

The influence of sun signs on apparel buying behaviour – an empirical analysis

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Abstract

Each person has his own direction of planets at the time of birth and each one of them are unique. Astrology helps us in understanding the basic cause of their nature and behaviour and it enquires into the basic traits of the person born in a particular sun sign. With the help of astrology we can understand the nature of a person and the reason behind their behaviour. The same has emerged as a major tool to understand one's behaviour and personality in modern era and in a competitive world where marketers are today facing tough competition to understand their target customers, astrology can prove to be a bigger relief in understanding the mood and behaviour of the target customers. Marketers can segment their target customers on the basis of their basic characteristics with the help of sun signs.

Key words – astrology, segmentation, sun signs.

The Zodiac

The zodiac (which is derived from the Greek word meaning "circle of animals") is believed to have developed in ancient Egypt and later adopted by the Babylonians. Early astrologers knew it took 12 lunar cycles (i.e., months) for the sun to return to its original position. They then identified 12 constellations that they observed were linked to the progression of the seasons and assigned them names of certain animals and persons (in Babylonia, for example, the rainy season was found to occur when the Sun was in a particular constellation which was then named Aquarius, or water bearer). These twelve sun signs can be well understood with the help of table 1.01 which explains the time of birth and their respective sun signs as well as the basic characteristics.

Table 1.01 – Description of sun signs

Name of Sun Sign	Period	Basic Characteristics
Aries	Mar 21 st to Apr 20 th	Competitive, Initiative, Enthusiasm, leader, Arrogant, Selfish.
Taurus	Apr 21 st to May 21 st	Loyal, Possessive, Practical, Jealous, Lazy.
Gemini	May 22 nd to Jun 21 st	Popular, Intelligent, versatile, Impatient, Break Rule.
Cancer	Jun 22 nd to Jul 23 rd	Protective, Domestic, Sensitive, Moody, Combative.
Leo	Jul 24 th to Aug 23 rd	Power, Authority, Romantic, Blunt, Domineering.
Virgo	Aug 24 th to Sept 23 rd	Methodical, High Standards, Reliable, Fault – finding.
Libra	Sept 24 th to Oct 23 rd	Fair, Co-operative, Hardworking, Indecisive, Extravagant
Scorpio	Oct 24 th to Nov 22 nd	Emotional, Secretive, Forceful, Jealous, Argue.
Sagittarius	Nov 23 rd to Dec 21 st	Honest, Hopeful, Friendly, Blunt, Not Particular.
Capricorn	Dec 22 nd to Jan 20 th	Neat, Ambitious, Organized, worry, Social Climber.
Aquarius	Jan 21 st to Feb 19 th	Helpful, Independent, Broad minded, Dogmatic, Blunt.
Pisces	Feb 20 th to Mar 20 th	Gentle, Dreamy, Compassionate, Easily Influenced, No Self Confidence.

(Source –Goodman L., - Sun Signs)

Introduction to Indian textile sector

Textiles industry is one of the oldest industries in Indian economy dating back several centuries. Even today, textile is one of the largest contributors to India's exports with approximately 11 per cent of total exports. The textiles industry is also labour intensive and is one of the largest employers. The industry realized export earnings worth US\$ 40 billion in 2015-16 as per data released by India Brand Equity Foundation. The textile industry has two broad segments. First, the unorganized sector consists of handloom, handicrafts and sericulture, which are operated on a small scale and through traditional tools and methods. The second is the organized sector consisting of spinning, apparel and garments segment which apply modern machinery and techniques such as economies of scale (Halepete and Iyyer, 2008).

