

User's Perception Towards Sports Apparel – A Study With Reference To Mayiladuthurai

Dr. G. Radha

M.Com, M.Phil., MBA, SLET, Ph. D
Assistant Professor in Commerce, AVC College (Autonomous),
Mannampandal, Mayiladuthurai

Abstract: Consumer perception towards sports apparel is shaped by factors such as quality, comfort, brand reputation, and pricing. In the town of Mayiladuthurai, youth and working professionals show high engagement with popular brands like Nike and Adidas. Sustainability and influencer marketing play a limited but growing role in purchase decisions. The findings highlight the importance of aligning product value with evolving consumer expectations.

I. INTRODUCTION

The global sports apparel industry has witnessed significant growth in recent years, driven by increasing health consciousness, fitness awareness, and the rise of athleisure fashion. Consumers today seek not only functionality and comfort but also style, branding, and personal identity in their clothing choices. As a result, sports apparel has evolved beyond athletic use to become a fashion statement. Brands have been adjusting their marketing strategies to match this shift in consumer expectations. Understanding how consumers perceive sports apparel is essential for brands aiming to remain competitive in a dynamic marketplace. This study explores key factors influencing user perception, including quality, comfort, branding, and social values.

USER BEHAVIOUR

User behaviour refers to the actions, preferences, and decision-making processes of individuals regarding products or services. In the context of sports apparel, it includes buying frequency, satisfaction levels, brand preferences, and responses to marketing strategies. This study aims to understand how different users interact with and perceive sports apparel in Mayiladuthurai town.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ✓ To analyse consumer perception towards sports apparel in Mayiladuthurai town.
- ✓ To explore the factors influencing consumer perception of sports apparel.
- ✓ To examine the role of marketing strategies in shaping consumer perception.
- ✓ To identify demographic and psychographic differences in consumer attitudes.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite the growth of the sports apparel industry, many brands struggle to connect with their target consumers effectively. While functional aspects such as comfort, fit, and durability are crucial, emotional and lifestyle-related factors like branding, style, and self-expression are equally influential. Additionally, modern consumers are increasingly concerned with sustainability, inclusivity, and value alignment. This gap between brand strategies and evolving consumer values presents a challenge. Understanding how different segments perceive sports apparel helps bridge this gap and improve customer satisfaction and loyalty.

II. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This study employs a descriptive research design to examine user perception of sports apparel in Mayiladuthurai. Data was collected from 75 respondents using a structured questionnaire with multiple-choice questions. A convenience sampling technique was used to gather responses from individuals of different age groups, income levels, and occupations. The collected data was analysed using simple descriptive statistics, such as percentages and frequencies, to identify trends and draw meaningful conclusions.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

AGE CLASSIFICATION

The majority of respondents (37.3%) are aged 18–25, indicating a strong interest in trends and activewear among young adults. The 26–35 age group follows at 26.7%, emphasizing practicality and comfort. Lower participation from those under 18 and above 45 reflects limited usage or purchasing power in those groups.

GENDER CLASSIFICATION

Male respondents (53.3%) slightly outnumber females (42.7%), while 4% identified as other genders. This indicates inclusive participation and highlights a growing market for gender-diverse sportswear.

OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE

Students represent the largest group (46.7%), showing high engagement with sportswear. Working professionals (33.3%) also show notable usage for fitness or casual wear, while businesspersons and homemakers make up smaller segments.

PURCHASE FREQUENCY

Most respondents (40%) buy sports apparel every 3–6 months, showing consistent demand. A smaller group (16%) buys monthly, indicating brand loyalty, while 17.3% rarely purchase sportswear.

FACTORS INFLUENCING PURCHASES

Quality and durability (26%) and comfort and fit (26%) are top priorities. Price (17.6%) and design/style (17%) follow, while brand name and celebrity endorsements have minimal influence (6.7% each).

BRAND PREFERENCES

Nike leads with 37.3%, followed by Adidas (26.7%). Puma (16%), Under Armour (10.7%), and Reebok (9.3%) also

hold market shares, driven by niche appeal and product performance.

TYPE OF SPORTS APPAREL PURCHASED

T-shirts and jerseys (33.3%) are the most common purchases, followed by shoes and sneakers (26.7%). Shorts, pants, jackets, and hoodies show moderate seasonal demand.

BRAND REPUTATION

Nearly 87% of respondents consider brand reputation important in their purchase decisions, reflecting strong trust in established brands.

SATISFACTION LEVELS

69.3% of respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of their apparel. Only 10.7% reported dissatisfaction, showing overall positive user experience.

INFLUENCER ENDORSEMENTS

Celebrity influence has limited impact: 46.7% said "No," 29.3% responded "Sometimes," and only 24% said "Yes." This suggests brand performance and reputation outweigh celebrity associations.

IV. SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATION

26.7% view sustainability as very important, while 42.7% find it somewhat important. Around 30.6% do not consider it significant, showing mixed attitudes toward eco-conscious consumption.

V. BRAND RECOMMENDATION

80% of respondents are willing to recommend their preferred sportswear brand, indicating strong customer satisfaction and brand loyalty.

VI. FINDINGS

- ✓ Males showed slightly higher interest (53.3%), but females (42.7%) also represent a strong market.
- ✓ Students (46.7%) form the majority user group, showing high youth engagement.
- ✓ Most buyers prefer purchasing every 3–6 months, indicating steady demand.
- ✓ Quality, comfort and price are the most important factors influencing purchase decisions.
- ✓ Nike and Adidas are the top preferred brands, showing high brand loyalty and trust.
- ✓ T-shirts, jerseys, and footwear are the most commonly purchased items.

- ✓ Brand image significantly impacts buying decisions, while celebrity endorsements have minimal effect.
- ✓ There is growing but mixed interest in sustainability as a buying factor.
- ✓ The majority of respondents are satisfied with their purchases and would recommend their preferred brands.

VII. SUGGESTIONS

To better meet consumer expectations, brands should focus on enhancing product quality, comfort, and affordability—especially for students and youth who make up the majority of buyers. Expanding the range of T-shirts, jerseys, and footwear can help cater to the most in-demand categories. Since brand loyalty is strong, especially for Nike and Adidas, local-level engagement like college-based promotions or loyalty programs may increase brand reach. With low influence from celebrity endorsements, companies should emphasize real user experiences and product performance. Furthermore, incorporating sustainable practices and promoting eco-conscious choices will appeal to the growing number of environmentally aware consumers.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The study reveals that consumers in Mayiladuthurai prioritize quality, comfort and brand reputation when selecting

sports apparel. Nike and Adidas are dominant brands, reflecting strong market trust. While affordability plays a major role, factors like sustainability and inclusivity are gaining attention. Despite limited impact from influencer marketing, high satisfaction levels and brand loyalty suggest a positive outlook for brands that align with evolving consumer needs. Companies should focus on value, durability, and personal identity to remain competitive in this growing sector.

REFERENCES

- [1] Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). *Marketing Management* (15th ed.). Pearson Education.
- [2] Solomon, M. R. (2018). *Consumer Behaviour: Buying, Having, and Being* (12th ed.). Pearson.
- [3] Dickson, M. A., & Pollack, A. (2000). Clothing and identity among adolescents. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 18(1), 19–30.
- [4] Niinimäki, K. (2010). Eco-clothing, consumer identity and ideology. *Sustainable Development*, 18(3), 150–162.
- [5] Hines, T., & Bruce, M. (2007). *Fashion Marketing: Contemporary Issues* (2nd ed.). Routledge.