the most comfortable material) as mean scores are close to 3.

The mean scores from the table show that most of the respondents disagree to statement S15 (I prefer a less advertised brand of shoe). statement S16 (I prefer usage of a brand that is widely and easily available.) and statement S13 (An increase in the price of my preferred brand will not affect my buying intent.) as the mean scores are close to 2. The lowest score of 2.16 has been acquired by statement S14 (I prefer a brand, which is the most economical.) depicting that the respondent does not consider economy as an important factor while purchasing a sport shoe.

The differences in mean scores of the respondents belonging to different income categories have been found to be statistically insignificant for 28 out of 30 statements. Majority of the respondents belonging to the lower income categories I₁ and I₂ have expressed greater level of agreement to statements: S8 (I favor a shoe that offers unique features) and S17 (I am loyal to particular brands of shoes). The differences between the opinion of lower and higher income groups have been found to be statistically significant with regard to these statements at 5 per cent level of significance.

A comparison of the responses shows that respondents belonging to all income groups carry almost similar views towards various characteristics of sports shoes and its effect on their purchase behaviour. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

Taking this into consideration, we have applied factor analysis only on the aggregate group of respondents and not on the individual income groups.

Sports Shoe Characteristics Influencing Purchase Behaviour: A Factor Analytical Approach (Overall Sample)

This section aims at understanding those characteristics of sports shoes that have an influence on the buying behaviour of consumers. Factor Analytic technique has been applied on thirty statements given in Table 2. The reliability of statements as measured by Cronbach's Alpha is 0.937 thus signifying a suitable level of internal reliability (Hair et al., 2010).

Data for Factor Analysis

In order to test the appropriateness of data for factor analysis, the subsequent steps were completed:

- Correlation matrix was computed and it portrayed that there were adequate correlations to conduct factor analysis.
- Anti-image correlations were figured. The partial correlations were low thus implying that true factors were present in the data.
- Overall Measures of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) such as KMO value was located to be 0.924, which suggested that the sample was suitable enough for sampling.
- Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Bartlett, 1950) revealed statistically significant number of correlations amid the variables.

Henceforth, as disclosed by the overhead considerations, the data was established fit for factor analysis.

Extraction Approach and Number of Factors Extracted

The assumptions suggest that the data is appropriate for factor analysis. In our study however, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) has been applied for extraction of factors. The number of factors has been held on the basis of latent root criterion. Thus, only the factors having Eigen values or latent roots greater than 1 have been considered substantial;

all the factors with latent roots less than 1 have been overlooked. Barely five components have Eigen values greater than unity. The analysis gave a five-factor solution. Total variance accounted for by these factors is 72.083 per cent and remaining variance is explained by other factors.

Table 3 shows the extracted factors. The last column in the table shows communalities. Normally accepted values of communalities are amid the range 0.40 to 0.70 (Costello and Osborne, 2005). In the current study, all communalities are within this range. Large communalities suggest that a large amount of variance has been accounted for by the factor solution. In the current study, all the communalities are above 0.51.

A factor loading symbolizes the correlation between a variable and its factor. The factor loadings, which were greater than 0.30, have been held. Based on sample size of 500 respondents, it has been specified that factor loading of 0.30 or above has been considered to be substantial (Hair et al., 2010). In the study, principal factors have been orthogonally rotated by the application of varimax rotation. This has resulted in the emergence of five major factors for defining the purchase behaviour of consumers for shoes. Extracted factors, factor labelling, factor loadings and communalities are given in Table 3

Table 3
Principal Component Analysis with Varimax Rotation

FACTORS						
LABEL	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	COMM UNALI TIES
	ADAPTABLENESS	BRAND RECOGNITION	BRAND LOYALTY	LOGICAL BEHAVIOUR	EXPEDIE NCY	
S29	0.879					0.512
S2	0.859					0.778
S3	0.851					0.557
S4	0.84					0.5
S5	0.838					0.751
S6	0.81					0.782
S7	0.571					0.581
S8		0.844				0.575
S9		0.818				0.57

S10		0.808				0.554
S11		0.801				0.589
S12		0.798				0.735
S13		0.783				0.772
S14		0.59				0.825
S15			0.835			0.805
S16			0.834			0.811
S17			0.82			0.742
S18			0.747			0.807
S19			0.591			0.821
S25			0.579			0.844
S21			0.552			0.798
S22				0.873		0.592
S23				0.871		0.554
S24				0.857		0.521
S26				0.847		0.754
S20				0.802		0.745
S27					0.789	0.759
S28					0.783	0.75
S1					0.773	0.743
S30					0.707	0.777
Eigen Value	5.301	5.053	4.542	3.977	2.551	
Explained Variance (%)	17.571	15.842	15.474	13.258	8.838	
Cumulative Variance (%)	17.571	34.513	49.987	53.245	72.08	

Naming of Factors

All the factors have been given suitable names conferring to the variables that have loaded on to each factor. The five factors described in Table 3 are examined below.

