An Analysis of Apparel Buying Approach of Female Consumers in the Context of West Bengal and Bangladesh

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Abstract: *Buying behavior for the apparel items is very complex and vibrant in nature. It may differ in terms of personalities, culture and even socio-economic condition (Shim and Bickle, 1994; Shim and Mahoney, 1992). On the other hand, the success of marketing depends on understanding consumers' mind and also to respond them in an appropriate manner. This paper aims to determine the dynamic nature of females' apparel buying behavior in relation to their fashion type (Progressive fashion, Following Current fashion, Having own style, Traditional fashion and Not very important), store selection (shopping mall, specialty store, local store, online shopping), purchasing category (planned buying, unplanned buying, impulse buying), purchasing frequency (never, very rare, occasionally and frequently) and visiting at store per month (0 time, 1-2 times, 3-5 times and more than 5 times). To do so, a comparative study has carried out where primary data was collected through the method of personal interviewing by using a structured questionnaire. Here, 292 female were taken from Bangladesh and 262 were from West Bengal as sample size by using Crohan's formula within the age of 16 to 55 years followed by convenience random sampling technique. Here, ten hypotheses have formulated separately for West Bengal and Bangladesh for being tested by using ANOVA and Chi-square and also developed the diagrammatic approaches of females' apparel buying pattern separately for the two study areas. This study also proposed some measures for the marketers to enjoy competitive advantages in the apparel fashion industry.*
Key Words: *Buying behavior, Fashion type, store preferences, purchasing category, purchasing frequency, store visiting, Apparels.*

I. Introduction

The fashion buying behavior includes all the movement of fashion that may takes place in females' apparel choice which is altering continuously in a very surprising way in different socio-economic perspectives (Bhanot, S., 2013). Fashion stands for change, but as fashion is also repetitive, in a long-range perspective it stands for tradition as well. Cultural theory has devoted a great deal of attention to fashion as a cultural phenomenon but little attention is given to fashion as a production system (Leopold, 1992). Buying pattern for the apparels is not the result of a single variable, but rather a phenomenon that is associated with a large number of issues. But the winning in fashion industry relates to understanding consumers' fashion pattern and also responding them in a proper mode (Lahiri, I. and Siddika, H. 2013 & 2014). So, it is now time demand studying with fashion approaches in order to sustain in the competitive fashion industry.

Apparel is the one of the very emerging market in fashion industry. Both India and Bangladesh having esteemed position in Global apparel market with respect to their export condition. Both countries also playing prime role in Asian apparel market in terms of the share and growth. Thus, present study become motivated to conduct a comparative study to determine the dynamic nature of females' apparel buying behaviour in relation to their fashion type (Progressive fashion, Following Current fashion, Having own style, Traditional fashion and Not very important), store selection (shopping mall, specialty store, local store, online shopping), purchasing category (planned buying, unplanned buying, impulse buying), purchasing frequency (never, very rare, occasionally and frequently) and visiting at store per month (0 time, 1-2 times, 3-5 times and more than 5 times) by using primary data.

II. Literature Review

Visser EM, Preeza R DU (2003), mentioned in his research that apparel shopping behavior in a multicultural consumer society is a complex phenomenon. The objective of this research was to identify female apparel consumer market segments on the basis of differentiating lifestyles, shopping orientation, cultural consciousness, store patronage and demographics. By using primary data the macro-perspective model provided marketers of apparel with a holistic view of variables influencing female apparel shopping. It was identified that female apparel consumers differ with regard to their demographic characteristics, store patronage, lifestyle, culture and shopping orientations.

According to Jain R., et al., (2011), the expression of self through clothing behavior is one's culture, background and general values plays a dominant role. The research explores the relationship of general values and clothing behavior by using primary data from female students. Some descriptive statistics like mean, SD and t-test were carried out. It was measured that students from different academic groups are not different in economic and general values but they hold differences as regard to clothing related economic value.

