

A Study on Buying Behaviour Towards Men's Innerwear Among College Students

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ABSTRACT:

The men's innerwear market in India is undergoing rapid transformation driven by organised branding, rising consumer awareness, and the proliferation of e-commerce. College students represent a critical and understudied consumer segment whose purchase decisions are shaped by a distinctive interplay of product attributes, price sensitivity, peer influence, and brand perception. This study examines the buying behaviour of 147 male college students in Tamil Nadu toward men's innerwear brands including Jockey, Dollar, Lux Cozi, VIP/Frenchie, and Dixcy Scott. Using simple percentage analysis and ranking analysis, the study identifies comfort as the most important purchase factor followed by fit and size, quality, price, and brand image. The findings confirm that online platforms have emerged as the dominant purchase channel, the ₹200–₹400 price range commands majority preference, and Jockey leads brand preference at 29.9 per cent despite its premium positioning. Customer satisfaction levels are broadly positive, while brand switching is primarily triggered by price differences.

KEY WORDS: Buying Behaviour, Men's Innerwear, College Students, Brand Preference, Comfort, Price Sensitivity, Ranking Analysis, Tamil Nadu, Consumer Behaviour, Brand Loyalty.

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

India's men's innerwear market has evolved from a commodity-driven, largely unorganised segment into a brand-conscious, fast-growing consumer goods category. The organised segment, led by brands such as Jockey, Lux Cozi, Dollar, Rupa, VIP/Frenchie, Macho, Amul Macho, and Dixcy Scott, is expanding rapidly on the back of rising disposable incomes, growing awareness of fabric technology and comfort, and the rapid penetration of e-commerce. Within this dynamic landscape, college students occupy a uniquely important position. As first-time independent buyers, they are in the formative stages of developing brand loyalties that may persist well into adulthood. Their purchase decisions are shaped by the convergence of limited income, high exposure to digital media and peer networks, and a growing preference for branded products that offer consistent comfort and quality.

Despite the commercial significance of this segment, relatively limited academic attention has been directed toward understanding what specifically drives innerwear purchase decisions among college-going males in the Indian context. This study addresses that gap by empirically investigating the buying behaviour of 147 male college students in Tamil Nadu toward men's innerwear, using a structured primary data instrument and two statistical tools — simple percentage analysis and ranking analysis.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Although the branded men's innerwear market in India is growing rapidly, there is insufficient academic research specifically examining what drives purchase decisions among college students in Tamil Nadu. College students are a price-sensitive, brand-aware, and digitally connected consumer group whose innerwear buying patterns differ meaningfully from those of employed adult consumers. Key questions remain unanswered: Which product attributes matter most? Does brand image drive purchase or do functional attributes dominate? Is online or offline retail the preferred channel? What triggers brand switching? This study investigates these questions using empirical primary data from 147 respondents.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is confined to male college students in Tamil Nadu and covers the men's innerwear product category with reference to brands including Jockey, Lux Cozi, Dollar, Rupa, VIP/Frenchie, Macho, Amul Macho, Dixcy Scott, and

Peter England. The study examines product attributes, purchase patterns, brand preference, satisfaction levels, and switching behaviour. Findings are applicable to the defined study population and are not intended for generalisation to other demographic groups or geographies.

OBJECTIVES

- To identify the key factors influencing the buying behaviour of men's innerwear among college students.
- To examine the influence of product attributes such as comfort, quality, fit, and durability on purchase decisions.
- To analyse the impact of price and brand perception on the buying behaviour of college students.
- To study the relationship between customer satisfaction and brand preference in the men's innerwear market.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- **Research Design:** Descriptive Research
- **Area of the Study:** Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu
- **Sampling Size:** 147 respondents
- **Sampling Method:** Convenience Sampling
- **Sources of Data:** Primary data (structured questionnaire, 29 questions) and secondary data
- **Data Analysis Tools:** Simple Percentage Analysis and Ranking Analysis

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Brand Preference and Comfort in Indian Apparel (Bhatt & Bhatt, 2012) — This study found that quality and comfort are the two most dominant purchase determinants in Indian branded apparel, ahead of price and brand image. The study confirmed that brand preference among Indian youth is significantly shaped by direct product experience rather than advertising, consistent with the present study's ranking placing comfort first.

2. Brand Preference of Innerwear Among Urban Indian Consumers (Mohan & Sharma, 2014) — Conducted in Indian urban markets, this study found that Jockey commands the highest brand recall among young male consumers. Comfort was rated as the most influential purchase factor by 68 per cent of respondents, directly mirroring the 86.4 per cent agreement rate for comfort found in the present study.

3. Price Sensitivity of Indian Consumers (Kothari & Mainkar, 2016) — This empirical study identified the ₹200–₹400 price band as the optimal price point for penetrating the young adult innerwear market. This is directly validated by the present study where 42.9 per cent of respondents preferred the ₹200–₹400 range — the largest single category.

