



## Optimizing Fashion Marketing Strategies: Understanding Consumer Behavior in Bangladesh

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### ABSTRACT

This study delves into the intricate dynamics of consumer behavior in the context of fashion apparel, focusing on t-shirts and denim pants in Bangladesh. Consumer preferences, perceptions, and purchasing decisions are explored through qualitative research methods, aiming to uncover insights crucial for marketers and retailers. The research emphasizes the significance of fashion attributes such as quality, comfort, fabric, color, and special effects in influencing consumer choices. A sample of 500 young Bangladeshi consumers participated in structured interviews, providing nuanced perspectives on their preferences and expectations. Findings highlight a strong preference for quality and comfort in both t-shirts and denim pants, with significant variations in color and fabric choices. The study underscores the evolving nature of consumer behavior influenced by globalization and digital advancements, posing challenges and opportunities for fashion marketers. By understanding these dynamics, stakeholders can optimize marketing strategies to better meet consumer demands and foster brand loyalty in a competitive marketplace.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Consumer behavior involves the intricate interplay of individuals' thoughts, emotions, actions, and their environment. Therefore, marketers must grasp the significance of products and brands to consumers, understand the steps consumers take to purchase and use them, and recognize the factors influencing shopping, purchase decisions, and consumption (Peter and Olsan, 2005). In recent years, consumer buying behavior has undergone significant transformations. Today's consumers are more informed and have unprecedented choices in how they allocate their spending. They seek products and experiences that fulfill their deepest emotional needs, presented to them through innovative and engaging methods (Solomon and Rabolt, 2007). Understanding and satisfying customers has become increasingly complex and challenging (Peter and Olsan, 2005). The advent of digital technology is not only reshaping the ways consumers shop – where, when, and how – but also reshaping their expectations and interactions with all providers, from retailers and manufacturers to governments and utilities. This rapid evolution has left many organizations struggling to adapt their business models to meet the evolving demands of consumers and harness the full potential of technology (Tungate, 2007). Clearly, the future promises further turbulence in consumer landscapes. Fashion attributes play a crucial role in marketing, serving both the interests of marketers and customers, and have long been recognized as a means to differentiate a brand from its competitors. Customers value these attributes as they form the basis for evaluating clothing and provide the desired benefits in their purchasing decisions (Easey, 2009). A product, in essence, satisfies customer needs and drives customer satisfaction, which enhances loyalty, encourages repeat purchases, raises brand awareness, reduces price sensitivity, and lowers customer acquisition costs. By consistently satisfying customers better than its competitors, a company gains a competitive advantage that leads to increased profitability in the medium and long term (Peter and Olsan, 2005). Satisfied customers also tend to be more communicative, enabling firms to better understand and meet their expectations, even if the firm's products command higher prices. Globalization, heightened competition, and rapid product turnover in the fashion retail sector create asymmetrical consumer behaviors and present significant marketing challenges for retail firms in Bangladesh (Craik, 2009). To thrive in this industry, manufacturers and retailers must develop and leverage core marketing capabilities (Peter and Olsan, 2005). This study examines the effectiveness of different psychological factors in shaping consumer perceptions of fashion attributes and analyzes buying behaviors in fashion apparel retailing. The study further examines the factors that influence fashion attributes and their effects on consumer psychology in relation to fashion apparel. The market for fashion apparel has seen significant diversification with the introduction of designer labels, store brands, customization options, advertising, and cultural influences on a global scale. By identifying and comprehending the preferences of target customers, fashion apparel manufacturers and retailers can more effectively attract and retain their desired clientele (Andrews & Pentecost, 2009). Consequently, this study aims to explore

consumer psychology and optimize fashion attributes, focusing on the perspective of Bangladesh.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

Consumer behavior in the context of fashion apparel is a multifaceted area of study that involves understanding the preferences, perceptions, and purchasing decisions of consumers. Various studies have explored different aspects of consumer behavior, focusing on attributes such as quality, comfort, fabric, color, and special effects, which significantly influence consumer choices.

