

ADOPTION OF FASHION TRENDS AND ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY IN MEERUT: CHANGING LIFESTYLES UNDER GLOBALIZATION

RASHMI & YUDHVIR SINGH

Department of Economics, Meerut College, Meerut, India

ABSTRACT

Globalization can be viewed as an expansion and intensification of interconnectivities and movement of people, goods, capital, ideas and/or cultures between various countries. Globalization has resulted in the increase in availability and also knowledge about the changing fashion trends across the globe. The knowledge of fashion leads to a greater awareness and thus increasing wants as regards to fashion. Similarly, a wide array of technological advancements taking place today have exposed the common man to newer and newer technology and gadgets, which on one hand improve the quality of day to day life but also leads to a greater hunger for improved technology. People today are more aware about the international brands and in addition many indigenous brands have cropped up in the market at the disposal of the consumer. All this has lead to a significant change in the standard of living and lifestyle of an average consumer. The present study is an attempt to study the impact of globalization on lifestyle in Meerut through the chosen demographic and socio-economic variables.

KEYWORDS: Fashion Trends, Technology, Lifestyle, Globalization, Brands

INTRODUCTION

Meerut is a city in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. It is an ancient city with settlements dating back to the Indus Valley Civilization having been found in and around the area. The city lies 70 km northeast of the national capital New Delhi and 453 km northwest of the state capital Lucknow. It is the second largest city in the National Capital Region of India, the sixteenth largest metropolitan area and twenty-fifth largest city in India. Meerut is one of the industrial towns of western U. P. It is a rich agricultural area. Being in the proximity of Delhi, it is ideal for industry. It is famous for handloom works and scissors industry from older age. Meerut is home to 520 micro, small and medium scale industries. As per District Census Handbook 2011, Meerut has about 23,471 industrial units, including 15,510 small-scale units and 7922 cottage industries.

In its course of development, Meerut has tried to maintain a balance between traditional ways and modernization, and has been successful in weaving the seeds of modernity within the scaffold of its traditional framework. This has not been a smooth sail, as there were clashes and disagreements which worked as the harbinger of the new social and economic evolution. Today, Meerut is the home to some of the globally famed industries like sports goods, jewelry, scissors, auto-parts, auto-tyres, handlooms, power looms, pesticides and sweet-meats. Although the seeds of its progress were sown in the colonial era, augmentation of the middle class proceeded gradually post independence of the country. The rapid development coupled with the upsurge of urbanization and globalization, proved to be the driving engines for rise of middle class. The social segment which has been affected most by the global emerging market was the progressing urban middle class, incorporating professionals

Globalization is a very broad concept and is a gradual process. It is an important harbinger of development which ultimately leads improvement in the quality of life. Globalization leads to a series of qualitative as well as quantitative developments viz. gradual rise in international finance and transactions, reorganization of production, global harmonization of preferences and standards, liberalization, deregulation, privatization, advance technology, global amalgamation of information, cultures, values and ideas. As such globalization has various dimensions extending its influence over economics, culture, politics, social lifestyle and environment. In this study, the main focus is on the effect that globalization has on the lifestyle and consuming habits of the Meerut region. In the coming sections, the different impacts on fashion trends, media habits, brand adoption and technology has been dealt with in precise details.

Due to industrialization and changing economic scenario in India, the economic development in the country has been at a steady pace, and Meerut, which is the place for the present study, is no exception to this development. The standard of living of a household (a group of persons who normally live together and take their meals from a common kitchen unless the exigencies of work preventing any of them from doing so) can be understood from their consumption pattern, and the qualities of consumption budget which clearly indicate the level of welfare of the household. Lifestyle is a term to describe the way a person, household and society live. It reflects the attitude, interests, activities, values and allocation of income. It also means the expression of self image which is extended through the use of goods and services. The change in consumption pattern is observed due to changes in consumer taste, preference and income at micro level and structural shift in the overall environment at macro level. It ultimately affects the buying behavior of consumers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher designed convenience random sampling for designing a structured questionnaire based on nominal scale. A total of 550 questionnaires were distributed among the respondents of Meerut city to collect the primary data. The study was conducted in two market areas: the shopping malls and major markets in Meerut (Sadar bazaar and Budhana gate). The respondents completed the questionnaire at the purchasing time with anonymity. 500 questionnaires which were complete were selected out for further study, out of which 51.50% were males and 48.50% females. The responses were further tabulated to infer the useful results as per the objectives of the study. The correlations of the socio economic variables were tested using chi-square (χ^2) test.