Akarte A. et al. (2012) measure the purchase intentions of consumers for fashion apparel driven by the stimulation and fun situation by using primary data and applied statistical techniques like T-tests and CFA. It was observed that consumers were attracted for longer period by the technology, advertisement, perception drives, innovation, celebrities' promotions and store attractions. However, similar pattern of shopping behavior of urban consumers in shopping malls was indicated by the results of the study compared to other markets. The results of the study also suggested the approach to enhance consumers' purchase involvement. It was also found that buying intentions of new products followed by the personalized experience on the products.

According to Singh R. and Sarvanan R., (2013), clothing plays a major role in building the female identity and status. The aim of his research was to know the female buying behavior in women's worn, female preference in design, types of fabric and fashion and also to find out the factors affecting female buying behavior during purchasing women's worn. The approach was to make a combination of an exploratory and a confirmatory factor analysis by using primary data. The study identified that women generally have the tendency to buy clothes on festivals with a special offer and discounts. Most of college going females preferring casual dress which is more viable to the changing trends like latest design, comfort, look, elegance. Mostly working women like to use branded western and Indo-western mix design garment and given preference to purchase ready-made garment but middle age women always prefer to stitch the garment according to their comfort. Again, young generation was more conscious about fashion trends as compared to other categories.

Bhanot S., (2013), conducted a study to study the important demographic, psychological and socioeconomic factors which influence the consumer purchase behavior for apparel with reference to college going students, especially management students. Descriptive statistics were applied by using primary data. It was identified that majority of male and female were influenced by the discount offers or promotion and students purchased apparel by actually visiting the store and not through e-commerce. Again, most of the students purchase apparels as per their own choice or their friends' opinion and got influenced by movies in their choice of apparel. The relation between various demographic variables and consumer buying behavior on apparel is expected to be understood.

Research Gap*:* No study has found that identified the relationship among consumers' buying behavior and their fashion types, purchasing approaches, store selection, purchasing frequency and per month visiting at store for the apparels. Moreover, no comparative study has not exists in this field which provide the diagrammatic approaches with respect to South Asian Countries; very especially in the context of India and Bangladesh.

Definition of variables*:* After reviewing the literature reviews five variables have selected for this study. These are:Fashion type: The type of apparel fashion may be progressive fashion (others may follow me) or following current fashion (prefer to go with the trends available in the market) or having own style (individual is happy with their own fashion) or Traditional fashion (one is very conventional with existing fashion) or Not very important (not interest over fashion) could be followed by the consumers (Narumi, 2000; Fuller and Blackwell, 1992).

Store preference: Consumers visit an online store with varying search needs. Broadly, their search behavior can be classified into goal-directed or exploratory search (Janiszewski, 1998). With the increase in number of various formats for shopping like malls, departmental stores, hypermarkets etc., the consumer's preferences are changing towards these (Gupta M., 2004). Shopping frequency and multipurpose shopping contributed to patronage behavior, with special reference to mall choice (Stoltman et al., 1991).

Purchasing category: Women appreciate first of all satisfaction and comfort, followed by function, while men prefer comfort, followed by satisfaction and quality. As for "how one buys", women go shopping mostly by impulse, planned or unplanned (Roy and Goswami, 2007; Lapitsky M., 1961).

Purchasing frequency: In terms of "when one buys" (how frequently one goes to shopping), we may infer that women buy more often and that both genders choose to buy mostly during sales season (Thai Post, 2010).

Visiting at store: Most of the male students and female students purchased apparel by actually visiting the store (Bhanot S., 2013).

III.   Objectives of the Study

i.   To measure the relationship among females' apparel fashion type and their purchasing category, store preferences, purchasing frequency and visiting at store.
ii. To identify the relationship among females' apparel purchasing category and their store preferences, purchasing frequency and visiting at store.
iii. To identify the relationship among females' store preferences and their purchasing frequency and visiting at store.
iv. To determine the relationship between females' apparel purchasing frequency and their visiting at store.
v.   To develop the diagrammatic approaches of females' apparel buying pattern with respect to West Bengal and Bangladesh.