SWOT analysis of Indian apparel sector

✓ **Strengths:**

• **Raw material base**

- The Indian economy has primarily been an agriculture-driven economy. The vast stretches of land, resources and climatic conditions aid the production of varied raw materials for different industrial purposes. Historically, India has been known for its high-quality cotton, jute and other natural fibre. Over the years, however, the domestic industry has progressed and diversified into many types of fibre and yarn, both natural and man-made. The textile industry in India includes almost all types of textile fibres – natural fibres such as cotton, jute, silk and wool; synthetic / man-made fibres such as polyester, viscose, nylon, acrylic and polypropylene (PP) and multiple blends of such fibres and filament yarns such as partially oriented yarn (POY). The type of yarn used is dictated by the end-product that is manufactured. The abundant availability of raw material is one of the important advantages of the Indian textile industry. It is well-established that India possesses a natural advantage in terms of raw material availability. India is the largest producer of jute, the second-largest producer of cotton and silk and among the largest producers of wool across the world (www.dnb.co.in).

• **Labour**

Cheap labour and strong entrepreneurial skills have always been the backbone of the Indian apparel and textile industry. In the recent years, the growth pattern of labour productivity across the states appears to be skewed. In other words, the national growth in labour productivity in the textile sector is dominated by a few States. The States such as Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa have exhibited growth in labour productivity, which is higher than the national average in the recent years. The inter-state disparity in the labour productivity growth in the recent years is certainly a concern. The States such as Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, J&K, Orissa, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu etc. have shown better labour productivity growth in the recent years in comparison to earlier decades. This probably implies that the growth is concentrated in a few regions where the textile sector has some advantages either in terms of raw material availability or in terms of the availability of skilled manpower (NMCC, 2010).

• **Flexibility**

The small size of manufacturing which is pre-dominant in the apparel industry allows for greater flexibility to service smaller and specialized orders.

• **Domestic market**

With a population base of more than 1.25 billion, India has one of the largest domestic markets in the world. Domestic demand coupled with increase in per capita income, young work force, flourishing consumerism, change in life style of people, nuclearization of

families, urbanization, growing preferences for branded products, mall culture and above all, the higher aspirations of the Indian consumers are the biggest strengths of Indian apparel sector.

✓ **Weaknesses:**

• **More dependence on cotton**

Indian apparel industry is mainly based on cotton produce. Due to over-specialization in cotton, the bulk of the international market is missed out, synthetic products in India are expensive and fabric required for items like swim-suit, sky-wear and industrial apparel is relatively unavailable.

• **Poor Infrastructure**

Indian apparel sector is suffering from poor infrastructure. Apparel sector in India consist mainly of those small small manufacturers who don't use new high-end technology but mainly depend on labour, and produce in very small quantity, thus loosing the economies of scale as well as time consumed in production is very high. High power costs and long export lead times are also eroding India's export competitiveness across the apparel sector.

• **Low Labour Productivity**

Indian apparel is mainly based on traditional methods and it is labour-intensive rather than technology-intensive. Productivity levels for manufacturing various apparel items are far lower in India in comparison with its competitors.

• **Spinning Sector**

- Spinning sector lacks modernization and there is a need of introducing new technology.

• **Fabric Processing**

Processing is the weakest link in the Indian textile value chain, adversely affecting its ability to compete in exports.

• **Other Weaknesses:**

- Less attention on man power training
- Poor quality standards
- Distance of the potential market
- Lower average consumption in domestic market
- Lack of professionalism and integration of supply chain
- Dependence on quota system
- Very low investment on R&D
- Limited exploitation of economies of scale

✓ **Opportunities:**

• **Growing Industry**

The Indian textile industry is expected to reach US\$ 500 billion in size by 2025.

• **Market access through bilateral negotiation**

The trade is growing between regional trade blocs due to bilateral agreements between participating countries.

• **Integration of Information technology**

'Supply Chain Management' and 'Information Technology' has a crucial role in apparel manufacturing. Availability of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) makes communication faster, easier, transparent and reduces duplication.

• **Opportunity in High Value Items**

India has the opportunity to increase its Unit Value Realization (UVR) through moving up the value chain by producing value added products and by producing more and more technologically superior products.