### ***Quality and Consumer Satisfaction***

Quality is a critical factor in consumer satisfaction and loyalty. According to Peter and Olsan (2005), consumer behavior is influenced by the perceived quality of products, which directly impacts their satisfaction and loyalty. This finding is consistent with the work of Otieno, Harrow, and Lea-Greenwood (2005), who explored the retail experience of fashion shoppers and highlighted the importance of fit and affordability in consumer satisfaction. Similarly, Andrews and Pentecost (2009) emphasized that generational cohorts, gender, and fashion fandom significantly affect fashion expenditure, further underscoring the role of quality in consumer decision-making.

### ***Service Expectations and Retail Environment***

The retail environment and service expectations play a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior. Ma and Niehm (2006) examined the service expectations of older Generation Y customers in apparel retail settings and found that quality service is a determinant of customer satisfaction. This aligns with the research by Babin and Darden (1995), who discussed consumer self-regulation in a retail environment, indicating that a positive retail experience enhances consumer satisfaction and loyalty.

### ***Fashion Attributes and Consumer Preferences***

Fashion attributes such as comfort, fabric, and color are vital in influencing consumer choices. Solomon and Rabolt (2007) discussed the importance of these attributes in consumer behavior, noting that today's consumers seek products that meet their emotional needs. Craik (2009) also highlighted that globalization and digital advancements have transformed consumer expectations and interactions, posing challenges for retailers to adapt to these changes.

### ***Consumer Perception and Brand Loyalty***

Consumer perception towards branded garments significantly impacts purchasing decisions and brand loyalty. Mittal and Aggarwal (2012) examined consumer perception toward branded garments and found that consumers are more likely to purchase products that they perceive to be of higher quality and from well-known brands. This perception is influenced by various factors,

including advertising, personalization, and ethnic influences, as noted by Andrews and Pentecost (2009).

### ***Specialty-Size Satisfaction***

The satisfaction of specialty-size consumers is another important aspect of fashion marketing. Kind and Hathcote (2000) explored the satisfaction levels of specialty-size college females with retail outlets and apparel fit, revealing that fit and availability are critical factors in consumer satisfaction for this demographic.

### ***Globalization and Consumer Behavior***

Globalization has significantly impacted consumer behavior, leading to increased competition and rapid product turnover in the fashion retail sector. Tungate (2008) discussed how fashion brands must adapt to the changing consumer landscape by leveraging branding and marketing strategies to differentiate themselves from competitors. Easey (2009) also emphasized the importance of understanding target customer preferences to attract and retain a loyal customer base.

The literature highlights the intricate dynamics of consumer behavior in the fashion apparel industry. Quality, comfort, fabric, color, and special effects are essential attributes that influence consumer choices. The retail environment and service expectations also play a crucial role in shaping consumer satisfaction and loyalty. As globalization and digital advancements continue to transform consumer behavior, fashion marketers must adapt their strategies to meet evolving consumer demands and foster brand loyalty in a competitive marketplace.

## **METHODOLOGY**

For this research, customer satisfaction was the central focus, with a particular emphasis on individual perceptions of fashion attributes related to t-shirts and denim pants.

### ***Research Approach***

The objective of this study was to gather insights from young Bangladeshi customers regarding quality, performance, brand perception, customer service, products, and pricing. Qualitative research methods were employed to gauge customer satisfaction and expectations. Questionnaires, consisting of both structured and open-ended questions, were distributed in-store, allowing customers to express their opinions and suggestions for improvement. The survey aimed to capture customers' overall perspectives on fashion attributes.

### ***Problem Analysis***

The survey aimed to identify customer requirements, satisfaction levels regarding t-shirts and denim pants, and their expectations from fashion apparel retailers and suppliers. Questionnaires were used to explore the motivating factors behind customer expectations. Qualitative data collection methods were utilized to examine expected needs and satisfaction levels, focusing on behaviors

influencing overall purchasing decisions. Positive impacts on product quality and customer satisfaction were intended to foster customer loyalty.

### ***Question Development***

The questionnaire was designed to effectively capture essential information to understand customer behavior across segmentation variables such as gender, age, location, activities, usage frequency, and market preferences. It aimed to gather insights into the reasons for purchasing, customer expectations and requirements regarding the quality of t-shirts and denim pants, satisfaction levels with current products, expectations of retailer services, brand preferences and perceptions of brand quality, and customer loyalty. The questionnaire was structured with "tick mark" options to ensure simplicity and minimize time commitment for respondents.