IV.   Research Methodology

This study has followed by descriptive method of research (Malhotra N., K., 2006) that has derived with empirical data.

Selection of Area: There are huge similarities with respect to language, food, fashion patterns, clothing preferences, celebration of occasions, life style and so on between the two geographically close areas like Bangladesh and West Bengal which is one of the important state of India Thus, Bangladesh and West Bengal have taken as sampling areas in this study.

Data collection process: Primary data has used in this study which has collected through survey method by using a structured questionnaire. Before drawing the final questionnaire a pilot survey for the same was conducted. Both Quantitative and qualitative data have used. For scaling technique; in Part II of the questionnaire, interval and nominal scale have followed; where in Part I: nominal, ordinal and interval level measurement have followed for getting demographic profile. The data has collected within time period of April, 2013 to December, 2015.

Sample Design: Here, every individual female those are involved in apparel using has considered as sampling elements with respect to Bangladesh and West Bengal. Individual female within the age of 16-55 years have selected as sampling unit. Consequently, as sample extent some cities of Bangladesh like Dhaka, Comilla, Rangpur, Boghra and Chittagong districts were selected; where Kolkata, Burdwan, North 24 Pargona, Nadia and Murshidabad districts were chosen from West Bengal so that these could cover urban, sub urban and rural regions. The sampling frame (educational institutions and households) has selected by simple random selection and from those frame respondents were divided into some stratus based on age, income, occupation, education and region and responses were taken followed by convenience sampling technique.

Cochran's formula has applied for determining the sample size (as population was infinite) that is:

$$SS = \frac{Z^2 p(1-p)}{C^2}$$

Here, SS = Sample size, Z = given z value, p = Percentage of population and C = Confidence level
So, the required sample size (SS) would be: SS = $(1.96)^2$ x 0.8 (1-0.8) / $(0.05)^2$ = 245.8624

It has found that 246 is the optimum sample size; but for getting better result a survey has carried out with more than 246 respondents. The final version of the questionnaire has administered on 986 respondents. Out of total respondents only 554 have responded properly, where 292 were from Bangladesh and 262 were from West Bengal which satisfied the required limit of sample size. The sample was representative of the entire population, so results from this research can be generalized.

Statistical tools: Ten hypotheses have taken separately for West Bengal and Bangladesh which have tested by using Chi-square test and Analysis of Variance. Here, for ANOVA, as the variable visiting at store is interval in nature has considered as dependent variable; where fashion type has taken as independent variable. But before proceed for the analysis, the normality of distribution has tested by using Skewness and Kurtosis test and Box plot has used to identify outliers. Moreover, some descriptive statistics has taken place to summarize the demographic profile of respondents.

V.   Analysis and Findings

Separate analysis has carried out for female respondents taken from West Bengal and Bangladesh. For this, the data set and hypotheses also were separated for getting a clear picture on present situation.

Testing Normality of Distribution

Table 1: Statistics of Skewness, Kurtosis and Normality Score (for West Bengal)

Variables	Skewness		Normality score (Stat/Std. Error)	Kurtosis		Normality score (Stat/Std. Error)
	Statistic	Std. Error		Statistic	Std. Error	
Store Preference	.276	.150	1.84	-.482	.300	-1.606
Purchasing Category	.380	.150	2.53	-.417	.300	-1.39
Store visiting	.377	.150	2.513	-.469	.300	-1.563
Purchasing Frequency	-.253	.150	-1.687	-.178	.300	-0.593
Fashion Type	.109	.150	0.727	-.254	.300	-0.847

Here, the normality of distribution of measuring five variables has been tested considering the thumb rule suggested by Rose S, Spinks N., Canhoto A. I. (2015).