✓ **Threats:**• **Decreasing Fashion Cycle**

The world of fashion is changing faster than ever. The apparel industry has to tackle it very efficiently. There has been an increase in seasons per year which has resulted in shortening of the fashion cycle.

• **Formation of Trading Blocs**

Formation of trading blocs like NAFTA, SAPTA, etc has resulted in a change in the world trade scenario. Existence of bilateral agreements may result in significant disadvantage for Indian exports.

• **Phasing out of Quotas**

India will have to open its protected domestic market to foreign players thus domestic manufacturer may suffer.

Literature review

Mitchell and Haggedd (1997) wrote a path breaking research article "Sun-sign Astrology in Market Segmentation: An empirical investigation". The objective of the paper was to test whether date of birth has any effect on behavior and was to see whether any such observed effects could be interpreted in line with astrological predictions. Data was collected by taking a stratified random sample from 10,000 households through personal interviews over the age of 16 years for smoking, drinking, reading books, listening radio, Gardening, Watching TV, Visiting Friends and Going on Holiday. For analyzing purpose Cruksal - Walis test, chi-square test and one way analysis of variances were used. The results of the study showed that Cancerians are less likely ever to have smoked probably because they are more prone to health worries. Capricorns are less likely to have smoked regularly as they are cautious and risk averse. Scorpians are ambitious and career conscious and they are less likely to have drunk alcohol. Virgoans are most active in all zodiac signs and the results showed that they spend less time in gardening, listening radio and watching TV. The results also showed that Sagittarians are less likely to spend their leisure time in visiting and talking to friends. The number of significant results suggested that the date of birth had some effect on behavior. They found that we have sufficient reason to believe that sun signs have some impact on consumption and simply use it as an additional variable when examining a segment's psychological profile. They also found in their study that astrological sign, particularly suited to a brand's image can be used as sales promotion tools in the brand's communication and positioning strategy.

Mitchell (1995) published an article titled "Using Astrology in Market Segmentation." The study discussed that the history and uses of astrology and demonstrate how it can be of potential use to marketers wishing to segment markets where the consumer's lifestyle and psychology are important discriminators. The study also discussed that the recognizing people's sun sign might add to a better understanding of consumer which may be used to improve communication and marketing mix. The study concluded that more subtle access to markets might be achieved with the use of symbols, colours, sounds, mood and image creation designed to appeal to the personalities of specific zodiac groups. The study had also highlighted the main characteristics of all the sun signs.

Kwak et al. (2000) researched on "Astrology: Its Influence on Consumers' Buying Patterns and Consumers' Evaluations of Products and Services". The objective of the study was to find out the relationship between personality traits and zodiac signs – a) consumers' general evaluation of products and services, b) consumers' buying patterns i.e. impulsive or compulsive. For this, they adopted two traditional astrological classification methods: odd / even zodiac signs and water / non-water zodiac signs. Water signs are *Cancer, Scorpio* and *Pisces* and rest are non-water zodiac signs. They surveyed

239 college students with convenience sampling. They found in their study that odd and non-water signs are positively associated with consumers' impulsive buying tendencies. The results of the study showed that consumers who belonged to water zodiac signs were less likely to engage in impulsive purchasing as compared to non-water sign consumers. They also indicated that zodiac signs can influence impulsive purchase behaviour but not compulsive purchase. The study also found that neither water/non-water nor odd/even zodiac signs played any role in consumers' evaluation of product qualities. Further, the results of the study showed that there was a significant relationship between consumers' water/non-water signs and their overall evaluation of perceived service quality i.e. consumers born under water signs are more likely to show favourable evaluation of services than are those with non-water signs. Thus, the researchers concluded that zodiac signs did not influence overall evaluations of product quality but they do influence overall evaluations of service quality.