Objectives of the Study

The present study evaluates the influence of the current fashion trends, media habits and use of advance technology on lifestyle and consumerism, and at the same time to explore the adoption of brand preference among the respondents. The objectives of the present study can be summed up as follows:-

- To study the fashion adoption trend among rural households.
- To examine the media habits and entertainment modes of rural households.
- To explore the use of technology in the consumption of lifestyle goods among rural households.

Hypothesis

Advancement in technology and usage of newest technological gadgets have exposed the common man to a wider spectrum of wants and needs and thus to a more comfortable life. The internet has carved an important niche for itself

among the new “**Information-seeking**” generation irrespective of the social setup in which the person lives. In the light of this contention and the pre-defined objectives, the following hypothesis was formulated and tested:

H₀: Internet usage is independent of the occupation

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Profile of the Respondents

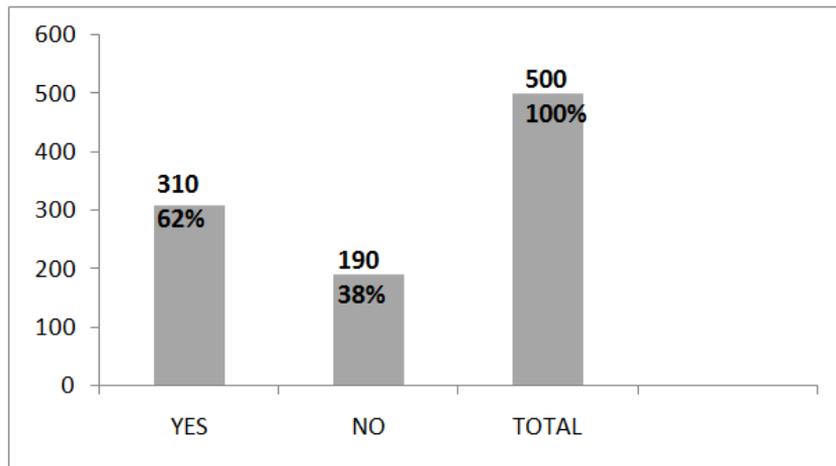
While undertaking the fieldwork, specific focus was kept to proportionally represent people of various segments viz. professionals, Government employees, teachers, businessmen etc. The distribution of the various demographic variables in terms of their respective percentages are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Households Profile

	Demographic Variables	Category	Percentage
1	Absolute Number of Respondents	Male and Female	100%
2	Gender Ratio	Male Female	51.50% 48.50%
3	Age of Family Members	Below 25 Years Between 26-40 Years Between 41-50 Years Above 50 Years	42.80% 31.59% 15.50% 10.11%
4	Occupation of the Head of Family	Self Employed Business Service Farming	18.00% 37.00% 35.00% 10.00%
5	Total Family Monthly Income	Less than Rs. 5,000 Between Rs. 5,001-Rs. 10,000 Between Rs. 10,001-Rs. 15,000 Above Rs. 15,000	10.80% 14.00% 16.00% 59.20%
6	Qualification of the Family Members	Illiterate Primary Education High School Intermediate Graduate and Above	10.00% 19.40% 22.00% 22.40% 26.20%
7	Marital Status of Family Members	Married Unmarried	44.80% 55.20%
8	Knowledge of English Language	Male Female	41.40% 58.60%

