

A study on Teenagers' Preference towards Branded Clothing



Sarita Sharma

Research Scholar
Deptt. of Home Science,
Banasthali Vidyapith,
Tonk, Rajasthan, India

Suman Pant

Professor,
Deptt. of Home Science,
Banasthali Vidyapith,
Tonk, Rajasthan, India

Abstract

Compared to other age groups, teenagers are more involved in fashion. They initiate fashion, styles and trends. Teenagers are important group of consumers because they are prominent as fashion leader, innovators or early adopters. With increasing age and maturity, teens become more aware of their identity and consequently, of fashion. Teenagers use brands to express themselves, which is particularly very prevalent in fashion. When a brand is consistent with their image, they have higher preferences towards that brand. In addition, increased presence of brands has created brand awareness and preference among them at very early age. For adolescents, brands play a dual role; firstly they can be the medium of acceptance among peers and secondly they show their own individuality and personal taste through the products they buy. Therefore, it is desired to know how teens associate with brands. Result of the study shows that most of teenagers prefer branded clothing. They mostly buy them for parties and casual wear.

Keywords: Teenagers, Consumer, Identity, Brands, Branded Non Branded, Brand Awareness, Peers, and Clothing

Introduction

The transition from childhood to adulthood is an important stage that involves a significant change in position and behavior. Young people want to communicate their maturity and their "adulthood" to their peers through their consumption patterns. The collection of material possessions is a means of establishing their identity and gaining the prestige needed, especially in this period of "identity crisis" for many teenagers (Belk, 1988). Clothing is a visible means of consumption for teenagers. It is one of the most expressed indications of peer identification. In adolescent period, clothing is considered as a form of self-expression and judgment of others. For this reason, teens seek information with their colleagues on fashion and brands (Piacentini and Mailer, 2004). Consumers use brands to express themselves, which is particularly very prevalent in fashion. It also includes all the beliefs, hopes, feelings, and opinions that consumers associate with the brand (Fournier, 1998). The brand is a package of attributes that someone buys and provides satisfaction. Brands are seen as a significant indicator for identifying people's social and economic status (Piacentini and Mailer, 2004). Consumer loyalty is reinforced if brands match with a consumer's needs (Grant and Stephen, 2005, Solomon and Rabolt, 2004). Modern technologies have made adolescent more aware of international clothing brands. The global interest of adolescents for clothing products is main driving force behind the rapid growth of the global clothing, accessories and luxury products market. This suggests the need for a survey on teenagers' attitudes towards clothing brands in general. The objective of this study is to understand behavior of Indian consumers in the age of 13 – 19 years towards branded apparel products. It aims to study their brand consciousness, motivating factors for preferring branded garments and brand loyalty.

Hypothesis

To achieve the objective of the study, the following hypothesis have been formed:

H_{0 1}

Preferences of teenagers toward branded clothing is independent of their demographics.

H_{0 2}

Brand consciousness does not depend on demographics of teenagers.

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Ho 3

Use of branded clothes does not depend on demographics of teenagers.

Ho 4: There is no association between brand loyalty and demographics of teenagers.

Literature Review

Brands

The brand has been used to differentiate the goods from one another since long time. It is a reason to choose a product over others. It includes everything that is publicly conveyed to consumers about the brand for example name, logo etc. According to Liu (2002), there are two common brand concepts: 1. Function-oriented Brands 2. Prestige-oriented Brands. Function-oriented brands are related to product performance attributes such as quality and durability, while a prestige brand is associated with luxury and status.

The clothing market is divided into two segments:

Luxury Brands

Fast Fashion Brands

Luxury brands are mainly dedicated to producing high end limited fashion with niche markets. While in fast fashion brands, production is on a large scale and international markets receive new lines every six or eight weeks (Austgulen and Stø, 2013) Consumer preferences towards a brand indicate the following:

Brand Unawareness

A buyer is not aware about the brand.

Brand Awareness

A buyer is aware of the brand but has a little knowledge of it and clearly does not have a particular emotional attachment, so he can think about buying the brand.

Brand Acceptance

If a buyer has no negative feelings about the brand, he can purchase that brand, but has an open mind to try other brand also.

Brand Preference

A buyer is in favor of a particular brand, but he may think of another brand that is next in his preference schedule.