Inanli (2008) studied the topic "Astrology Quality or Cost as Buying Behavior." The purpose of the study was to search the relationship between astrological personality traits and buying patterns based on quality and cost as feminine and masculine astrological signs. Masculine signs are Aries, Leo, Sagittarius, Libra, Gemini and Aquarius while the rest are feminine signs. The study was conducted with the sample size of 286 adults and questionnaire was used to collect the data. The analysis of data showed that there is a significant relationship between masculine astrological personality traits and tendency toward quality. The analysis also found that there is a significant relationship between the cost (as a primary buying motive) and feminine astrological personalities. Feminine personality tends to buy cheap or low quality products whereas the masculine personality would be willing to pay higher price for quality and this type of personality see quality as a part of utility maximization. The research did not find any significant relationship between masculine astrological personalities and cost factor and feminine personalities and their prime interest in quality. The study found that masculine astrological personalities have buying tendencies based on quality and feminine personalities are most cost conscious buyers as compared to masculine personalities.

Consumer behaviour refers to the mental and emotional process of consumers during searching, purchasing and post consumption of a product or services. It also tries to assess the influence on the consumer from groups such as family, friends, reference groups and society in general. Consumer behaviour involves study of how people buy, what they buy, when they buy and why they buy (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003). Consumer market for fashion apparel has become more diverse by store brands, designer brands, advertising, personalization and ethnicity in the market place. The study analyse that consumers' uniqueness, reference groups, store attributes, product attributes and promotional measures are the factors affecting the purchase of luxury fashion apparel brands by women consumers. The study indicates that store attributes, consumers' uniqueness, product attributes and promotional measures are positively and significantly influencing the average purchase value per store visit. The study found that the women consumers prefer branded apparels, which have good quality which clearly indicates that the apparel store should sell branded apparels more than that of unbranded apparel. In addition, the apparel store should promote carefully, aggressively, appropriately and attractively to tap women consumers (Gopesh and Ganapathi, 2015).

Consumers can either be subjective or objective, testing the expressiveness of brand names. Consumers may choose particular products not only because these products provide the functional benefits as expected, but also because these products can be used to express their personality, social status or affiliation or to fulfill their internal psychological needs, such as the need for change or newness. Retail stores selling the products also play an important role in swaying the decisions of consumers, and the or visual appeal of the retail outlet can determine sales, or the service of the salesmen (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000).

Objectives

- i. To study whether respondents of different sun signs have significantly different opinions towards purchase of apparels.
- ii. To study the scope of sun signs as a tool of segmentation.

Research design

The present research is exploratory cum descriptive in nature and depends largely on the primary source of information. The data has been collected from the respondents with the help of questionnaire. Interview technique has been used, in order to gather information about the present apparel scenario.

Mode of data collection

A five-point Likert scale has been used to measure the intensity and direction of responses. The scale ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree. For this study, primary as well as secondary data have been used.

The questionnaire

Questionnaire containing 10 statements related to price and branding decisions w.r.t. apparels was prepared by the research for the present study and the same was got filled from 120 respondents of different sun signs.

Hypothesis

H_0 – There is no significant difference in the opinion of respondents across sun signs.

Tools for analysis of data

After the collection of the relevant data through questionnaires and secondary sources, statistical techniques have been used to analyze the data in this study using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS 18.0). Anova was used in order to check the significance differences in the opinion of respondents. The data has been presented and analyzed in the form of tables.

Data analysis

For the present study a questionnaire containing 10 statements was prepared by the researcher and the same has been analysed in this part. The questionnaire was filled by 120 respondents over different sun signs. The following chart explains the result of respondents across different sun signs.

Figure 1.01 – Percentage of respondents across various sun signs.