Source: Primary Data

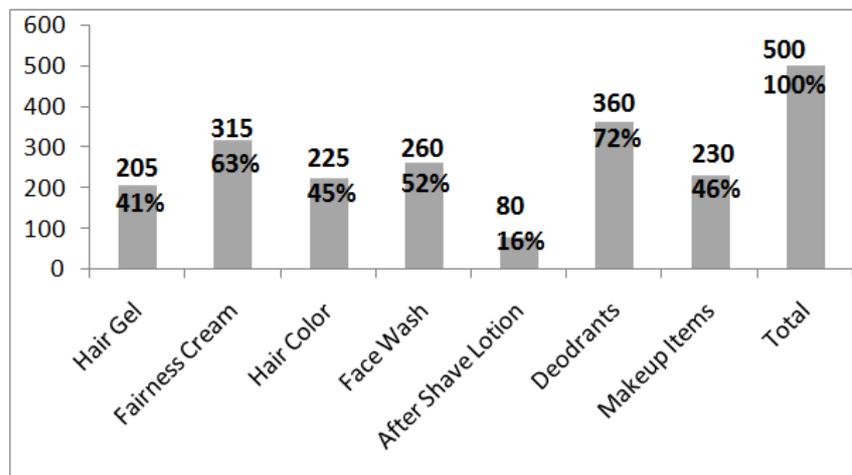
Fashion Involvement and Buying Behavior: These days, the reach and marketing potential of fashion items in the country is also growing even in the remotest areas due to surplus income and exposure to the changing globalized world through TV, internet and other interactive media.



Source: Primary data

Figure 1: Changing Outfit Styles According to Changing Trend in Fashion

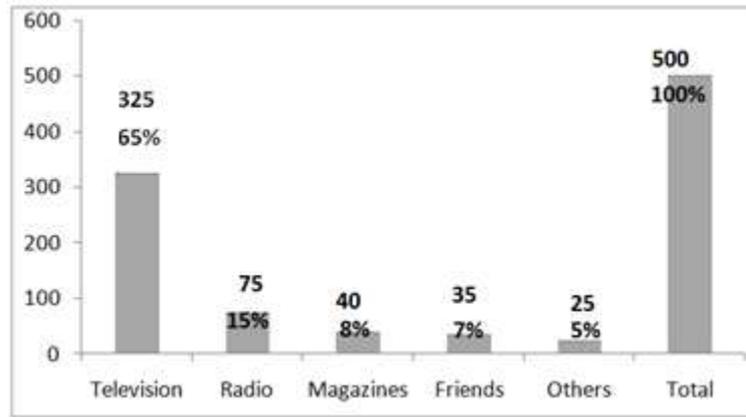
It is revealed from Figure 1 that 62% of respondent households prefer to change the styles of their outfit as per the current fashion, while 38% voted against that by saying that they do not want to change their outfit style with the changing fashion.



Source: Primary data

Figure 2: Use of Non-Essential Cosmetic Products

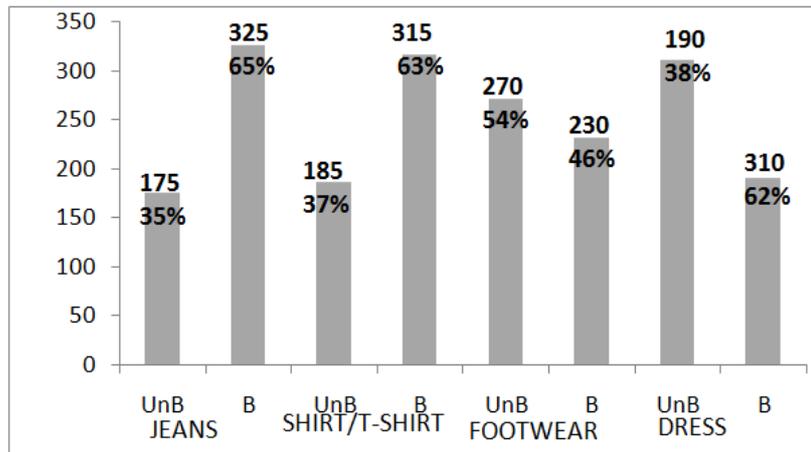
Figure 2 exhibits that 72% households use deodorants, closely followed by fairness cream (63%), which is trailed by face wash (52%), makeup items (46%), hair color (45%) and hair gel (41%), and after shave lotion (16%). After shave lotion is having the lowest preference by just 16%.