Brand loyalty

The link with a particular brand is very strong and if brand is not available, then only he thinks about purchasing other brand.

Brand Insistence

A buyer stands firm on the purchase of a single brand and does not accept any replacement product.

Meaning of Unbranded or Store Brands

Unbranded products are generic products that are not associated with any brand name, but are similar to products made by popular brand manufacturers / companies. These products are often considered to be of low quality and value, as they are not affiliated with any brand that can guarantee their quality, durability, etc. Because of this perception of the market, they are sold at a lower price.

Teenagers and Brands

Peers affect use of specific brands to strengthen the bonds in group (Cardoso et al., 2008,

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Chaplin and John, 2005). Teenagers are ready to pay more to acquire a certain brand that is an identity of the group (Grant and Stephen, 2005). On the contrary, brands are only important if the peer group considers them significant and integral for the group (Bearden & Rose, 1990).

Adolescents are very conscious of the brands (Lachance et al.). They have preferences for certain brands according to their age and associate brands with specific characteristics and their self-concepts (Chaplin and John, 2005).

Why do Teenagers Wear the Brands?

Fitton et al. (2012) suggested that there is a hierarchy for what makes something cool. At the bottom is, "to have cool things", then, "to do great things" and at the top, "to be cool". If a teenager sees someone who they think is cool, doing cool things using a brand, that's what, makes a brand cool. If a person, wearing a brand, is a part of the membership group and have the same hobbies and within the reach, that brand is considered as cool. Dotson and Hyatt (2005) point out that for teenagers it is not a simple jeans, but it is "GAP or Tommy Hilfiger" because these brands offer "the promise of being cool and stylish". Today's young people generally seek their peers' acceptance to increase their self-confidence and mix into their social environment. Thus, Lawrence (2003) argues that for teenagers "the Brand is king". Due to intense influence of the friends and the need to be accepted by them, teenagers are more "brand conscious". Martin and Bush (2000) identified groups that influence the purchase intention and behavior of high school students. These teenagers indicated that their buying behaviors were mainly affected by their parents. Fathers have been more influential than mothers. Achenreiner and John (2003) studied the age at which children use the meaning of conceptual brands to make buying decisions. They discovered that the meanings of conceptual brands, which specify the unobservable abstract characteristics of a product, are used for the first time in middle childhood (about 8 years old) and are integrated into the thought process a few years later. When children reach the age of 12, they can think about brands on symbolic level and are able to incorporate these meanings into many brand-related judgments. Valkenburg and Buijzen (2005) studied the development of child brand recognition and recollection in early childhood and the effect of various environmental factors on these two. It has been discovered that the brand recognition of children follows a development path different from that of brand recollection. The most important increase in brand awareness occurred between 3 and 5 years, while brand recollection occurred between 7 and 8 years.

Chan (2006) explored young consumers aged 13 to 19 years and their perceptions of brands in Hong Kong. The results shows the main differences in the adolescent consciousness of an important person through the branded product package in terms of type of personal effects, leisure behaviors, apparent traits. Fernandez (2009) conducted a study on the impact of the brand on the choice of Gen Y garments, since