**Table 2:** Statistics of Skewness, Kurtosis and Normality Score (for Bangladesh)

Variables	Skewness		Normality score (Stat/Std. Error)	Kurtosis		Normality score (Stat/Std. Error)
	Statistic	Std. Error		Statistic	Std. Error	
Store Preference	.316	.143	2.209	-.653	.284	-2.299
Purchasing Category	.223	.143	1.559	-.684	.284	-2.408
Store visiting	.328	.143	2.293	-.711	.284	-2.503
Purchasing Frequency	-.021	.143	-.0146	-.435	.284	-1.531
Fashion Type	.277	.143	1.587	-.177	.284	-0.623

From the above table1 and table 2 it has identified that the Normality score (Statistics/Std. Error) for measuring five variables fall within ±2.58 for both selected areas, which mean that data used for the analysis is absolutely normally distributed.

Identifying Outliers in Distribution

For ensuring better output the study has applied Box Plot for identifying whether there is any outlier or not belongs to measuring five variables (http://www.shmoop.com/basic-statistics-probability/box-whisker-plots.html) which have displayed graphically in below:

Figure 1: Box Plot for identifying Outliers
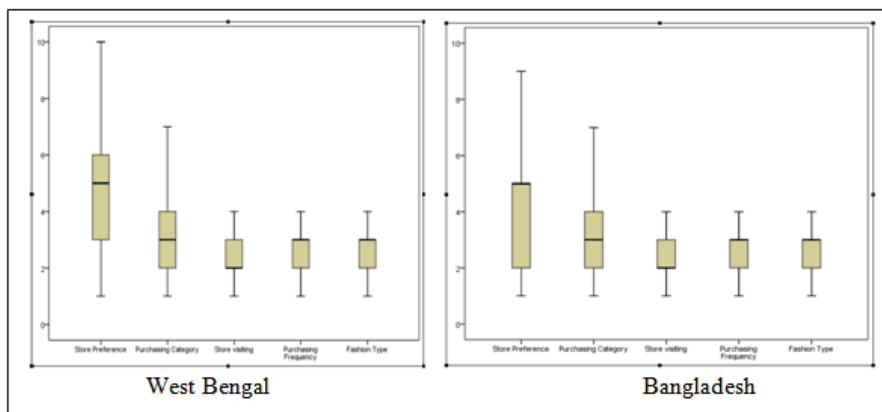
The above figures showing that each variable has distributed normally where some of them followed by skewed or kurtosis shape. Initially, some data has found plotted outside of the box that was defined as outliers which have been removed from the analysis.

Relationship between Fashion Type and their Store preference for apparels

H1: The null hypothesis (H$_0$) = There is no relationship between fashion type and store preferences for apparels with respect to both West Bengal and Bangladesh.

Table 3: Test result

Output	West Bengal			Bangladesh		
	Value	df	P value	Value	df	P value
Pearson Chi-Square	36.697	12	.000	27.435	12	.007
Likelihood Ratio	31.018	12	.002	28.266	12	.005
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.055	1	.044	4.007	1	.045

Here, at 5% level of significance p value is < 0.05 that relates to the rejection of null hypothesis. So, it proves that there exists significant relationship between females' fashion type and their store preferences for apparels with respect to both West Bengal and Bangladesh.

Relationship between Fashion Type and their Purchasing Category for apparels
H2: The null hypothesis (H_0) = There is no relationship between fashion type and purchasing category for apparels with respect to both West Bengal and Bangladesh.

Table 4: Test result

Output	West Bengal			Bangladesh		
	Value	df	P value	Value	df	P value
Pearson Chi-Square	54.268	24	.000	37.486	24	.039
Likelihood Ratio	55.001	24	.000	36.879	24	.045
Linear-by-Linear Association	13.709	1	.000	4.122	1	.042

Here, at 5% level of significance p value is < 0.05 that relates to the rejection of null hypothesis. So, it confirms that there exists significant relationship between females' fashion type and their purchasing category for apparels with respect to both West Bengal and Bangladesh.

