



THE INFLUENCE OF BRAND IMAGE ON YOUNG APPAREL BUYERS IN TASHKENT, UZBEKISTAN

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18152770>

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 01st January 2026

Accepted: 04th January 2026

Online: 05th January 2026

KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT

The research investigates the impact of brand image on the buying behavior of young apparel consumers between the age of 18 to 34 with the Republic of Uzbekistan. Comprehending consumer behavior has become crucial for both foreign and domestic apparel brands as the country is transitioning from a apparel raw material provider to a high-end retail hub.

The current study is the result of a PhD research in which a positivist philosophy along with deductive method were used to analyze data from 364 participants in the capital city of Uzbekistan, Tashkent. The outcome of the study exposes that brand attractiveness and external factors like price and social media influencers mainly trigger the buying frequency among young Uzbek apparel consumers despite indicating a weak traditional loyalty towards apparel brands in the Uzbekistan. The current research offers a strategic roadmap to navigate the “loyalty gap” in the Emerging markets like Uzbekistan

Introduction

The apparel industry of the Republic has experienced a dramatic development. Transitioning from a producer of raw materials into a hub for fine finished apparel products (frontdeskhelpers, 2023). This transition is facilitated by the country's strategic and key geographical position at the crossway of Asia and Europe, captivating foreign brands like Zara, Massimo, Duttì, Gucci, Bershka and many others and is predicted to generate \$1.43 billion in revenue for the Republic by 2024 (Daryo.uz, 2024).

The significance of this research is founded in the harsh competition between local and international apparel manufacturers. Understanding brand image by focusing on feelings and encounters has become vital for the success in the market.

The study mainly emphasizes on young apparel product buyers between the age of 18 to 34 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, a demographic that possess a considerable buying power that can act as a driver of national economy as well. Moreover, the research is in line with the decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan H.E. Shavkat Mirziyoyev (No. RP-153 and NO. UP-60) that stresses on increasing the export capacity and capability of the country and enhancing the role that marketing research can play in Uzbek manufacturing (lex.uz, 2024).

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

The impact of brand image is an already well-researched topic which was originally created by David Ogilvy and later on enhanced by Kevin Lane Keller and David Aaker. Ogilvy's

research outcome elaborated that as products become unique and identical their brand image turns into a basic driver for success. “Awareness Pyramid” by Aaker and “Brand Resonance Model” by Keller further explains the development from recognizing a brand to consumer psychological connections(Qualtrics, 2023).

Examples of previous results in some emerging economies indicate contradicting results. For instance, in Pakistan(Tariq, 2019) and India(Sahney, 2016) the researches carried out elaborate that brand image actually affects younger buyers in the form of a lifestyle symbol, however in Philippines(Agdigos et al., 2022) and Kazakhstan(Mamedov, Khatibi and Tham, 2022) the studies indicate that people prioritize price and quality of apparel products other than their brand image. Despite the existence of the similar previous studies in this context a significant “knowledge gap” is witnessed related to particular socio-cultural factors that can affect young apparel consumers` purchase behavior in the Republic of Uzbekistan, which makes the current research the first empirical study of its type in the country.

Methodology

The study is founded on a positivist philosophy that favors gathering and neutral assessment of factual, observable and quantitative data. The researcher maintains a high degree of objectivity by playing the role of a neutral investigator to assure that outcome is quantifiable, repeatable and free from personal biases through alignment of the methods of hard science(Blackwell, 2018).

Deductive research approach is used in the study to utilize a “top-down” logic where particular hypothesis are shaped depending on existing universal theories of customer purchase behavior and brand image(Emmanuel, 2025). Hypothesis like the influence of brand equity and mediating role of economic variables are later on tested empirically to justify or reject them in the context of Uzbek apparel market. The study is also established on the principles of falsifiability, demanding that overall claims must be constructed in a way that allow them to be proven incorrect via objective observation and investigating.

A cross-sectional time horizon is used in the research which allows the investigator to have “snapshot” of specific traits and behaviors of participants at a single point in time. This strategy is chosen due to its cost efficiency and effectivity in measuring the burst of a specific market phenomena(Lauren, 2022).

The primary tool to carry out the survey was a closed-ended questionnaire to gather quantitative data from a big number of participants efficiently(Dawer, 2025). The total number of participants are 364 young apparel product users and buyers in Tashkent Uzbekistan between the age of 18 to 34 who reside in different districts of the capital. To maintain the data integrity a complete dataset with no missing information was kept to assure that the research outcome fully represents the selected group of people.

Validation of Statistics

To assure statistical validation of the study, the research is verified through rigorous statistical measurements. To analyze the complex relation between different brand variables and purchase habits of consumers ANOVA, Regression and Pearson Correlation metrics were used on SPSS. To justify the homogeneity of variance Levene`s Test was conducted indicating a score of 0.79. To show that the gathered data remained free from multi-collinearity issues a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) test was applied. Current research sticks to strict ethical principles and standards, assuring that the consent of all 364 respondents were taken before involving them in the research and all participated on their own consent without any pressure. The personal information of the respondents is kept secret.

