Measuring Brand Effectiveness of Garments:
With Special Reference to Indore City

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ABSTRACT

Branding has become a very instrumental way for organizations to communicate to the customer in today's competitive business environment. Over the last decade, demand for brand name apparel products in both discount and department stores has continued to rise. A better understanding of the brand oriented customer is needed to assist businesses in producing and marketing apparel products to meet consumer needs. The present study is aimed to determine the customers' preference towards exclusive and multi-brand retail outlet of readymade garments and to find out the factors that determine the satisfaction level of the customers. This paper aims to achieve the objectives of analyzing the factor on which the consumer preference depends. Data were collected from 288 respondents by a self design questionnaire. Nonparametric test (Chi-Square) was used for demographic analysis. Result shows that age and gender play vital role to understand perception towards purchase of branded garments. Graphical representation shows about preferences, factors affecting purchase, advertisement effectiveness etc.

Keyword: Brand, Garment, Purchase Potential,

Introduction

In social and cultural terms there is perhaps no single issue that dominates the modern psyche as much as fashion. It not only forms an important part of everyday consumption decisions, but also a central component of almost all daily events, influencing what and where we eat, what we wear, how we communicate. Increasingly, in fashion marketing, brands are seen as important in creating an identity, a sense of achievement and identification for consumers who are fashion conscious and materialistic. In reality fashion may not be the creation of powerful persuaders, but a normal outcome of a dynamic culture and common shifts in the style and tastes of individuals and groups. In relation to fashion, consumer researchers have studied the links between consumer's personality traits and their buying behaviors for over 40 years (Browne & Kaldenberg, 1997). It can be understood that people express themselves through consumption in an innumerable ways, and in this context, products and brands have an ability to communicate messages to others. The product style determines how consumers who own a particular product are perceived by others.

There have been a wide array of personality theories and measures developed to test the theoretical proposition that purchasing and consumption behavior are related to aspects of consumers personality traits. In fashion marketing, brands are seen as important in creating an identity, a sense of achievement and identification for consumers who are fashion conscious. One view of fashion is that it is not the creation of powerful persuaders, but a normal outcome of a dynamic culture and common shifts in taste and references. Increasingly the relationship between characteristics of consumers and of brands are becoming important marketing problems, particularly, so for the characteristics such as materialism as a strong driver of acquiring and on summing specific types of brands. As such, this study focuses on examining the relationships

between consumer and its perception of buying the branded garment.

Branding has become a very instrumental way for organizations to communicate to the customer in today's competitive business environment. This means of communication has strategic advantages in creating association, values and differentiation. Successfully measuring brand equity and awareness can help companies for their marketing mix in a way that is not only cost-effective but also strategic in the long run. Most of the companies agree that their brand is an asset, yet measuring awareness and equity of the same asset seems to be more than art than a science.

Globalization, new technologies, intense competition, consumer demand shifts and economic and political system changes challenge enterprises in new ways. Companies, striving to achieve better results in the market, in comparison with their competitors need to acquire and retain particular uniqueness that can not be imitated and would provide a competitive advantage. Available brands of the enterprise are one of the resources that can hardly be imitated. A brand itself does not ensure any competitive advantage of the enterprise in the market. Good results are achieved just by those companies which are capable of managing their brand, reflecting its identity, and determining its elements, uniqueness and equity. This paper analyzing certain factors on which consumer buying behavior and priorities in purchasing branded garments depends.

Review of Literature

"A product is something that is made in a factory; a brand is something that is bought by a customer. A product can be copied by a competitor; a brand is unique. A product can be quickly outdated; a successful brand is timeless." (Aaker, 1991 p.1)

Possessions and their acquisition occupy a central role in the lives of many individuals. Activities, focusing on possessing and acquiring help to provide success and happiness. One product category that essentially fulfills these criteria in all aspect is fashion clothing. Fashion clothing (apparel) is a product that is consumed publicly and possesses public meaning. Purchasing apparel satisfies various needs such as the expression of identity and self-image, as well as giving individuals a way to impress others. So consumers who tend to pick up high priced apparel aim to satisfy some of the above needs. The crucial dimensions of possessions for any materialist are utility, appearance, financial worth and the ability to convey status, success and prestige. All these dimensions are satisfied through the purchase of high profile branded (& high priced) apparel. Individuals have an understanding that a particular possession will convey a strong message or signal to the world about what and who they are. Customers under the age of 30 tend to be very conscious of their image and the products they possess or acquire. High priced apparel is a product that has a high potential for symbolic meaning. There are some dimensions which are important to customers that concerns branded products. According to Grace & O'Cass (2002) these are feelings and self-image correspondence. Apparel is especially a way of communicating one's self-image to the surroundings. Clothes and shoes that individuals use are part of the first impression people get of an individual. Thus, buying a branded shirt or a pair of jeans does not only give value to a person's wellbeing but it is also a reflection of the personality.