Relationship between Fashion Type and their Purchasing Frequency for apparels
H3: The null hypothesis (H_0) = There is no relationship between fashion type and purchasing frequency for apparels with respect to both West Bengal and Bangladesh.

Table 5: Test result

Outputs	West Bengal			Bangladesh		
	Value	df	P value	Value	df	P value
Pearson Chi-Square	22.637	12	.031	27.239	12	.007
Likelihood Ratio	24.026	12	.020	27.020	12	.008
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.541	1	.011	4.991	1	.025

Here, at 5% level of significance p value is < 0.05 that relates to the rejection of null hypothesis. So, it proves that there is significant relationship between females' fashion type and their purchasing frequency for apparels with respect to both West Bengal and Bangladesh.

Relationship between Fashion Type and their visiting at store for apparels
H4: The null hypothesis (H_0) = There is no relationship between fashion type and visiting at store per month for apparels with respect to both West Bengal and Bangladesh.

Table 6: Test result

West Bengal					Outputs	Bangladesh				
Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
21.295	4	5.324	7.731	.000	Between Groups	15.243	4	3.811	5.555	.000
176.965	257	.689			Within Groups	196.880	287	.686		
198.260	261				Total	212.123	291			

Here, at 5% level of significance p value is < 0.05 that relates to the rejection of null hypothesis. So, it proves that there is significant relationship between females' fashion type and their visiting at store per month for apparels with respect to both West Bengal and Bangladesh.

Relationship between Purchasing Category and store preferences for apparels
H5: The null hypothesis (H_0) = There is no relationship between purchasing category and store preferences for apparels with respect to both West Bengal and Bangladesh.

Table 7: Test result

Outputs	West Bengal			Bangladesh		
	Value	df	P value	Value	df	P value
Pearson Chi-Square	94.657	54	.001	139.470	54	.000
Likelihood Ratio	92.050	54	.001	125.383	54	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	35.249	1	.000	20.202	1	.000

Here, at 5% level of significance p value is < 0.05 that relates to the rejection of null hypothesis. So, it proves that a significant relationship exists between females' purchasing category and their store preferences for apparels with respect to both West Bengal and Bangladesh.

Relationship between Purchasing Category and purchasing frequency for apparels

H6: The null hypothesis (H_0) = There is no relationship between purchasing category and purchasing frequency (per month) for apparels with respect to both West Bengal and Bangladesh.

Table 8: Test result

Outputs	West Bengal			Bangladesh		
	Value	df	P value	Value	df	P value
Pearson Chi-Square	28.154	18	.060	15.616	18	.619
Likelihood Ratio	27.551	18	.069	17.671	18	.477
Linear-by-Linear Association	9.911	1	.002	.349	1	.555

Here, at 5% level of significance p value is < 0.05 in case of West Bengal that relates to the rejection of null hypothesis. So, it proves that there is significant relationship between females' purchasing category and their purchasing frequency for apparels with respect to both West Bengal. But in case of the study area of Bangladesh p value is > 0.05 which relates to the acceptance of null hypothesis.

Relationship between store preferences and purchasing frequency for apparels

H7: The null hypothesis (H_0) = There is no relationship between store preferences and purchasing frequency (per month) for apparels with respect to both West Bengal and Bangladesh.

Table 9: Test result

Outputs	West Bengal			Bangladesh		
	Value	df	P value	Value	df	P value
Pearson Chi-Square	48.381	27	.007	14.212	27	.979
Likelihood Ratio	49.661	27	.005	16.789	27	.936
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.134	1	.008	.175	1	.676

Here, at 5% level of significance p value is < 0.05 in case of West Bengal that relates to the rejection of null hypothesis. So, it proves that there is significant relationship between females' store preference and their purchasing frequency for apparels with respect to both West Bengal. But in case of the study area of Bangladesh p value is > 0.05 which relates to the acceptance of null hypothesis and also proves that no relationship exists.