Findings and Analysis

Demographic Profile

the demographic profile of the study indicates that majority of the participants were between the age of 18 to 24 comprising 92.2% of overall respondents. 60.2% of the people

who participated in the study were male mainly undergraduate students forming 67.9% of the overall respondents. A considerable number of participants fall into the lowest income category (0 – 2 million USZ) and 52.5% are not employed currently which makes sense since it shows a population segment who are in their early stages of careers and mainly busy with studies.

Demographic Variable	Dominant Category	Percentage/Frequency
Age	18 – 24 years old	92.6% (337)
Gender	Male	60.2% (219)
Education	Undergraduate	67.3% (245)
Income	0 – 2 million UZS	37.9% (138)
Occupation	Unemployed	52.5% (191)
Location	Chilanzar District	24.2% (88)

Table 1: Demographic Profile

The Role of Brand Image (H1)

The test of hypothesis 1 indicates that the impact of brand image on purchase behavior of young Uzbek apparel consumers is significant statistically but weak, elaborating just 2.8% of the variation in buying frequency. The brand attractiveness which was used a proxy for brand perception as one of the shapers of brand image is found to be the only important individual predictor ($p = 0.018$). it is the indicator of the fact that young Uzbek consumers in apparel market have a “hybrid identity”, balancing preferences between foreign brands such as Zara and Uzbek brands like Samo.

Factor	Mean Score (Scale 1-5)	Statistical Significance (p-value)
Brand Loyalty	2.55	0.556 (Not Significant)
Brand Preference	2.50	0.082 (Not Significant)
Brand Attractiveness	1.80	0.018 (Significant)
Purchase Frequency	1.74	N/A (Dependent Variable)

Table 2: The Role of Brand Image

External Drivers (H2, H3, H4)

During the test of impact of economic factors on buying behavior of young Uzbek consumers price was found to be the most influential factor chosen by 181 participants as a main driver for their brand choice. Among social factors, influencers, media and peer pressure correlate significantly with the purchase frequency of the young Uzbek apparel buyers ($p = 0.005$). while evaluating the impact of culture it was revealed that despite the fact that it does not dictate the selection between Uzbek or international apparel brands among young apparel consumers, it affects significantly the particular product traits like fabric material choice ($p = 0.005$).

Influencing Factor	Key Driver	Statistical Finding
Economic (H2)	Price	Significant connection to brand preference ($p=0.027$)
Social (H3)	Influencers/Media	Significant correlation with purchase frequency ($p=0.005$)
Cultural (H4)	Tradition/Religion	Significant influence on fabric choice ($p=0.005$)

**Table 3: External Drivers
Market Tactics (H5, H6)**

The study outcome exposed that niche marketing tactics such as personalization and sustainability do not correlate statistically with real sales ($p = 0.480$). despite that the total perceived effectiveness of general industry marketing strategies was a reliable predictor of young Uzbek apparel consumers' buying behavior.

Marketing Approach	Popularity (%)	Impact on Buying Behavior
Personalization	42.3%	Not Significant ($p = 0.480$)
Affordability	34.6%	Not Significant ($p = 0.480$)
Sustainability	16.8%	Not Significant
Inclusivity	6.3%	Not Significant
Industry Strategies	N/A	Significant ($p < 0.001$)

Table 4: Market Tactics

Recommendations

The findings of the research reveals that fact that currently Uzbekistan's apparel market is determined by a highly dynamic and volatile environment. The study found out that there is no connection between shopping frequency and brand loyalty, rather patterns are triggered by immediate factors such as flash sales or influencer trends. Considering the above

points the following recommendations are provided for local and foreign apparel brands in Uzbek market:

1.Focus on Brand Attractiveness: Considering that brand attractiveness is the only predictor of buying frequency ($p = 0.018$), brands need to focus on visual appeal instead of long-term loyalty tactics.

2.Stress on Competitive Pricing: Considering the low monthly income of the young Uzbek apparel buyers specifically participants between the age of 18 to 24 focusing on making the apparel products affordable and providing regular discounts from time to time are vital to affect the consumers` preferences in Uzbek context.

3.Focus on Mixed Social Strategies: apparel brands need to implement mixed strategies by utilizing a combination of influencers, media and peer triggers to impact the purchase habits of young Uzbek apparel customers since no single social factor alone can affect their buying behavior solely.

4.Avoid Niche Over-Investment: The focus in Uzbek apparel market must be more on prioritizing the comprehensive and extensive industry tactics than emphasizing on niche tactics like sustainability and personalization since the study outcome in Uzbek context indicate sustainability and personalization do not have any predictive power on buying behavior of young apparel buyers in the Republic.

Conclusion

The current study bridges the gap between international marketing theories and the specific and unique realities of the developing apparel market in Uzbekistan. It indicates a “loyalty gap” that customers are triggered by immediate attractiveness of apparel products and economic variables instead of brand loyalty. Foreign or local apparel brands to thrive in Uzbek apparel market, they need to go for adoption of aggressive pricing and multi-channel social strategies tailored to the “hybrid identity” of young apparel buyers in Uzbekistan.

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