Factor 1 (F1): ADAPTABLENESS

This is the first and the most vital factor that accounts for 35.54 per cent of the total variance. Seven variables have been positively loaded on this factor. The factor includes statements S29 (I feel my brand satisfies my expectations), S2 (I prefer shoes with the most comfortable material), S3 (I select the brand name irrespective of its price), S4 (I like to try newly launched shoes to try something innovative), S5 (I

prefer to try shoes that are the most durable), S6 (I believe that a well-designed shoe reflects a good quality product) and S7 (While purchasing, I always pay attention to the difference in the price of the available shoes). These statements emphasize that buyers are willing to buy shoes that offer comfort regardless of their cost. Moreover, it is also implied that people look forward to wearing shoes with innovative trends as it offers them with a new look.

Factor 2 (F2): BRAND RECOGNITION

Factor two explains statements S8 (I favor a shoe that offers unique features), S10 (I have a tendency to pick up shoes, which have the attractive look), S11 (I prefer a brand that

offers good color choice.), S12 (I feel that a shoe exposes my personality.) S13 (An increase in the price of my preferred brand will not affect my buying intent.) and S14 (I prefer a brand which is the most cool and stylish). This factor explains 12.72 per cent of the total variance. The factor structure studies the effects of brand traits on its preference. A brand with unique features reflects a good quality product. Consumers pay attention to small details of like: the look, colors and style of a shoe. They have a liking for colourful and attractive shoes. Furthermore, they consider the increase in the price of their preferred brand as an irrelevant factor while making a purchase.

Factor 3 (F3): BRAND LOYALTY

Statements S15 (I prefer the most advertised brand of shoe), S16 (I prefer usage of a brand that is widely and easily available), S17 (I am loyal to particular brands of shoes), S19 (I favor a brand that fulfills my expectations), S25 (Extensive advertising by a competitor company does not affect my choice of shoes) and S21 (If there is a wide choice, I buy the shoe of the most popular company) constitute the fourth factor, which explains 9.57 percent of variance. The factor structure elaborates the level of enthusiasm displayed by a consumer while buying a sports shoe. This factor suggests that consumers prefer shoes that are easily and widely available. In addition to this, brand loyals prefer buying sports shoes of the same company over and over again even if it is lesser advertised as compared to the competitive brands as they feel that their expectations are being fulfilled.

Factor 4 (F4): LOGICAL BEHAVIOUR

The fourth factor includes statements S22 (I decide to buy a well-known brand of a shoe because I find it reliable.), S23 (I prefer buying a brand that justifies my personality.) S26 (While purchasing I pay the most attention to the economy provided by the brand.), and S20 (If satisfied with a brand only then I buy it in my next purchase). It explains 5.87 per cent of the total variance. The factor is titled and understood as logical behaviour of consumers during purchase of a sports shoe. It suggests that consumers act judiciously while buying a sports shoe only if they consider it reliable. However, the consumers believe in buying a brand that justifies their personality and go for repetitive purchases only if immensely satisfied.

Factor 5 (F5): EXPEDIENCY

Statements S27 (I am easily able to identify the brand I purchase amongst all displayed brands.), S28 (I can easily identify the logo of my preferred brand), S1 (I am most enthusiastic to buy the most reputable brand.) and S30 (I prefer a brand that is well displayed.) form the fifth factor 'utility' that accounts for 5.15 per cent of the total variance. It shows that consumers are of an opinion that a brand needs to be well displayed identifiable and reputable. A practical choice is to select a brand that is the most well demonstrated and popular.

Conclusions and recommendations

In this section some viable recommendations are forwarded on the basis of the research findings. The foregoing discussion reveals that consumers prefer a sports shoe that is comfortable. A sports shoe that provides ease and comfort is more desirable among consumers. Consumers are ready to shell out more money, if a shoe provides more relaxation. This implies that companies must offer sports shoes coupled with advanced state of the art technologies, the cost factor will not matter much as consumers are ready to buy even at higher prices.

Moreover, like as in case of any other accessory, people prefer innovativeness in shoes also. Variability in colours, style, and designs is a fad, especially amongst the youngsters. Consumers judge the personality of a person by his clothes and shoes. Shoes form a vital part of the appearance. Companies need to venture into product line extensions, launch new styles, designs that are in coordination with the ever-changing trends of these days. Modification of already existing products also needs to be undertaken.

Age has a tremendous effect on consumer's preference of shoes. Attributes are attached different importance by consumers belonging to different age groups. Therefore, it is significant for all companies in the foot wear industry to establish the stage of life of their consumers and also what product attributes they pay the most attention to. This will definitely help shoe companies to undertake effective segmentation and enable them to design effective marketing programs concurring with the attributes that are salient to distinctive consumers age groups.

Product promotions need to highlight, not only the functional benefits sought by the buyers but must also

accentuate the emblematic features associated with shoes. Appearance that inspires mindsets, exaggerates the passion among buyers needs to be projected. Perceived status of users, especially young ones needs to be taken care of. For the older customers prominence can be laid upon the comfort and durability of shoes. These initiatives, topped with a virtuous display and wholesome salesmanship will definitely help in attainment of captivating sales for all brands.

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