Relationship between store visiting and purchasing frequency for apparels

H8: The null hypothesis (H_0) = There is no relationship between store visiting (per month) and purchasing frequency (per month) for apparels with respect to both West Bengal and Bangladesh.

Table 10: Test result

West Bengal					Outputs	Bangladesh				
Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
7.374	3	2.458	3.322	.020	Between Groups	21.069	3	7.023	16.830	.000
190.886	258	.740			Within Groups	120.174	288	.417		
198.260	261				Total	141.243	291			

Here, at 5% level of significance p value is < 0.05 that relates to the rejection of null hypothesis. So, it proves that there exists a significant relationship between females' store visiting (per month) and their purchasing frequency (per month) for apparels with respect to both West Bengal and Bangladesh.

Relationship between store visiting and store preference for apparels

H9: The null hypothesis (H_0) = There is no relationship between store visiting (per month) and store preferences for apparels with respect to both West Bengal and Bangladesh.

Table 11: Test result

West Bengal					Outputs	Bangladesh				
Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
14.549	9	1.617	2.218	.021	Between Groups	3.793	9	.421	.863	.559
183.710	252	.729			Within Groups	127.037	260	.489		
198.260	261				Total	130.830	269			

Here, at 5% level of significance p value is < 0.05 in case of West Bengal that relates to the rejection of null hypothesis. So, it proves that there is significant relationship between females' store visiting (per month) and their store preferences for apparels with respect to both West Bengal. But in case of the study area of Bangladesh p value is > 0.05 which relates to the acceptance of null hypothesis and also proves that no relationship exists.

Relationship between store visiting and purchasing category for apparels

H10: The null hypothesis (H_0) = There is no relationship between store visiting (per month) and purchasing category for apparels with respect to both West Bengal and Bangladesh.

Table 12: Test result

West Bengal					Outputs	Bangladesh				
Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
6.007	6	1.001	1.328	.245	Between Groups	2.563	6	.427	.876	.513
192.253	255	.754			Within Groups	128.266	263	.488		
198.260	261				Total	130.830	269			

Here, at 5% level of significance p value is > 0.05 in case of West Bengal and Bangladesh that relates to the acceptance of null hypothesis. So, it proves that there is no relationship between females' store visiting (per month) and their purchasing category for apparels.

After considering the test results of ten hypotheses the relationships among five variables could be demonstrated through the following diagram.

Figure 2 & 3: Females' apparel buying approaches respectively West Bengal and Bangladesh

Figure 2: Females' apparel buying approach (West Bengal)

Figure 3: Females' apparel buying approach (Bangladesh)
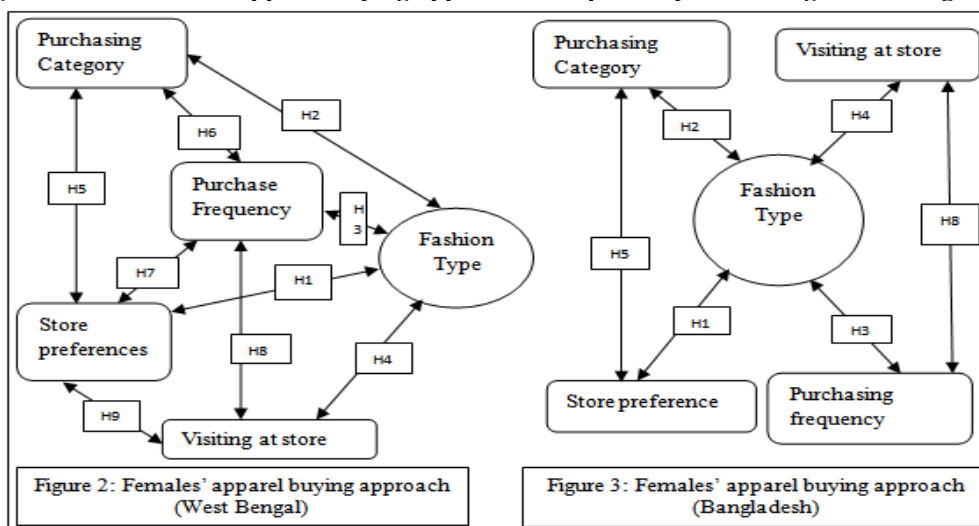
In figure 2 and figure 3 shows apparel buying approach of female consumers respectively with respect to west Bengal and Bangladesh. Here, the relationship has shown by double headed arrow as per the test results of hypotheses.