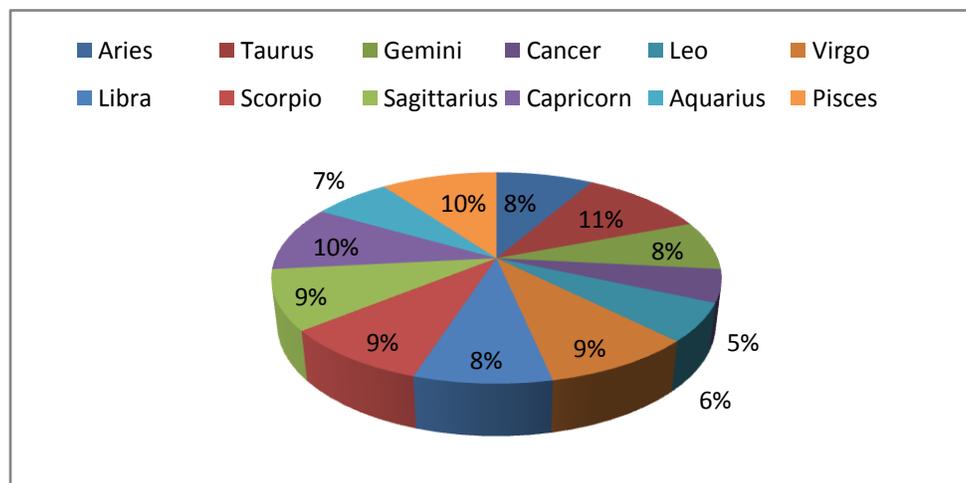


Figure 1.01 explains the respondents across different sun signs. It is evident from the table that a sample of 120 respondents has been chosen by the researcher for present study. The data was collected among the students of PG courses in various colleges. Taurus respondents have got the maximum number of share among all the respondents while Cancerians counts for minimum number of respondents. It is evident from the data that the range of respondents is between 5 percent to 11 percent which is acceptable looking at the average at 8.5 percent. Hence, it is clear that data consist of a sample which represents all groups.

Table 1.02 explains the result of ANOVA which was intended to check the level of significance among the respondents across twelve sun signs.

H0 – There is no significant difference in the opinion of respondents across sun signs.

Table 1.01 Anova across sun signs

Variable	Statement	F	Sig
V1	I prefer branded apparels.	2.50	0.01
V2	I prefer brands that provide exclusivity and designer wear.	1.90	0.04
V3	I move to other brands if one brand is not available.	1.85	0.05
V4	I prefer to try different brands.	1.47	0.15
V5	I think that price of apparels is directly linked with quality.	1.15	0.33
V6	I prefer to buy those brands that offer maximum discount.	1.86	0.05
V7	Price is the main factor which affects my purchase decision.	1.18	0.31
V8	I think branded apparels are overpriced.	0.47	0.92
V9	I purchase most of the apparels during promotional offers.	2.87	0.00
V10	I am price conscious while switching to the brands.	2.63	0.01

Source – Primary Data

It is evident from the glimpse of table that respondents have got level of significance less than 0.05 for 6 out of 10 statements. The respondents across different sun signs have got significant differences in their opinion w.r.t. statement which indicates that they prefer branded apparels; they prefer brands that provide exclusivity and designer wear; they move to other brands if one brand is not available; they prefer to buy those brands that offer maximum discount; they purchase most of the apparels during promotional offers; and they are price conscious while switching to the brands. Thus it is clearly evident that null hypothesis cannot be rejected for these six statements. Rest four statements have got level of significance more than 0.05 which indicates that respondents across twelve sun signs don't have significant difference in their opinions with respect to these variable and null hypothesis stands accepted. If we look at the overall data we find that majority of the statements lies where null hypothesis stands rejected and it can be concluded that respondents across different sun signs have significant difference in their opinions.

Findings and conclusion

It is evident from the analysis of data with the help of anova that respondents across different sun signs have difference in their opinion for 6 out of 10 variables and they don't have uniformity in their opinions. It can be derived from the analysis of data that respondents across various sun signs tend to behave differently when it comes to purchase of apparels. Overall it can be concluded that respondents across different sun signs have significantly different opinion and hence it can be stated that respondents can be divided into different segments on the basis of sun signs.

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