

A Review Paper on Identification of Different Types of Indian Luxury Customers in the Apparel Sector with respect to Consumer Behaviour.

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Abstract

India is on the fast-track to become one of the biggest luxury markets in the world. A lot of global luxury brands have entered India in the last 15 years. India is a large country with a lot of diversity. To distinguish themselves in the ever-expanding luxury customer base, luxury brands need to apply branding strategies specific to the Indian luxury consumer. A luxury brand cannot sustain itself by just applying its global, culture-neutral brand strategies in India. Thus, knowing, differentiating and segregating its consumer base becomes an important exercise for the brands to have successful marketing campaigns. This paper reviews the various consumer luxury segments studied and discovered across the globe and especially in India. The paper also discusses the various marketing strategies adopted by the luxury companies in India.

Keywords: review, luxury, segmentation, Indian, consumers

Introduction

The culture of luxury has always been prominent in India and it displays an enormous potential for growth. India is poised to become world's fifth largest luxury market by 2025 (APLF, 2011). According to this report, nine million households will be a target for luxury consumption by 2020. Though global brands spot India as the preferred location to expand, an important factor that need to take into account is that India is a complex market with an unstable consumption nature. The early entrants who did not tailor make their offerings according to

Indian needs faced hurdles in conquering the market (Jain, Pingle, & Daswani, 2012). Thus, the need for profiling and segmenting consumers becomes of paramount importance.

Several researches have pointed out the importance of consumer segmentation in brand and marketing communication. It was pointed out in one of the earlier studies that it is much easier to communicate and market your product to the consumer if the marketer is well-informed about the consumer's lifestyle (Hornik, 1989). Another study also emphasised the importance of knowing the consumer lifestyle characteristics for a better marketing and brand strategy (Chiagouris, 1991).

Discussion:

Segmentation of luxury consumers across the globe

Dubois & Duquesne (1993) suggested that the consumer market is divided into two major segments – individuals for whom luxury products act as a standard for excellence and individuals for whom luxury brands act as a social status symbol.

Vigneron & Johnson (2004) segmented luxury consumers according to how consumers perceive price and luxury. *Veblenian consumers* are individuals who attach a lot of importance to the price of the product as an indicator of status. The main motive of these type of consumers is to impress others. *Snob consumers* avoid popular brands as they want to differentiate themselves from others. They perceive price as a symbol for exclusivity. *Bandwagon consumers* place a lot of importance on the effect they make on others while consuming luxury brands. This type of consumer pays less importance to price as an indicator of prestige. *Hedonist consumers* place importance to their own thoughts and feelings and less importance to price as an indicator of prestige. *Perfectionist consumers* generally rely on their own perception of the product's quality, but they also may use price as a further indicator of quality.

Dubois & Laurent (2005) did an empirical study across 20 countries and distinguished the luxury consumers into 3 segments according to their access to luxury brands. *Affluent people* have unlimited access to luxury brands because of their wealth. This group considers buying luxury as a way of life. *Excluded people* have no access to luxury brands due to paucity of funds. This group does not think about owning luxury goods. *Excursionists* are the rising middle class who save money to buy luxury brands, thus having access to these luxury brands intermittently.

However, it was seen that most of the luxury consumers were excursionists, traditional segmentation methods using income as the main segmentation variable was no longer sufficient (Hudders, Pandelaere, & Vyncke, 2013).

In the U.S, a study was conducted by Gardyn (2002) where he segmented the customers according to what luxury meant to them. The *functional group* bought luxury for its superior quality and functionality. The *reward group* bought luxury goods for status signalling. The *indulgence group* bought luxury for the emotional benefits.

Dubois, Czellar & Laurent (2005) segmented consumers according to their attitude towards luxury goods. The *elitists* believe that luxury is meant for only a 'happy few' who have the wealth to afford these brands and the class to fully appreciate them. The *democrats* believe that luxury can be attained by many people. The *distance* segment believe that luxury is a different world and they do not belong in it.

Kapferer (2008) distinguished the customer segments according to the relative importance they attached to each luxury brand characteristic.

The *first segment* attached importance to the beauty and excellence of the product. It gave importance to the uniqueness of the product. E.g. consumers who appreciated and bought a Rolls Royce. The *second segment* lays more emphasis on creativity and sensuality. Case in point- Gucci. The *third segment* prioritises the classic value of a product and pays importance to its beauty and 'magic value'. E.g Louis Vuitton. The *fourth segment* has uniqueness and exclusivity of the product as its most important components. E.g. Chivas.