The apparel industry is one business where branding is a common way for companies to differentiate from competition and gain competitive advantage. Although one branded t-shirt may not differ from another when it comes to quality, the brands are different, and this will lead to a perceived diversity between the products.

Branding

"A brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, design or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers" – (Keller, 2003, p.3).

"Branding is to help achieve and maintain a loyal customer base in a cost effective way in order to achieve the highest possible returns on investment" – (Costantino, 1998 p.60).

The word brand originally comes from the Old Norse word brandr, which means "to burn". The livestock owners historically used to burn their animals to differentiate them from other owners'. Branding

livestock to branding goods is a small step. In the Greek and Roman eras branding became more popular, shop-owners used signs to present what goods or services that were offered. The brand was used as a mark of identification and the good craftsmen were hoping the customers would be looking for their particular mark on the goods. Early branding was both a sign of authorship and a way to differentiate the products (Costantino, 1998).

It is important to recognize that a brand must deliver an added value. The difference between branded products and commodities is due to the extra value delivered with the brand. With commodities, customers have a hard time to differentiate the products; one pot is very much like another pot. With commodities the purchase is usually based on price and availability. Branded products on the other hand have additional attributes which may be considered as intangible, but still important to the customers. If customers value a brand they should also be willing to pay extra for that particular brand (Costadino, 1998). According to Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders and Wong (2001) the brand can be divided into four different levels.

- Attributes: A watch can be nice looking, have many technological features and be expensive.

- Advantages: An expensive watch may give the owner a certain status, or one with many features may help the owner be on time. One should look upon the advantages with the attributes in mind.

- Values: The buyers of a specific brand will most likely share values with the brand, i.e. the customers of BMW probably value performance, comfort and prestige.

- Personality: One can compare a brand with human attributes, and if the brand was actually a person what type of person would it be.

The present study is an attempt to find the factors affecting the purchase behavior of consumers of branded garments, perception towards brand and their evaluation criterion.

Methodology

Questionnaire Design

Study was conducted in several stages. In the first stage related literature review was done to understand the problem, concept and past studies. Various articles, books and journals were referred. A draft questionnaire was developed based on the review of literature and circulated to a group of expert as a part of a pilot study. A few members of management institute were also contacted. Based on their suggestions the questionnaire was revised. The questionnaire consisted of 10 questions with different option. Out of the 10 questions, 7 were optional with 4 options to choose from and 2 were rank order base question, where options need to be ranked on 1 to 6 scale. Last question is the top of the mind game where one has to write the brand which clicks first. Questionnaire statements were set in English only and the language was simplified, taking into consideration the fact that all the respondents were young second-language English speakers.

Sample design and data collection

A non-probability sampling design (convenience sample) was used to draw the sample. Data was collected from different age groups of male and female in Indore city. The questionnaires were disseminated among different age group. The age group is mainly divided into 3 categories below 25, 26-39, above 40. Sample size was 288. Firstly, the objective of the study was explained to the respondents. Opportunity was given to clarify any possible problems or questions regarding the process of completing of the questionnaires. After completion, all the questionnaires were personally distributed and collected by the researcher.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

H01   There is no significance difference between male and female regarding purchase potential of branded garments

H02   There is no significance difference among various age groups regarding purchase potential of branded garments.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1

Purchase Potential Between Male and Female							
			Never	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	Total
GENDER	Male	Count	6	61	48	44	161
		Expected Count	.6	66.4	55.7	38.3	161.0
	Female	Count	0	50	51	24	125
		Expected Count	.4	51.6	43.3	29.7	125.0
Total		Count	1	118	99	68	286
		Expected Count	1.0	118.0	99.0	68.0	286.0

Table 2

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.271	3	.153

H01 is accepted because (p= .153 > .05) Hence, the analysis shows that there is no significance difference between male and female regarding purchase potential of branded garments because our hypothesis is accepted.