Source: Primary data

Figure 3: Source of Information about Fashion Stuff

As per Figure 3, majority of respondents (65%) rely on television for information about fashion items, followed by radio (15%) and magazines (8%). This clearly is an indication that the television is the most popular of source of informing about the latest trends in fashion through tv serials, live shows etc. and its reach is penetrated deep to into the society.



(UnB: Unbranded, B: Branded) Source: Primary data

Figure 4: Preference for Apparel: Branded Vs Non-Branded

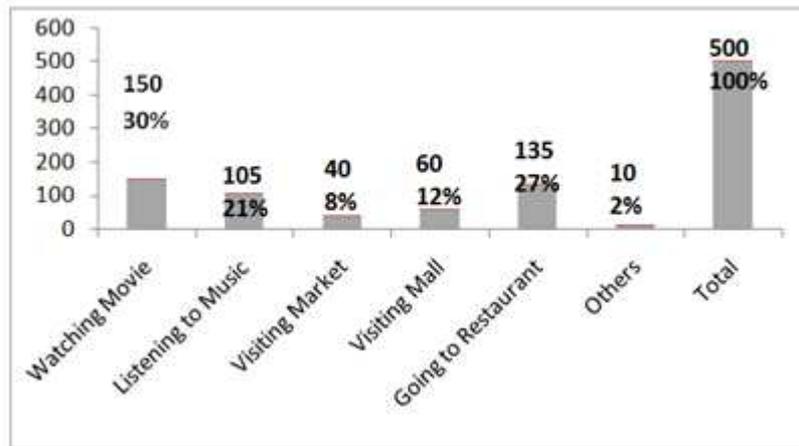
Figure 4 reveals that more than 50% of the respondents still think that branded outfits are more trendy and acceptable in the group that they belong to. In the categories of Jeans and Shirt/T-Shirt, high percentage of households uses stylish and latest design to portray the fashionable look.

It is evident from Figures 1-4 that evenally high percentage of respondents prefer branded outfit. Hence, we see that brand conciousness is high among the society, which suggests that the marketers can strategise their promotional campaign based on image building which could be differentiated from the competing brands. This behaviour again indicates towards the increasing disposable income in the hands of consumers.

The favoured cosmetic products are deodrants, fairness cream and face wash which has become the lifestyle requirement of consumers today. Television is the most popular source for getting information about the upcoming fashion trends through serials, live shows, advertisements, celebrity endorsements etc. Exept Jeans and T-Shirts, rest of the lifestyle

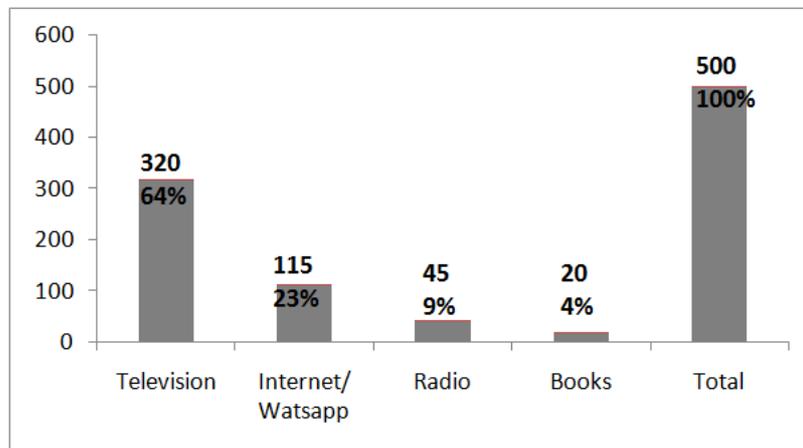
outfit products are used in traditional way among the consumers. That may be because of the late adoption of radically different styles of shoes, dresses etc

Media as a Means of Entertainment: - Due to the increasing rate of literacy and penetration by media, the perception and attitude of common man is shifting towards proper consumerism. The reach of Television and satellite has made a noticeable impact on the lifestyle of people, as they get exposed to a huge cluster of latest information. In the post liberal era, the culture of shopping at Mall is being taken as a source of entertainment accompanied by eating out at restaurant.