In another study by Husic & Cicic (2009), consumers were divided into the following segments. *Snob consumers* try to find exclusivity everywhere. *Aristocratic consumers* desire to associate with group who regularly use that brand and *Bandwagoners* or individuals with new money want to imitate others.

Even though snob and bandwagoners buy luxury for apparently opposite reasons, their basic motivation is essentially the same: whether through differentiation and group affiliation, they want to enhance their self-image (Husic & Cicic, 2009).

Ngai & Cho (2012) studied the young luxury consumers in China and segmented the young Chinese consumer in the following categories. *The overseas pack* see themselves as having a high knowledge of luxury brands. They have a quality-conscious mind with clear personal preferences in brands. They are not particularly price conscious and see themselves as trend-setters. These individuals can be described as international. They have studied or worked overseas and are keen on international fashion trends.

The self-established cool are the individuals who are generally younger and most of them are still attending universities. While they have a small purchasing power of their own, they are able to afford luxury because of their parents' wealth. Their priorities are setting trends and being unique. They do not focus too much on the quality of the product. They have a passion for luxury products and are in the quest to discover the 'next cool thing'. They believe in setting trends through self-expression.

The luxury followers are individuals are reluctant to adopt a trend unless it has been accepted by the majority. They are less knowledgeable about, and hence less adventurous in choosing luxury products. Thus, they are the most responsive towards the opinions of celebrities and their peers towards luxury brands. These individuals are more responsive towards sales promotions, such as discounts or tester products etc. They are content as long as the luxury products they're buying are accepted and acknowledged by the community.

The spirituals are individuals who are highly quality conscious and seem less keen on being trendsetters. They would also be willing on spending on luxury products that last longer to promote sustainable luxury. They are cautious in their purchases and their impulsiveness is also relatively low as compared to the other groups.

Weidmann et al. (2009) used a combination of both attitudinal items and buying motives to segment consumers as follows. *Materialists* are individuals who attach most importance to the materialistic aspect of luxury. i.e. they consider luxury goods as a way of expressing status. Quality of the product and self-identity aspects are of less important for this group. *Rational functionalists* prioritise uniqueness and quality of the luxury brands. They consider owning luxury brands as a part of their self-identity. This group differentiates itself from others by purchasing exclusive luxury products. For the *extravagant prestige seekers*, social value is the biggest take-away of luxury. They consider owning luxury items as a symbol of being part of an elite group. This group is more concerned about the opinion of their peers. *Introvert hedonists* buy luxury goods for the pleasure of owning a luxury good. This group believes that consuming luxury products improves the quality of life.

Hudders, Pandelaere, & Vyncke (2013) segmented the luxury consumers to understand their purchase behaviour in emerging countries like China and India where the number of high net-worth individuals (HNIs) have been growing over the past few years. They segmented the luxury consumers using the 4 P's of marketing. *Patricians* are the individuals are super-rich and they spend their money on inconspicuously branded products. They look for subtlety and do not indulge in explicit signalling. *Parvenus* are the nouveau rich and they buy expensive luxury products to show that they have arrived. They use luxury brands for explicit signalling. *Poseurs* buy fake luxury products to demonstrate affinity towards the two groups above. They also use these brands for explicit signalling. *Proletarians* are the individuals who are left out in the socio-economic status. They do not buy luxury goods at all.

Hudders, Pandelaere, & Vyncke (2013) differentiated their respondents according to their perception of the luxury brands based on the three facets of luxury brand meaning. *The impressive group (functional)* perceived luxury brands as durable brands of high craftsmanship which also offered a lot of comfort. This group associated luxury brands with high-quality, innovation, sophistication and elegance. *The expressive segment* perceives luxury brands as rare and unique brands that were inaccessible and very expensive. *The mixed segment (emotional)* thinks that luxury brands should be exclusive and should have high quality. They have an emotional reaction to luxury and associate luxury with inner happiness.