### ***Data Collection and Sampling***

To investigate customer behavior, 500 interviews were conducted with adult consumers in Bangladesh. Participants ranged from 18 to 30 years old and were located in Dhaka, Gazipur, and Narshingdi. Interviews were primarily conducted at market venues, and efforts were made to include respondents from various domestic brands such as "Dorjibari, Aarong, Smartex, Richman," targeting young adults aged approximately 20-25, who constitute the primary customer base for t-shirts and denim pants.

### ***Data Analysis***

Data analysis utilized qualitative content analysis to categorize and condense respondents' extensive verbal data into meaningful categories. The process involved open coding to systematically break down, organize, and interpret the data, enabling a deeper understanding of customer perceptions and behaviors related to fashion apparel.

### ***Measurement***

A sample size of approximately 501 respondents was chosen to ensure sufficient item-to-response ratios. The respondents were predominantly male, with a significant portion being students. However, the study faced challenges in obtaining responses from employed individuals. Data was collected from eight different marketplaces: New Market, Mirpur, Bashundhara, Uttara, Savar, Joydebpur, Chowrasta, Shibpur, and Tongi.

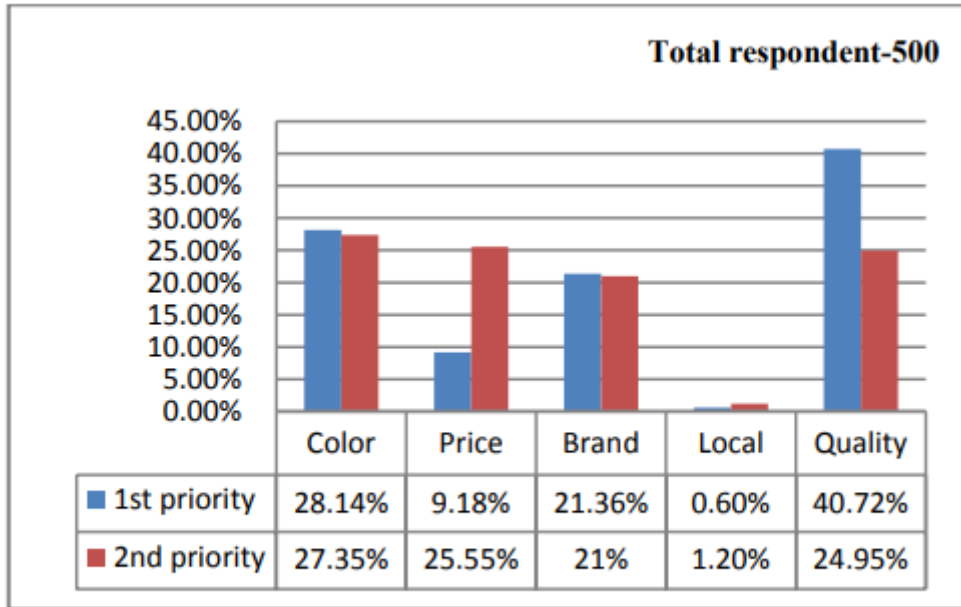
### ***Data Integration***

Data integration is essential for ensuring survey quality. By incorporating various opinions and data sources, it seeks to reduce biases and stereotypes, uphold standards, and promote fair and accurate decision-making. This process includes interviewers sharing and assessing information gathered during interviews to uncover key insights and trends.