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they were conscious of the brands. The results suggest that Gen Y is aware of the brand, since the right selection of clothes helps them to create their image and identity. Peer influence plays an important role in choosing brands, and it improves their socialization process. Yin and Suan (2012) did a study on 200 students to analyze the trend of clothing purchases, whether it is of foreign or national brands. The study showed that 58% of students preferred foreign branded clothing. This is due to the influence of the media and the biasness towards buying clothing of foreign / national brands. Another study on the same line by Cardoso et al., (2008) shows that gender, age and faculty factors have nothing to do with the purchase of domestic or foreign branded clothing. However, family background is important in this regard. The role of media in influencing consumers when buying clothes also cannot be ignored. Fernández (2014) studied the impact of the brand on clothing choice of adolescents since they are supposed to be aware of the brand. The findings suggest that teens are aware of the brands since the right selection of clothes helps them to create an image and identity for themselves. Rajagopal A. (2017) done a study on brand competition, peer influence, and purchase intentions towards fashion apparel in Mexico. The results shows that socio-cultural and personality related factors accelerate the purchase motivations among consumers. Fashion loving teenagers like multi-channel retail outlets, designer brands, and invest time and cost towards an advantageous product search. The results also confirm a positive effect of store and brand preferences on developing purchase intentions for fashion apparel among young consumers. Rathore S. & Monika Kumawat M (2018) done studied late adolescents' perception towards branded apparels in Udaipur city. The results of the study suggest that in present era, adolescents are well-informed about branded apparels and they prefer brands while selecting their apparels. They prefer branded clothing to look attractive, enrich their personality and impress other people. Latest fashion trends, design, style, and trends are the main influencing factors in selection of brand. They like to buy branded clothes because of the fame, recognition, quality and identity attached with them. Teenagers prefer branded clothing over non-branded regardless of high price. They are always eager to buy new trendy clothes because they want something new and change their boring old style. They feel cheerful, satisfied and self-confident when they wear branded clothes. According to this study, young consumers get easily attracted to the offer and discount given by brand companies. This class of consumers is influenced by their relatives and friends in buying new apparels. Pallavi & Sharma R.R. (2017) did an empirical study on brand consciousness among teenagers in India. According to results of the study, increased demand for branded products' among teenagers is resulting in a growing clothing market. The results will be helpful to the marketers, to the policy makers of the corporate houses, and to advertisers in order to promote their products in an effective manner to reach the maximum number of

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teenagers. A study by Bronnenberg P.B. and Dube J. P.(2017) reveals that brand experiences in early life have persistent effects on a person's brand choice behavior throughout their life.

Research Methodology

The present study is exploratory in nature. Questionnaires was used to determine the opinions, preferences, motivations, attitudes and perceptions of individuals in a sample of the population and based on the results of the sample, it is possible to infer a generalization of the population.

Selection of the Study Area

The study was conducted in Bhopal city, capital of Madhya Pradesh. This has been selected for various reasons. Bhopal is a tier two city, growing with a number of reputed apparel retail stores of well-known brands, fashion stores and developing economy. People of different attitude, values, socio economic status and culture reside here. Ease of accessibility for researcher is another reason for selection of Bhopal.

Sampling Size

It is the total number of respondents targeted for collecting the data for the research. Bhopal has total teenage population of 16,011,000 in year 2017. Population of the study comprises teenagers in 13-19 years age bracket. As it is impossible to contact each teenager, students studying in six schools will comprise sample of this research.

Sampling Technique

Bhopal is divided in five different zones by Bhopal Municipal Corporation. There are some government and private schools in the residential zone of the researcher. Three government and three private schools were included. All the male and female students present at the time of conducting survey were selected. Attempt was made to include as many variables as possible to get reliable result with as much as possible generalization. Principals of schools were contacted to discuss objectives and procedure of the study.

Variables of the study

Socio demographic variables

1. Sex –Male and Female
2. Age- Early teen -Adolescents in the age group of 13-15 years and
Late teens - Adolescents in the age from 16-19 years
3. Socio Economic Status- High and Middle

Preference towards branded clothing

Tools and Technique of Data Collection

Questionnaire was developed using academic literature as guide. It contained questions related to demographic, brand consciousness, motivating factors for preferring branded garments and brand loyalty. Questionnaires were distributed to students and collected after one week.

Data Analysis

The data collected was edited, coded and prepared for analysis. Results were analyzed and interpreted using percentage, graphs. Chi square test was used to find out difference in brand preference of teenagers of different demographics.

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Result and Discussion

Demographic of teenagers

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage	Total
Gender	Male	208	51.48%	404 (100%)
	Female	196	48.51%	
Age (years)	13-15	211	52.22%	404 (100%)
	16-19	193	47.77%	
Social Economic Status	Upper	139	34.40%	404 (100%)
	medium	210	51.98%	
	Lower	55	13.61%	

For this study 208 males and 196 female teenagers were selected. 211 teenagers were of 13-15 years and 193 were of 16-19 years age. Three socioeconomic status groups i.e. lower, middle and upper were considered for the study. 139 respondents were from upper, 210 from middle and 55 from lower socioeconomic status.