The current market features two main segments of millionaires: "New money" or the "Nouveau Riche" who constitute to about 7.5 million people in the world and "Old Money" who are around 2.5 million people (BCG, 2017). Moving beyond this simple segmentation, luxury segment can be classified into eight segments. *The Absolute Luxurers* are elegant connoisseurs who have grown up in luxury. They represent the "Happy Few". There are around 2 million Absolute luxurers in the world and they spend around 20,000 Euros a year. *The Megacitiers* live in New York City, London, Paris, Rio or Shanghai and they spend around 20,000 Euros a year. They are generally aged between 25 and 35 and there are 2 million of them in the world.

The Social wearers have a significant presence in the emerging markets like China & India. They spend around 15,000 Euros a year and there must be around 700,000 Social wearers around the world. These people continuously seek an emotional connection with the brand and make for the most loyal customers. Quality, sustainability and an excellent make are essential conditions for them in a luxury brand. **Experiencers** spend around 12,000 Euros per year. They are discreet and sophisticated and they experience happiness in little moments. They are generally in the age group 45 – 50.

Little Princes are aged 18-25, this generation of young consumers comprises of children who were born with a silver spoon and are used to playing with designer toys. This generation is impulsive, have a daring aesthetic and they long for niche products and experiences. There are around 1.5 million Little Princes and they spend around 10,000 Euros a year. **Fashionistas** are mostly women, aged 35-40, who spend around 8000 Euros a year. There are 3 million Fashionistas in the world right now. These women are known to splurge on designer bags, shoes and clothes. Sometimes, these women would forego a holiday or a nice meal at a restaurant to buy something they desire.

Status Seekers are represented by 2 million consumers who spend 8000 Euros yearly. This category mainly comes from Asia, some of them coming from Russia and Italy too. This category doesn't like experimenting. They follow well-established brands and the logo of their brands must be clearly visible. Approval of others is essential for them. **Classpirational** is a set of consumers is unsophisticated in terms of luxury. This set of consumers consider luxury in terms of quality and trusted brands. Traditionally, they are followers who likes to play it safe. For them, value-for-money for the luxury brands they're buying is a key driver. They stick to a basic style.

According to Agility research and strategy (2017), the affluent luxury consumer can be segmented as such - **The Exclusivity seeker** has a considerable disposable income and can spend liberally across multiple luxury categories. These consumers spend on fashion and are especially likely to spend on travel too. **The indulgent traveller** predominantly buys luxury goods at airports. This group looks at luxury to elevate their social status. **The virtual shopper** does his/her research and has no problems making their luxury purchases online. They value luxury goods for their uniqueness and high quality. **The luxury bargain hunter** also goes online to search for a good bargain and prefers to buy luxury products tax free. They see luxury as desirable, but only when it comes at a right price.

According to Ciornea et al. (2012), the luxury consumer in Romania can be segmented as such - **The excursionists** do not buy the big-ticket luxury items like clothing or bags but instead spends on luxury cosmetics or perfumes. Thus, this group prefers affordable luxury. This group had an average family income of around 4000 lei (almost Rs. 60,000). Thus, though this group has a desire for luxury but very rarely is this a financial possibility. **The hedonic consumers** enjoy both luxury goods and services. This group could enjoy luxury due to their family's financial situation or by sacrificing other things.

The materialist consumers spend more on the more 'visible' luxury products. For this group, appearances are more important. *The well-dressed consumers* like to spend on luxury items which makes them look and feel good. These customers spend the maximum on fashion, cosmetics and perfumes. *The adventurous consumers* have a more active lifestyle and they give more importance to health and beauty.

Segmentation of luxury consumers in India

The moodie report (2006) studied the nascent Indian luxury market across metropolitan cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Bangalore and segmented the consumers as follows - *The Arrived* are the most affluent group which comprises of 49% of the target audience of luxury brands. *The Actualised Ascetic* is the smallest group (15% of the target audience) and it comprises largely of industrialists, self-made men or professionals. *The Climbers* wants to buy luxury brands to project a certain image that will gain them acceptance amongst their peers or higher-ups in society. They comprise of 19% of the target universe for luxury brands. *The Laggards* might or might not buy luxury goods, although they are targeted by luxury brands. This group remains nonchalant and non-committal about buying luxury. This group is 17% of the target consumer base.

Chadha & husband (2006) identified four segments of potential luxury shoppers in India - *India's old money* consist of the industrial dynasties for whom luxury was a way of life. *New-money entrepreneurs* believe in using luxury as a symbol of status. *Gold collars of the corporate world* believe in value-driven luxury. They have the money but also believe in savings and have a frugal Gandhian mindset. *The BPO generation* believe in making money and spending it immediately.