**RESULTS & DISCUSSION**

*First & Second Priority in Purchasing t-shirt*

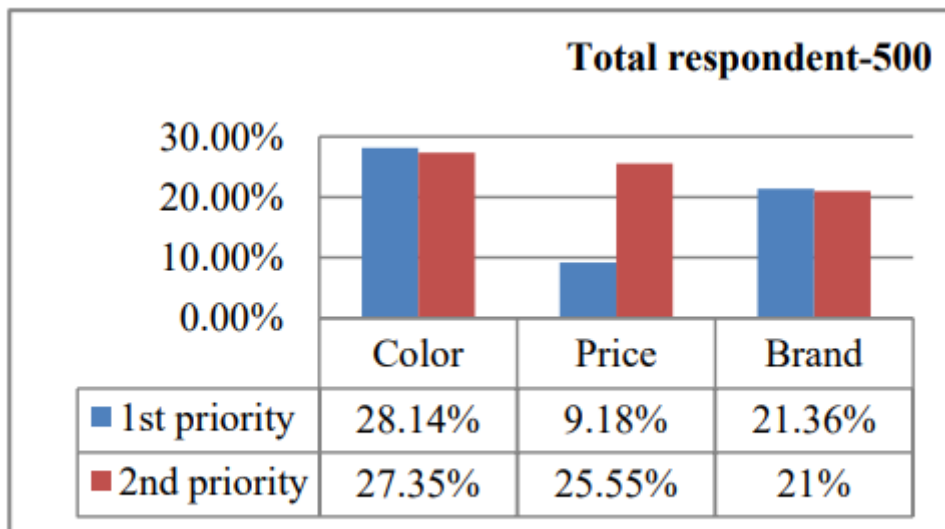
The investigation reveals that the majority of consumers prioritize the quality of t-shirts above all else, with color being their second priority. The following figure illustrates the percentage distribution for each priority category.



**Figure 1.** First & second priority in purchasing t-shirt

*In terms of quality selection for t-shirts*

The majority of customers prioritize comfort over aesthetic appearance and fitting. The following figure displays the percentage distribution for each quality priority.

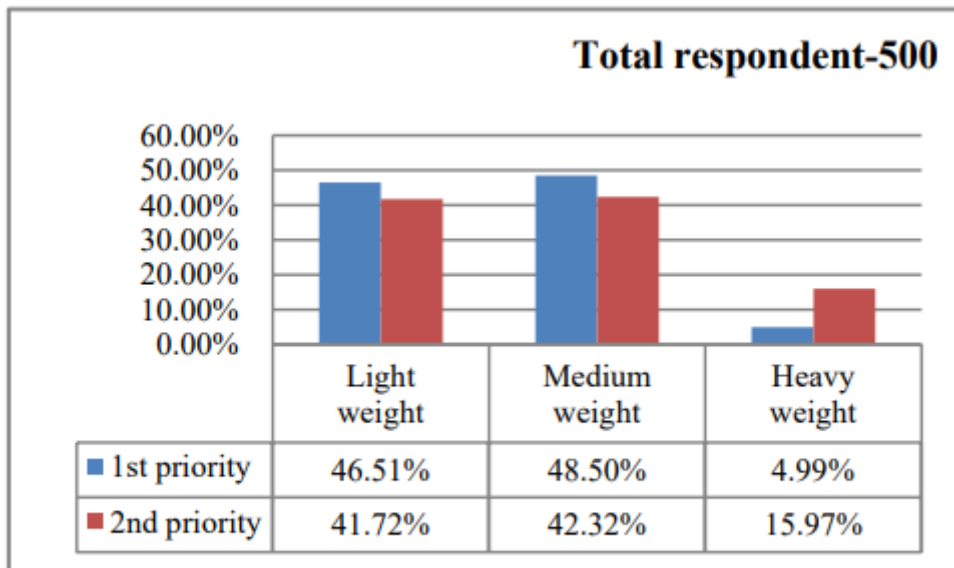


**Figure 2.** Quality selection of t-shirt

*Fabric Selection for T-Shirts*

Conducted during the summer season, the investigation reveals that most customers prefer medium and lightweight fabrics for t-shirts. Among these