Figure1: Preference of branded garments vs non-branded garments (N=404)

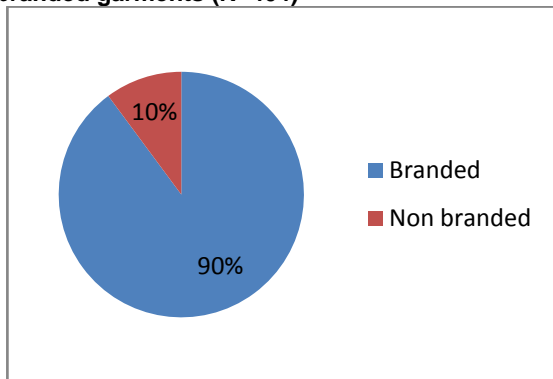


Figure 1 contains result of the preference of branded garments vs non-branded garments by teenagers. It can be clearly seen that most teenagers (90%) prefer to wear branded clothing. Only 10% teenagers prefer to wear non-branded clothing.

Brand Consciousness

Figure 2: Purchasing different garment brands to have variety in wardrobe(N=404)

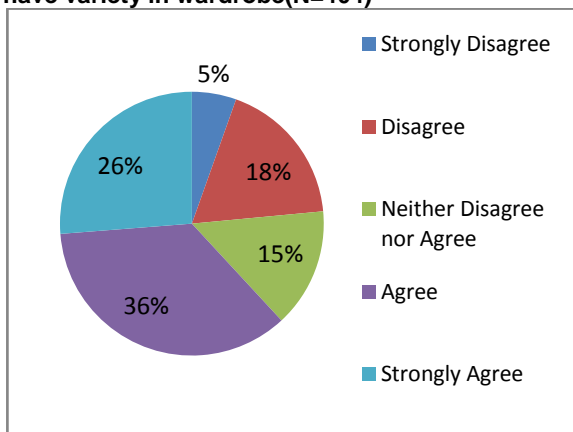


Figure 2 shows the result for purchasing different garment brands to have variety in wardrobe. It shows that most of the teenagers (36%) agree with this statement. 26% teenagers strongly agree with this. 18% teenagers disagree that they purchase different

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garment brands to have variety in their wardrobe. Only 5% strongly disagreed with this.

Figure 3: Higher the price, higher the quality of the garment (N=404)

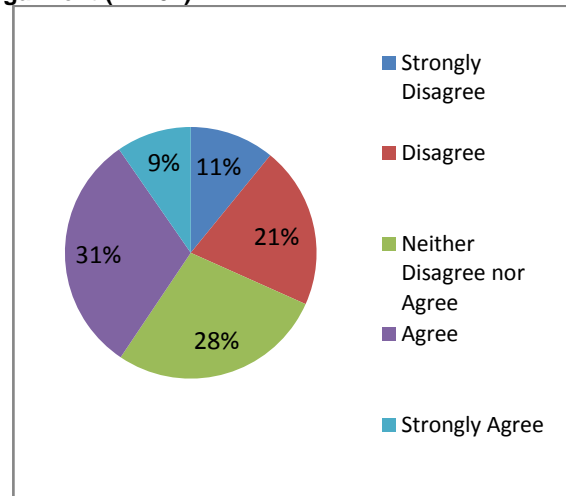


Figure 3 reveals result for the statement that higher the price, higher the quality of the garment. 31% of the teenagers agree while 9% strongly agreed with this. 28% teenagers neither disagree nor agree. 21% respondents disagree that higher the price, higher the quality of the garments. 11% strongly disagree and only.

Figure 4: Significance of branded garments for self-image (N=404)

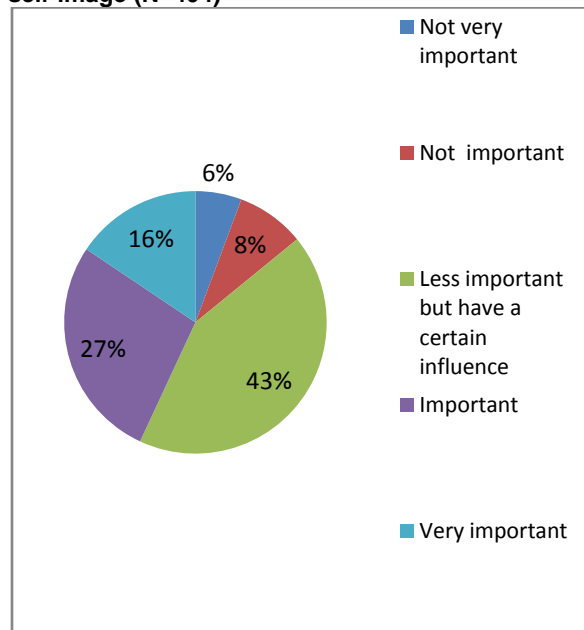


Figure 4 presents the result of significance of branded garments for self-image of teenagers. It can be concluded that percentage of the teenagers (43%) is highest who consider that branded garments are not that important for self-image but have a certain influence on them. 27% agreed that branded garments are important for their self image. For 16%, it is very important. For 8% respondents it is not important and for only 6% it is not very important.