Banerjee & Mishra (2015) segmented the Indian luxury consumers as such - *Young & secure group* are the young and energetic consumers who consider themselves as more self-reliant than others. This group is active in sports and loves travelling. This group likes following the latest trends. The *aware* group is very aware of itself and its surroundings. They are constantly working on self-improvement; they want to eat the right food and exercise regularly. They are also responsible citizens of the country who are interested in politics and regularly vote too. The *quiet and introvert* type of respondent is usually involved in individual activities and prefer to stay in their own individual circle. The *family-oriented* type of customers enjoy spending time with their family. These customers are proud of their achievements. They feel strong and can cope with everyday life. This type of consumer likes shopping at the mall.

Srivastava, Bhanot, & Srinivasan (2016) did a research study in a city in India (Mumbai) and classified consumers into three behavioral segments using cluster analysis. *Snob customer* buys luxury goods just for their snob value, i.e. this customer feels superior on buying luxury products. This segment looks for high quality and unique luxury products. *Prestige customer* buys luxury for its *prestige value*, i.e. it makes them feel at par with their peers after buying the luxury product. This segment buys traditional luxury products that have a high prestige value. The *price-value customer* is price-conscious. This segment looks for deals and discounts in their luxury products as they want value for money.

Gupta (2017) identifies the following type of consumers in India - *Old money consumer (The original maharajas and nawabs)* is the group born with a silver spoon, this group has inherited wealth. They are elite and sophisticated and have carried on with their conspicuous consumption of luxury products even post-independence. Luxury is a way of life for this group. This group wants exclusivity and customisation in their luxury products. *New money (New age maharaja) group* consists of the industrialists created after India's industrialization phase of the 1960s. This group has earned their wealth on their own and are want value from the products they buy.

The returning non-resident Indian (NRI) is the group who is well-educated and tech-savvy and is used to a certain standard of living. Luxury business has greatly benefitted from the fact that a lot of NRIs are coming back and settling in India. This group likes to invest in luxury real estate, home décor as well as fashion and food. *The corporate professional* consists of the management graduate, the DINK (double income, no kids), YUUMY (young urban upwardly mobile) and the HENRY (high-income not rich yet). This group shops luxury in every aspect of life. They dress well, eat and drink well and their philosophy is – you live only once. *The bargain hunters* consist of the group of people who look for a good bargain for luxury products during sales etc. They can end up falling in a 'value trap' i.e. can make impulsive decisions for a seemingly good deal. This group generally buys entry-level luxury products.

<i>Serial no.</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Country/ Region of Research</i>	<i>Consumer Segments</i>
1.	Dubois & Duquesne (1993)	Europe (UK, France, Germany, Italy & Spain)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals for whom luxury acts as a standard for excellence • Individuals for whom luxury acts as a status symbol
2.	Vigneron & Johnson (2004)	USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veblenian consumers: attach importance to the price of product • Snob consumers: perceive price as a symbol for exclusivity • Bandwagon consumers: attach importance on the effect they make on others while consuming luxury • Hedonist consumers: attach importance to their own thoughts and feelings while purchasing luxury • Perfectionist consumers: rely on their own perception of luxury while purchasing it
3.	Dubois & Laurent (2005)	Europe (UK, France, Germany, Italy & Spain)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affluent people: have unlimited access to luxury • Excluded people: have no access to luxury • Excursionists: save money to buy luxury brands
4.	Gardyn (2002)	USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional group: bought luxury for its superior quality • Rewards group: bought luxury for status signaling • Indulgence group: bought luxury for the emotional benefits
5.	Dubois, Czellar & Laurent (2005)	Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elitists: believe that luxury is meant for only a ‘happy few’ • Democrats: believe that luxury can be attained by many people • Distance: believe that luxury is a different world which they’re not a part of