4. Retail Shopping Motives of Indian Youth (Kaur & Singh, 2007) — This study identified peer influence and social acceptance as significant motivators in apparel purchase decisions. The present study's finding that 46.3 per cent rejected peer influence for innerwear reveals the private nature of this product category.

5. Consumer Buying Behaviour Towards Branded Innerwear in Coimbatore (Subhashini & Vidhyalakshmi, 2017) — This Coimbatore-based study found that male consumers in the 18–25 age group prefer branded innerwear for consistent fabric quality and fit. Online platforms were identified as an emerging purchase channel — a trend the present study confirms as now the leading channel at 33.3 per cent.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Simple Percentage Analysis

Table 1

Age of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
17–19 years	34	23.1	23.1	23.1
20–21 years	57	38.8	38.8	61.9

22–23 years	40	27.2	27.2	89.1
Above 23 years	16	10.9	10.9	100.0
Total	147	100.0	100.0	

a. Source: Primary Data

Table 2
Monthly Allowance / Income

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Below ₹5,000	48	32.7	32.7	32.7
₹5,000–₹10,000	47	32.0	32.0	64.6
₹10,001–₹20,000	33	22.4	22.4	87.1
Above ₹20,000	19	12.9	12.9	100.0
Total	147	100.0	100.0	

a. Source: Primary Data

Table 3
Preferred Purchase Location

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Online Platform (Amazon / Flipkart)	49	33.3	33.3	33.3
Local Retail Store	46	31.3	31.3	64.6
Branded Exclusive Store	28	19.0	19.0	83.7
Supermarket / Mall	24	16.3	16.3	100.0
Total	147	100.0	100.0	

a. Source: Primary Data

Table 4
Preferred Price Range per Piece (₹)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
₹200–₹400	63	42.9	42.9	42.9
Below ₹200	35	23.8	23.8	66.7

₹400–₹600	32	21.8	21.8	88.4
Above ₹600	17	11.6	11.6	100.0
Total	147	100.0	100.0	

a. Source: Primary Data

Table 5
Brand Most Frequently Purchased

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Jockey	44	29.9	29.9	29.9
Dollar	28	19.0	19.0	49.0
Lux Cozi	18	12.2	12.2	61.2
VIP / Frenchie	15	10.2	10.2	71.4
Dixcy Scott	10	6.8	6.8	78.2
Others	32	21.8	21.8	100.0
Total	147	100.0	100.0	

a. Source: Primary Data

Table 6
Satisfaction with Current Innerwear Brand

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Strongly Agree	29	19.7	19.7	19.7
Agree	60	40.8	40.8	60.5
Neutral	37	25.2	25.2	85.7
Disagree	18	12.2	12.2	97.9
Strongly Disagree	3	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	147	100.0	100.0	

a. Source: Primary Data

Table 7

Previous Brand Switching Behaviour

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Yes	59	40.1	40.1	40.1
No	88	59.9	59.9	100.0
Total	147	100.0	100.0	

a. Source: Primary Data

Table 8

Primary Reason for Brand Switching (n = 59 switchers)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Price Difference	25	42.4	42.4	42.4
Better Quality Elsewhere	20	33.9	33.9	76.3
Poor Comfort / Fit	12	20.3	20.3	96.6
Brand Unavailability	2	3.4	3.4	100.0
Total	59	100.0	100.0	

a. Source: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION

The frequency output reveals that the dominant age group is 20–21 years (38.8%), and a cumulative 64.7% of respondents receive a monthly allowance up to ₹10,000, confirming the price-sensitive nature of this segment. Online platforms lead purchase channel preference at 33.3% followed closely by local retail stores at 31.3%. The ₹200–₹400 price band commands the highest single-category preference at 42.9%, with cumulative low-price preference (below ₹400) accounting for 66.7% of respondents. Jockey leads brand preference at 29.9% with a substantial gap over nearest rival Dollar at 19.0%. Overall satisfaction is positive with 60.5% agreeing or strongly agreeing; however, 40.1% have previously switched brands, with price difference as the primary trigger at 42.4% of switchers.

4.2 Ranking Analysis

Ranking analysis was conducted to determine the relative importance of five key purchase factors — Comfort, Fit & Size, Quality, Price, and Brand Image. Respondents assigned ranks from 1 (most important) to 5 (least important). Mean rank scores were computed; a lower mean score indicates greater importance.