Figure 5: Uses of branded clothes(N=404)

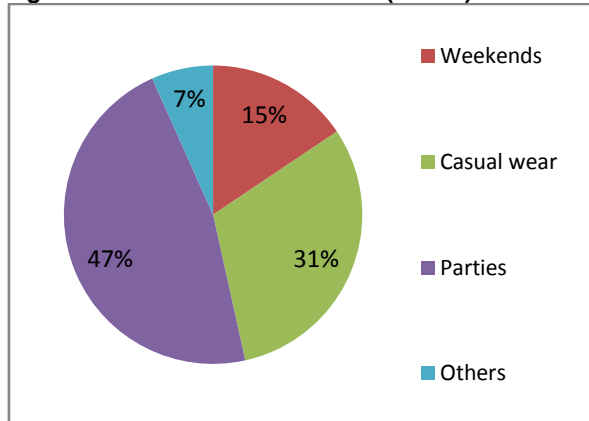
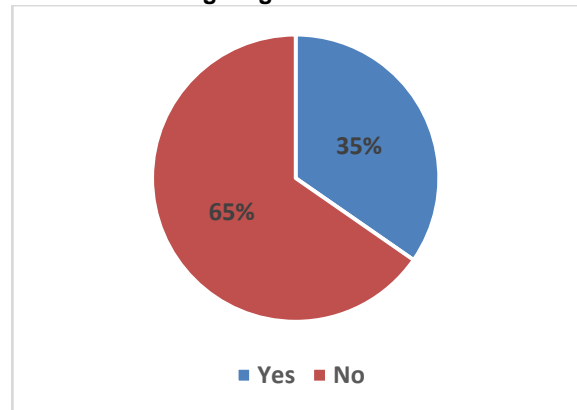


Figure 5 demonstrates the frequency distribution for uses of branded clothes. It can be concluded that most of the teenagers (47%) use branded clothes for party wear followed by casual wear (23.26%), weekends (15.59%) and other purposes (7%) such as night wear.

Brand loyalty

Figure 6: Changing existing garment brands when other brands are giving better offer



It seems that most of the teenagers are brand loyal as many of them (65.34%) are not ready to change existing garment brand if other brands are giving better offer. Thus it can be said that their brand preference will not change.

Reasons for preferring branded garments

Table 2: Age and Sex wise ranking of factors for preferring branded garments

Reason	Age				Sex			
	13-15 yrs (n=211)		16-19 yrs (n=193)		Male (n=208)		Female (n=196)	
	Mean Score	Rank	Mean Score	Rank	Mean Score	Rank	Mean Score	Rank
Style	3.22	1*	1.41	1*	1.20	1*	2.75	1*
Comfortable	3.97	2	1.99	2	1.99	2	4.26	4
Trendy	4.57	4	2.86	4	3.43	4	4.74	5
Quality	4.08	3	2.36	3	2.68	3	4.14	2
Store environment	6.96	9	5.33	9	7.16	9	7.24	3
Habit	7.47	10	5.83	10	7.91	10	7.35	10
Status symbol	6.67	8	4.90	8	6.45	8	6.53	9
Well fitted	5.028	5	5.01	5	5.00	5	5.14	6
Value for money	6.42	6	6.21	6	6.10	6	6.42	7
More choices	6.53	7	6.76	7	6.88	7	6.43	8

(Rank 1 is most preferred, 10 is least preferred)

Table 2 shows mean values and ranking of factors for preferring branded garments by teenagers belonging to different age groups. It can be deduced that style is most important factor to buy branded garments. This is followed by comfort and quality. Thus style, comfort and quality are the top three reasons. Same ranking has been done by teenagers of both age groups. Whereas, status symbol, store environment and habit are the bottom three factors for preferring branded garments by both the groups.