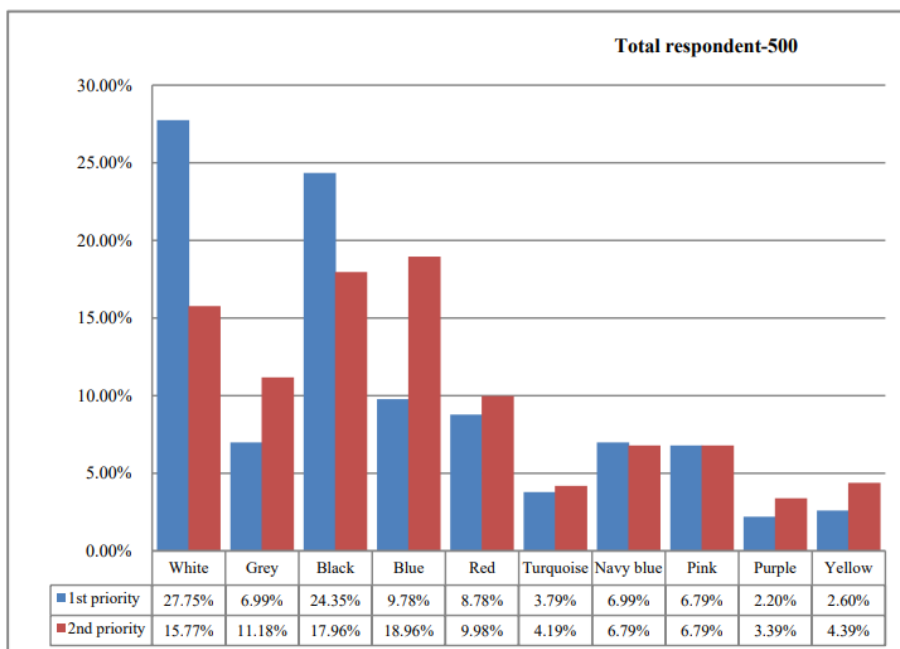
options, medium-weight fabric is the most preferred by the majority of customers. The percentage distribution of fabric preferences is illustrated in the following figure.



**Figure 3.** Fabric selection for t-shirt

**Color Selection of t-shirt**

Young customers in Bangladesh have a preference for colorful fashion clothing, particularly when it comes to t-shirts. Among the various colors available, white is the most popular choice among young customers. Blue ranks as the second most preferred color, followed by black.



**Figure 4.** Color selection for t-shirt

**Preferable Neck for t-shirt**

The investigation determined that most consumers prefer using body fabric for the preparation of t-shirt necks. The results are shown in the following figure.

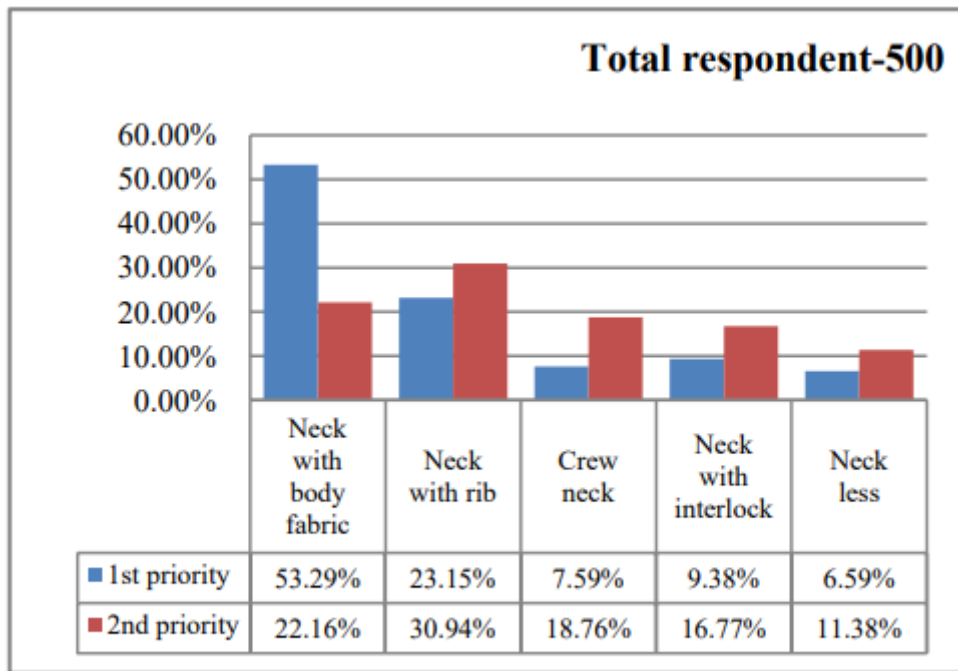


Figure 5. Preferable mark sheet for t sheet

*Special Effect Priority Level*

The study found that most young Bangladeshi customers prefer printed t-shirts with slogans. Printed t-shirts with images are the second most popular choice among them.