Again, some descriptive statistics has carried out to summarize the demographic profile of respondents separately with respect to West Bengal and Bangladesh that placed in Appendix.

VI.   Managerial Implications

Apparel sector is likely to grow with Indian and Bangladesh economy. Many multinational players either have already plunged into the market or plan to do so in apparel sector. The key contribution of this work is it identified the dynamic relationships among fashion type and store preference, purchasing category, visiting

at store through a comparison with empirical data. Again, marketers could consider the theoretical approaches of females' apparel buying approaches that have developed separately in this study while designing their marketing strategies for the domestic and international market.

As consumers' preferences for apparel selection is changing very dramatically and there is no fixed nature of such changes, the fashion market become challenging and also opens with the door of potentials even crossing the national boundary. So, the role of such responding activities should be understood well which may help any players to survive and gain in a long run.

VII . Conclusion

Marketers of many countries are now vastly executing fashion marketing strategies in the domestic or international arena. Present study could reveals the opportunities for practitioners to add value through sharing significant findings and virgin contributions of both male and female apparel market with respect to West Bengal and Bangladesh. The study also proposed some measures for the improvement. Practitioners need to keep close attention on all the related every variables or issues to sustain in domestic market. Whether it is the apparel industry of West Bengal or Bangladesh, marketers or entrepreneurs need to emphasis the identified relationships; even which was not measured for their own market to enjoy competitive advantage in international context. Companies obviously should carry such type of descriptive study to get the reflection of direct consumers' response which is essential either to hold or sustain in existing market or gain the huge potentials as well. If practitioners of both countries could care these outcomes and design the strategies accordingly, then no doubt they could comfortably handle the competition in emerging apparel market. Thus, such movement could bring remarkable share and growth of apparel market which relates to the aid in country's economy as well.

The study has carried out with small sample size, only 5 variables were used and limited statistical tools which were applied may not enough for the comparative study. But within a certain time frame and limited budget, the study has originated with present situation. So, this study disclosed the point to conduct further research in broader areas with more sample size, longer time period, with new or additional variables or applying new statistical technique to explore more insights.

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Appendix

Demographic Variables of Female respondents		West Bengal		Bangladesh	
		Frequency	**Percentage**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Age	16-30 years	141	48.3	164	62.6
	31-40 years	129	44.2	66	25.2
	41-55 years	22	7.5	32	12.2
Education	Primary	36	12.3	27	10.3
	SSC	29	9.9	48	18.3
	Higher Secondary	103	35.3	46	17.6
	Graduate	88	30.1	76	29.0
	Post Graduate	36	12.3	65	24.8
Region	Urban	188	64.4	116	44.3
	Semi Urban	23	7.9	106	40.5
	Rural	81	27.7	40	15.3
Income (Per month)	Below 15000	183	62.7	178	67.9
	15000-30000	69	23.6	43	16.4
	31000-60000	29	9.9	21	8.0
	61000-85000	6	2.1	14	5.3
	86000-100000	1	.3	2	.8
	Above 10000	4	1.4	4	1.5

Humaira Siddika An Analysis Of Apparel Buying Approach Of Female Consumers In The Context Of West Bengal And Bangladesh." IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM) 20.3 (2018): 38-46.