Table 2 also shows sex wise ranking of factors for preferring branded garments by teenagers. It can be concluded that style is most preferred reason to buy branded garment followed by comfort for males and quality for females. Quality comes at third number for males and store environment for females. Status symbol, store environment and habit are the bottom three factors for preferring branded garments by males and for females, more choices, status symbol and habit are the least preferred reasons for choosing branded garment.

Table 3: Socioeconomic status wise ranking of factors for preferring branded garments

Attribute	Upper (n=139)		Middle (n=210)		Lower (n=55)	
	Mean Score	Rank	Mean Score	Rank	Mean Score	Rank
Garment Style	3.02	1*	3.02	1*	3.13	1*
Comfortable	4.46	3	4.17	3	4.24	3
Trendy	4.80	4	4.75	4	4.70	4
Quality	4.22	2	4.03	2	4.13	2
Store environment	6.79	9	7.00	9	7.00	9
Habit	7.07	10	7.40	10	7.21	10
Status symbol	6.47	8	6.49	7	6.42	7
Well fitted	5.23	5	5.18	5	5.36	5
Value for money	6.50	7	6.45	6	6.34	6
More choices	6.44	6	6.59	8	6.72	8

Socioeconomic status wise ranking of reasons for preferring branded garments is given in Table 3. It can be concluded that style is considered most preferred reason by all three status groups. After that, quality and comfort comes on second and third number respectively. Status symbol comes on eighth position for upper class and more choices for both

middle and lower class. Store environment and habit are the last two preferred reasons for all three groups.

Overall it can be said that teenagers think that branded garments are stylish and so create image of being stylish. It can also be said that teenagers are aware that branded garments are of good quality and are more comfortable than non-branded one.

Table 4: Chi square values for association between teenagers' demographics and brand preference, brand consciousness, uses of branded clothes and brand loyalty

Variables	Chi Square Values		
	Sex	Age	SES
Preference of branded garments vs non- branded garments	0.483 P<0.487	7.701 P=0.006	5.847 P=0.054
Purchasing different garment brands to have variety in wardrobe	11.193 p=0.024	16.343 p=0.003	8.377 p=0.398
Higher the price, higher the quality of the garment	4.902 P=0.298	17.307 P=0.002	9.254 P=0.321
Significance of branded garments for self-image	5.723 P=0.221	6.408 P=0.171	32.157 P=0.000
Uses of branded clothes	4.646 P=0.200	3.250 P=0.355	15.365 P=0.018
Changing garment brands when other brands are giving better offer	8.480 P=0.004	2.888 P=0.089	3.303 P=0.192

Chi square values given in Table 4 show that there is no significant difference in preference of branded garments vs non- branded garments of different sex and SES groups. It means preference for branded or non- branded garments is not associated with sex and socioeconomic status. But there is significant difference in preference for branded garments of teenagers belonging to different age groups.

Purchasing different garment brands to have variety in wardrobe is independent of socioeconomic status but there is close relationship between this phenomena and sex and age of teenagers.

There is close association between age and teenagers' opinion about positive relationship between price and quality. But it is independent of sex and socioeconomic status.

There is no significant association between importance of branded garments for self-image and age. Sex of teenagers is also not associated with significance of branded garments for self-image whereas it is significantly associated with socioeconomic status of the respondents.

Chi square values of sex and age are not significant which shows that uses of branded clothes is not dependent on age and sex of respondents. But significant difference between uses of branded clothes of respondents of different SES is found.

It can be interpreted that there is significant association between sex of teenagers and changing garment brands by teenagers when other brands are giving better offer. On the other hand, age and SES of teenagers have no association with brand loyalty.

Conclusion

It can be concluded from this study that most of the teenagers prefer branded clothing. They mostly purchase different garment brands to have variety in their wardrobe. They believe that higher is the price, higher is the quality of the garment. They also believe in significance of branded garments for self-image. According to them it is less important but has some influence on them. Most of the teenagers buy branded clothing for party purpose after they prefer them for casual wear. Most of the teenagers will not change their favorite garment brands when other brands are giving better offer. Thus it can be said that their brand preference will not change. According to them

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garment style is main attribute for preferring branded garments.

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