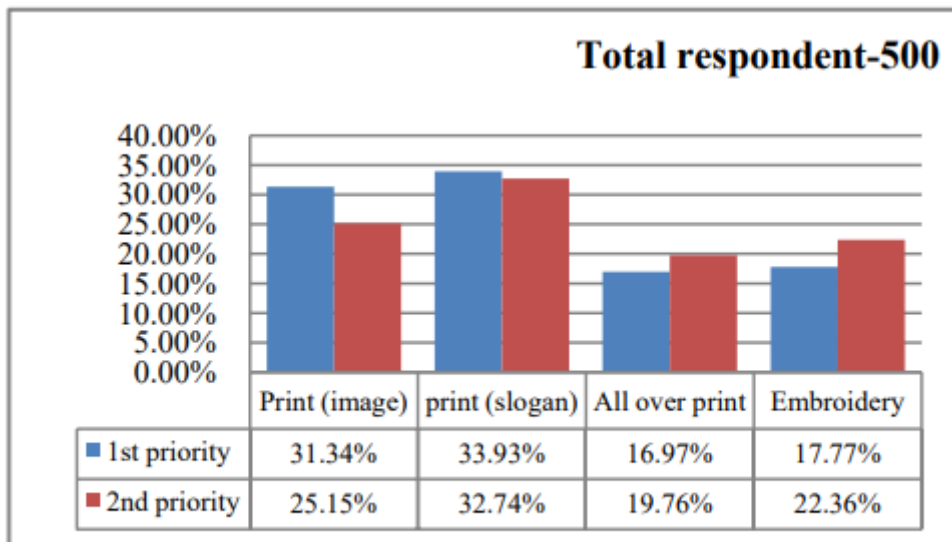
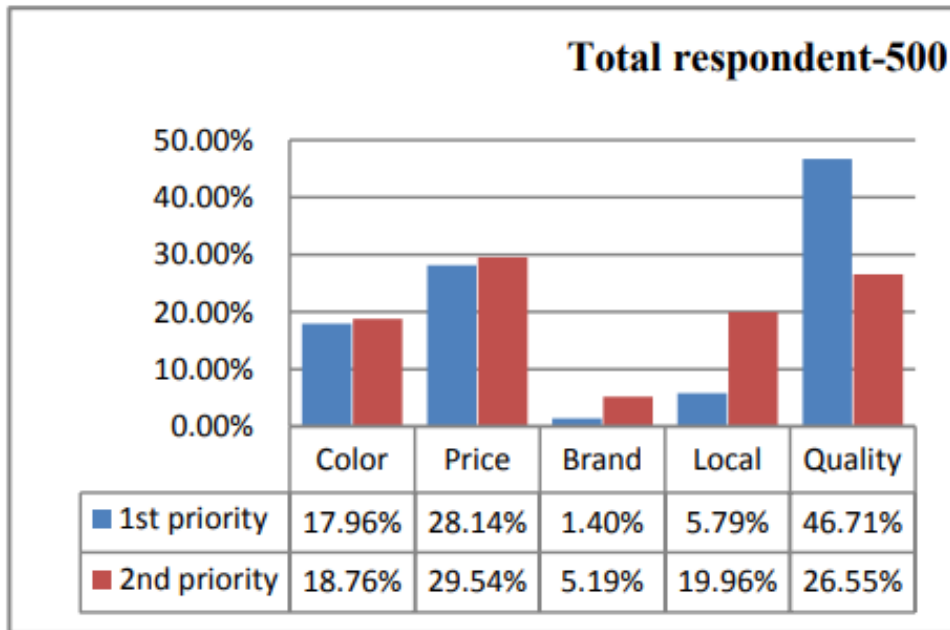