Table 9
Rank Frequency Distribution – Purchase Factors

Factor	Rank Assigned					Total
	1 (Most Imp.)	2	3	4	5 (Least Imp.)	
Comfort	52	51	13	18	13	147
Fit & Size	37	15	31	32	32	147
Quality	24	28	31	38	26	147
Price	20	30	34	30	33	147
Brand Image	14	23	38	29	43	147

a. Source: Primary Data

Table 10
Descriptive Statistics – Purchase Factor Rankings (Mean Rank Score)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Rank
Comfort	147	2.24	.985	1	5	1
Fit & Size	147	3.05	1.421	1	5	2
Quality	147	3.10	1.312	1	5	3
Price	147	3.18	1.389	1	5	4
Brand Image	147	3.44	1.276	1	5	5
Valid N (listwise)	147					

a. Lower Mean Score = Higher Importance. Source: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION

The SPSS descriptive statistics output confirms that Comfort is the most important purchase factor with the lowest mean rank score of 2.24 (Std. Deviation = .985), recording the highest first-rank frequency at 52 out of 147 respondents. Fit & Size ranks second with a mean of 3.05, followed closely by Quality (mean = 3.10) and Price (mean = 3.18) — whose near-identical means suggest near-equal importance in the purchase calculus of college students. Brand Image ranks last with a mean of 3.44 and only 14 first-rank assignments (9.5%), confirming that extrinsic brand cues are subordinate to functional product attributes in this segment's decision-making process.

FINDINGS

- The majority of respondents (38.8%) are in the 20–21 years age group and 64.7% receive a monthly allowance up to ₹10,000, confirming the price-sensitive profile of the college student innerwear consumer.
- Online platforms (33.3%) have emerged as the single most preferred purchase channel, marginally ahead of local retail stores (31.3%), indicating the growing dominance of e-commerce in this segment.
- The ₹200–₹400 price range is preferred by 42.9% of respondents, with a further 23.8% preferring below ₹200, confirming that 66.7% of respondents are concentrated in the budget-to-mid-market segment.

- Jockey is the most frequently purchased brand at 29.9%, followed by Dollar (19.0%) and Lux Cozi (12.2%), demonstrating strong brand equity for Jockey despite its premium price positioning.
- Comfort ranks as the most important purchase factor (Mean = 2.24, Std. Deviation = .985), recording the highest first-rank frequency of 52 respondents (35.4%), establishing it as the dominant driver of innerwear purchase decisions.
- Fit & Size ranks second (Mean = 3.05) and Quality third (Mean = 3.10), confirming that functional product attributes collectively outweigh extrinsic cues in purchase decision-making.
- Brand Image ranks last (Mean = 3.44, 9.5% first-rank assignments), indicating that brand recognition alone is insufficient to drive purchase decisions in this segment.
- Overall satisfaction is broadly positive with 60.5% agreeing or strongly agreeing; however, 55.1% indicated willingness to switch for better value, confirming that satisfaction does not translate into deeply entrenched loyalty.
- 40.1% of respondents have previously switched brands — price difference is the primary trigger (42.4% of switchers), followed by better quality elsewhere (33.9%) and poor comfort or fit (20.3%).

SUGGESTIONS

- Innerwear brands should centre product development and communication for the college student segment on comfort and fit, the two highest-ranked purchase factors. Detailed fabric-quality descriptors on e-commerce listings can meaningfully influence purchase decisions.
- Mid-market brands competing in the ₹200–₹400 segment should invest in quality perception building through fabric composition labelling, wash durability guarantees, and structured sizing charts.
- Given that online platforms are now the most preferred purchase channel, brands should ensure optimised product listings with accurate sizing guides and incentivised customer review programmes.
- Premium brands like Jockey should consider developing entry-level sub-ranges in the ₹200–₹400 band to capture price-sensitive college students who are already brand-aware.
- Since price difference is the primary brand-switching trigger, brands should prioritise pricing consistency and transparent value-for-money communication rather than relying solely on promotional discounting.

CONCLUSION

This study has empirically examined the buying behaviour of male college students in Tamil Nadu toward men's innerwear, using primary survey data from 147 respondents and two analytical tools — simple percentage analysis and ranking analysis. The SPSS output confirms that college student innerwear purchase decisions are fundamentally driven by intrinsic product attributes, with comfort ranked as the most critical factor (Mean = 2.24), followed by fit and size, quality, price, and brand image in that order. Brands competing for this segment cannot rely on brand image or advertising alone; consistent product performance on comfort and fit is the non-negotiable foundation of brand preference.

The study reveals a significant structural shift in purchase channel preferences — online platforms now lead over local retail stores — confirming that e-commerce readiness is an essential competitive requirement. Brand loyalty in this segment is functional rather than deeply attitudinal: 55.1% of respondents would switch for better value and 40.1% have already done so, with price difference as the primary trigger. Brands that deliver consistent comfort and fit within accessible price points, while maintaining strong presence across digital and physical retail channels, are best positioned to capture and retain the college student innerwear consumer in Tamil Nadu.

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