Source: Primary data

Figure 5: Preferred Means of Family Entertainment



Source: Primary data

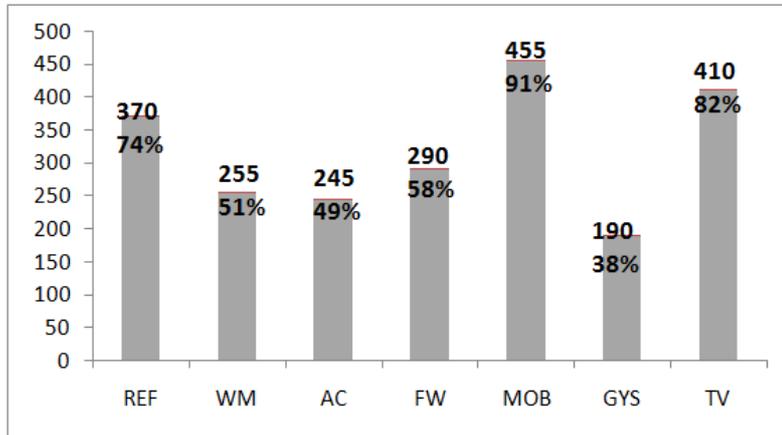
Figure 6: Favorite Mode of Media for Entertainment

Figure 5 suggests that in order to entertain themselves in leisure time, most of the respondents (30%) prefer to watch a movie, which is closely followed by going out to a restaurant to eat (27%), followed by listening to music of their choice (21%), 12% visit mall, whereas 8% visit market. The remaining 2% are not certain about utilization of their leisure time, they may go for any of the above options or remain in their house and play with their children.

Figure 6 clearly shows that a big majority (64%) prefer Television as a medium for entertainment followed by internet (23%), then comes radio and books, which are merely 9% and 4% respectively. It is quite evident that whether a person is young or old, male or female, prefer Television over other media for entertainment.

Technology Usage

The Indian consumers are increasingly adapting themselves and their preferences to the new technologies. This advanced technology has entered the day to day life in the form of gadgets and appliances used to make the life easy and comfortable. The common man is tech-ready to use the technology-interfaced services like mobile and internet, high utility products like automobiles and laptops.

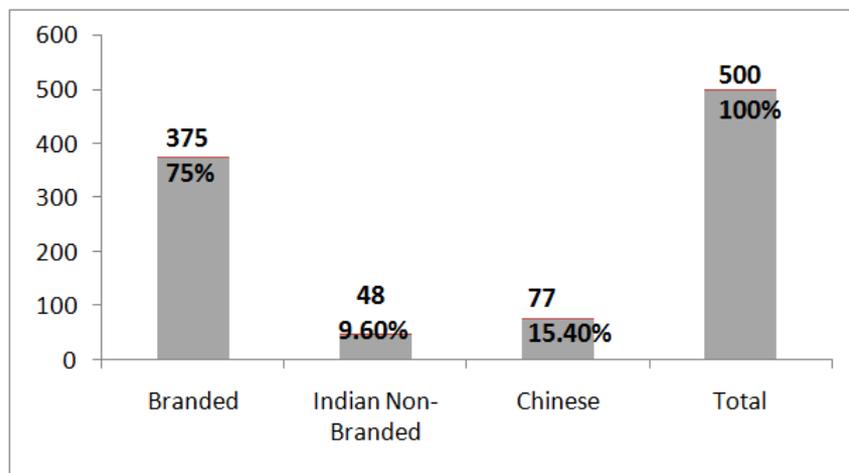


Source: Primary data

Figure 7: Appliances as an Indicator of Standard of Living

REF: Refrigerator, **WM:** Washing Machine, **AC:** Airconditioner, **FW:** Four Wheeler, **MOB:** Mobile, **GYS:** Geyser, **TV:** Television