Figure 6. Special effect priority level of t-shirt

*Priority Level for Denim Pant*

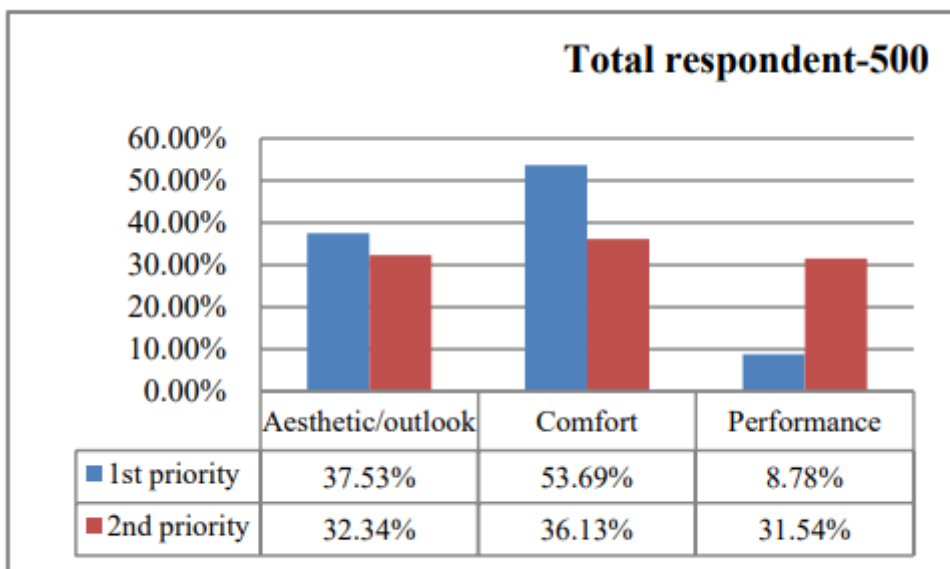
The investigation reveals that most customers prioritize the quality of denim pants above other factors. The following figure displays the priority levels for denim pants.



**Figure 7.** Priority level for denim pant

*Quality Selection for Denim Pant*

When selecting denim pants, most customers prioritize comfort over aesthetic appeal and performance quality.



**Figure 8.** Quality selection for denim pant

*Color Selection of Denim Pant*

In this investigation, the authors aim to determine the preferred colors of denim pants among young Bangladeshi customers. The majority of customers

favor light blue denim pants, followed by dark blue. Black varieties are also popular choices.

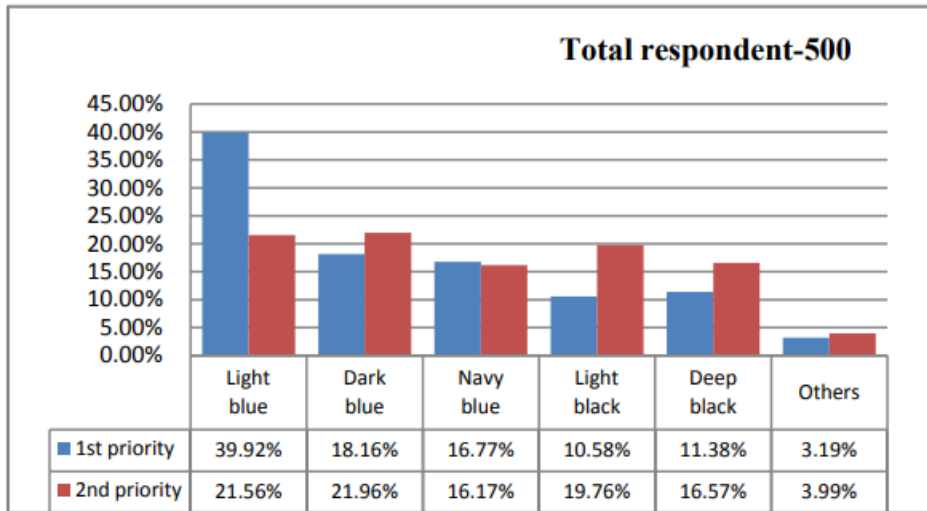


Figure 9. Color selection of denim pant

**Special Effects**

Special Effects in Denim Pants are currently trending among young Bangladeshi customers. These pants are highly favored for their unique appeal, which stems from various decorative styles and effects. Among these, wash effects are particularly preferred by most customers.