6.	(The moodie report, 2006)	India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Arrived: most affluent group. • The Actualised Ascetic: comprises largely of industrialists, self-made men or professionals • The Climbers: This group wants buy luxury brands for status • The Laggards: This group might or might not buy luxury goods, although they are targeted by luxury brands. This group remains nonchalant
7.	Chadha & husband (2006)	India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India’s old money: consist of industrial dynasties for whom luxury is a way of life • New-money entrepreneurs: use luxury as a status symbol • Gold collars of the corporate world: believes in value-driven luxury • The BPO generation: believes in making money and spending it immediately.
8.	Kapferer (2008)	UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first segment attached importance to beauty and excellence of the <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ product • The second segment lays more emphasis on creativity and uniqueness • The third segment prioritizes the classic value of the product • The fourth segment prioritizes the uniqueness and exclusivity of the product
9.	Husic & Cacic (2009)	Bosnia and Herzegovina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snob: prioritize exclusivity of the luxury product • Aristocracy: associate with people who regularly use that luxury brand • Bandwagoners: are the ones with the new money who imitate the snob/aristocracy group
10.	Ngai & Cho (2012)	China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overseas pack: have high knowledge of luxury brands and have clear preferences • The self-established cool: want to set trends and look for unique products • The luxury followers: follow trends accepted by majority

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The spirituals: they are highly quality and environment conscious • Materialists: use luxury as a way of expressing status • Rational functionalists: prioritize uniqueness and quality of luxury brands • Extravagant prestige seekers: social value is the biggest take-away of luxury • Introvert hedonists: buy luxury goods for the pleasure of owning a luxury good
11.	Han et al. (2010)	USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patricians: super-rich individuals who spend their money on inconspicuous luxury • Parvenus: are the nouveau rich who buy luxury products as a status symbol • Poseurs: are those who buy fake luxury products for explicit signaling • Proletarians: are those left out of the socio-economic status.
12.	Hudders, Pandelaere, & Vyncke (2013)	Belgium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impressive group: perceive luxury brands as durable brands of high craftsmanship, innovation, sophistication and elegance • The expressive segment: perceive luxury brands as rare and unique brands that are inaccessible and expensive • The mixed segment: think that luxury brand should be exclusive and have high quality.
13.	Branchini & Altagama (2016)	Global (major cities of the world like New York, Paris, Tokyo, Hong Kong etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The absolute luxurers: represent the ‘happy few’ with a lot of wealth • The megacitiers: lives in the major cities across the globe and spends a lot on luxury • The social wearers: seek an emotional connection with the brand and make for loyal customers • Experiencers: are discreet and sophisticated and they experience happiness in little moments • Little princes: young customers who are impulsive in their buying are born with a simple spoon • Fashionistas: are mostly women who splurge on designer bags, shoes and clothes

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status seekers: this category usually comes from Asia, don't like experimenting and seek approval of others • Classpirational: like to play it safe and look for value-for-money luxury <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ brands
14.	Agility research and strategy (2017),	Global	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The exclusivity seeker: have a considerable disposable income and can spend liberally • The indulgent traveler: buys luxury goods at airports and buy luxury to elevate their social status • The virtual shopper: have no qualms in making their luxury purchases online • The luxury bargain hunter: goes online to search for a good bargain and prefers to buy luxury tax-free • The excursionists: spends on small-ticket items like cosmetics or perfumes • The hedonic consumers: enjoys both luxury goods and services • The materialist consumers: spends on more 'visible' luxury products • The well-dressed consumers: spends more on items which make them look good • The adventurous consumers: give more importance to health and beauty
15.	Banerjee & Mishra (Banerjee & Mishra, 2015)	India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young and secure: they are more independent and self-reliant and can afford luxury goods by themselves • Aware: they are constantly working on self-improvement and are responsible in their purchases • Quiet and introvert: prefer to stay in their own circle • Family oriented: enjoy spending time with their family
16.	Srivastava, Bhanot, &	India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snob customer: buys luxury for snob value

	Srinivasan (2016)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prestige customer: buys luxury for prestige value • Price-value customer: buys luxury items which have value-for-money
17.	Gupta (2017)	India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old money consumer: aristocracy, luxury as a way of life • New money consumer: newly acquired money, luxury as a status symbol • Returning NRI: used to luxury at a global level, high standard of living • Corporate professional: have extra income at disposal, like spending on luxury • Bargain hunters: luxury as value-for-money, look for value deals

Table 1: *Luxury consumer segments*

Conclusion:

India is such a vast and diverse nation with various cultures and a fragmented consumer market (Banerjee & Mishra, 2015). It is much easier to communicate and market your product to the consumer if the marketer is well-informed about the consumer’s lifestyle. Thus, it becomes imperative that the luxury brand knows its consumer segments and applies customised marketing strategies according to the consumer segment (Hornik, 1989).

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