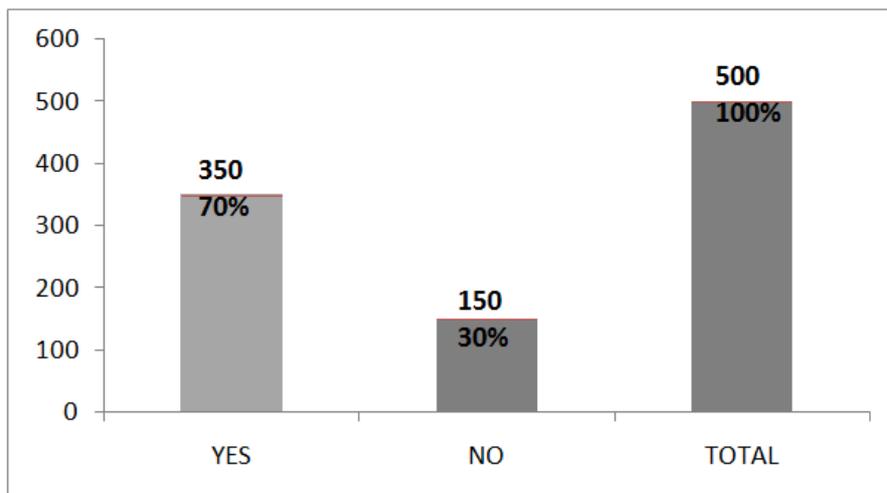
As per the Figure 7, most of the households are almost using the latest appliances mobile (91%), television (82%), refrigerator (74%), four wheeler (58%), washing machine (51%), air conditioner (49%) and geyser (38%).



Source: Primary data

Figure 8: Preference for Mobile Set: Branded VS Chinese and Non-Branded

Figure 8 reveals that most respondents prefer to purchase branded mobiles (75%) followed by Chinese and Indian non branded hand-sets at just 15.40% and 9.60% respectively.



Source: Primary data

Figure 9: Internet Access

It is evident from figure 9 that 70% of households are having internet access at home. It is also revealed from Table 2 that 63.79% and 64% respondents in business and service class respectively, frequently use internet in comparison of those involved in farming or self employment.

Table 2: Internet Usage across Various Occupations

S. No.	Options/Occupation	Yes	No	Total	Chi-Square Value (χ^2)
1	Self Employed	34 (37.78%) (50.76)	56 (62.22%) (39.24)	90	29.35* Significant
2	Business	118 (63.79%) (104.34)	67 (36.21%) (80.66)	185	
3	Service	112 (64%) (98.7)	63 (36%) (76.3)	175	
4	Farming	18 (36%) (28.2)	32 (64%) (21.8)	50	
	Total	282	218	500	

* Degree of freedom 3, Level of Significance 0.05

H₀ has been tested for Table 2 by using Chi-square test at 5% significance level. The calculated value, which came out to be 29.35 has been found significant at the said significance level. Thus, the null hypothesis (H₀), which states that the internet usage is dependent on occupation, is rejected in favor of alternate hypothesis

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Globalization has brought forth opportunities of all sorts to businesses as well as the consumers. The advent of the Internet has further expanded and enhanced globalization of market, creating a wealth of new opportunities to do trade through the creation of new markets and new ways of communication between and among businesses and consumers, as well as expansion of markets and businesses across borders. Consumers today are empowered by the Internet and social media, which help them in exercising their choice in a better way while purchasing. The analysis indicates a significant relationship between awareness and effective consumer behavior. The result demonstrates that awareness is prior to effective consumers' behaviors. It could be stated that consumerism is central to current forms of globalization as well as consumerism is fundamental to understanding globalization and the modern world. This connection could be grasped in the

fact that globalization enables access to resources as well as markets globally. Businessmen should effectively utilize television and internet based marketing and advertisements to target a broader section of consumers more effectively.

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