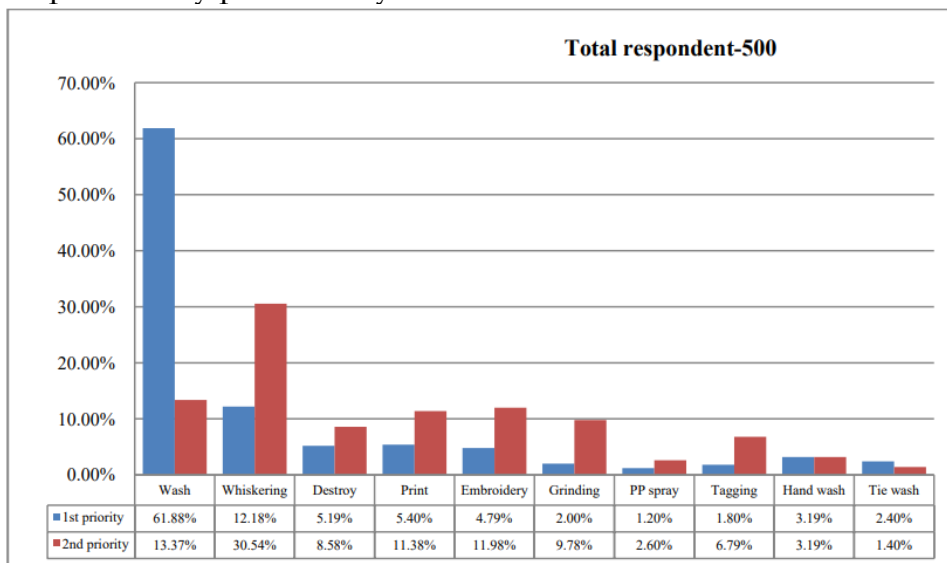
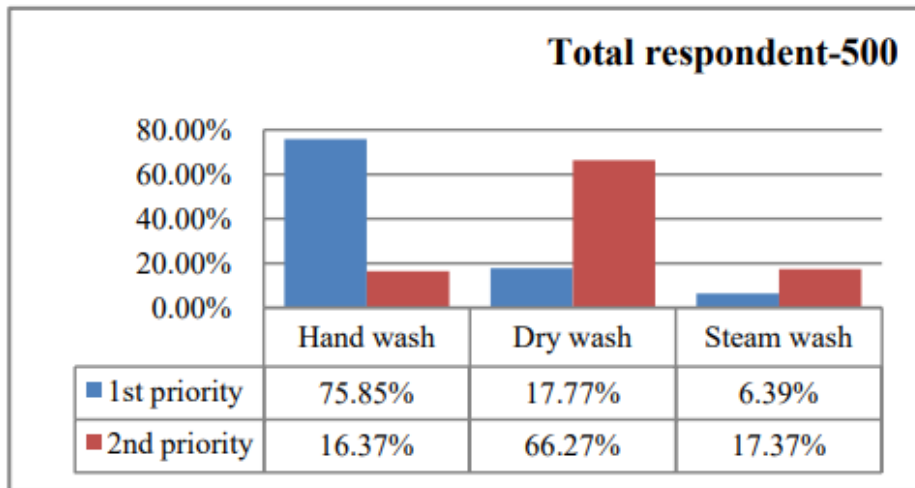


Figure 10. Selection of special effect for denim pant

**Preferable Cleaning Process**

In this investigation, it was determined that the majority of young Bangladeshi customers prefer hand wash as their first choice, followed by dry wash as their second preference.



**Figure 11.** Preferable cleaning process for denim pa

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To conclude the study on consumer behavior regarding t-shirts and denim pants in Bangladesh, the findings underscore several key insights. Firstly, quality and comfort emerge as paramount factors influencing consumer preferences across both apparel types. Consumers prioritize these attributes over others such as color and special effects, highlighting the importance of basic product satisfaction in driving purchase decisions.

Secondly, the study reveals significant variations in consumer preferences for fabric type, colors, and special effects, reflecting a diverse market landscape influenced by cultural and seasonal factors. For instance, lightweight fabrics are favored for t-shirts during the summer, while denim pants see a preference for light and dark blue hues.

Thirdly, the evolving nature of consumer behavior, shaped by globalization and digital advancements, presents challenges and opportunities for marketers in Bangladesh's fashion retail sector. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing effective marketing strategies that resonate with consumer expectations and foster brand loyalty.

In conclusion, this research provides actionable insights for fashion marketers aiming to optimize their offerings in Bangladesh. By focusing on quality, comfort, and aligning with evolving consumer preferences, brands can better meet the demands of a competitive marketplace, thereby enhancing customer satisfaction and brand loyalty.

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