Table 3

| Purchase Potential among Age Groups							
			Never	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	Total
AGE	Below 25	Count	7	43	51	32	133
		Expected Count	.5	55.4	45.7	31.4	133.0
	26-39	Count	5	48	42	8	98
		Expected Count	.3	40.8	33.7	23.1	98.0
	Above 40	Count	5	26	3	28	57
		Expected Count	.2	23.8	19.6	13.5	57.0
Total		Count	17	117	99	68	288
		Expected Count	1.0	120.0	99.0	68.0	288.0

Table 4

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	47.469	6	.000

H02 is Rejected because (p= .05 > .000) Hence, the analysis shows that there is significance difference among various age group regarding purchase potential of branded garments. Different age groups perceive different purchase potential for branded garments.

Factor affecting choice of branded garment
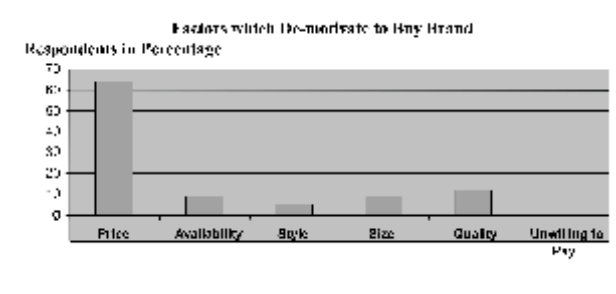
I.   Factor which motivates to buy

Figure 1

Factors Force to Buy the Brand
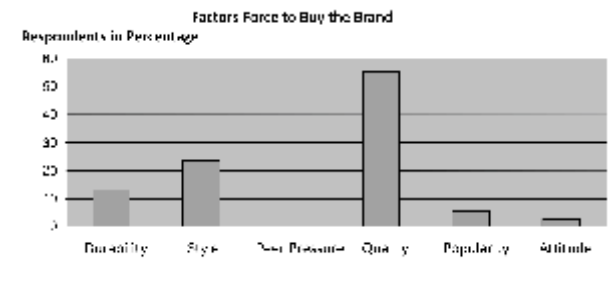
This figure is interpreted by analyzing the rank given by the respondent. Durability was ranked first by 12.7 %, 23.6 % respondent opt Style, peer pressure 0%, popularity 5.4 %, attitude 2.7% while Quality was opted by 55.4% here most of the respondent have given quality as the utmost important factor. People are more conscious about quality of garment.

II.   Factor Which De-motivates to buy Brand

Figure 2

Factors which De-motivate to Buy Brand

This figure shows the factor which de-motivates the consumer to buy branded garments. 64.47% of respondent have opt for Pricing as the de-motivating factor, while there are other factors also like Availability-9.2% , style-5.2 %, Size-9.2%, quality 11.8% and the 0% opted for unwilling to pay.

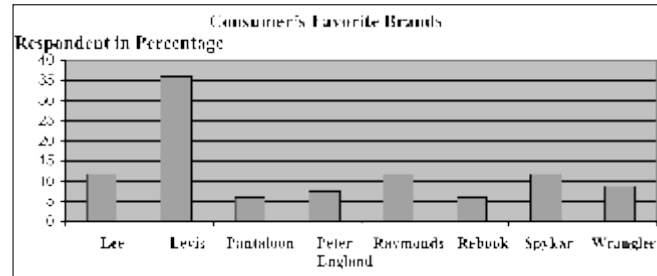III.   Effect of Advertisements on the purchase decision

Figure 3

Impact of Ads on Purchase
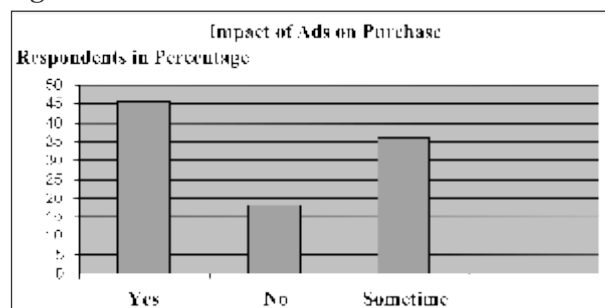
The figure shows that 45.6% of respondents are affected by the Ads in purchase decision of garment while 18% respondent denies the fact and 36.4% respondent says sometime it effect their decision.

IV.   Most memorable Brand

Figure 4

Consumer's Favorite Brands

There were 150 respondents who have written the most top of the mind Brand. Many brands were written out of that we have selected 8 major brands which were most favored. In these 8 brands Levis was the brand which occupies good image and recognition in the mind of consumer. 35.8% of respondent response in the favor of Levies.

V.   Association of brand with Celebrity

Figure 5

Association of Brand with Celebrity
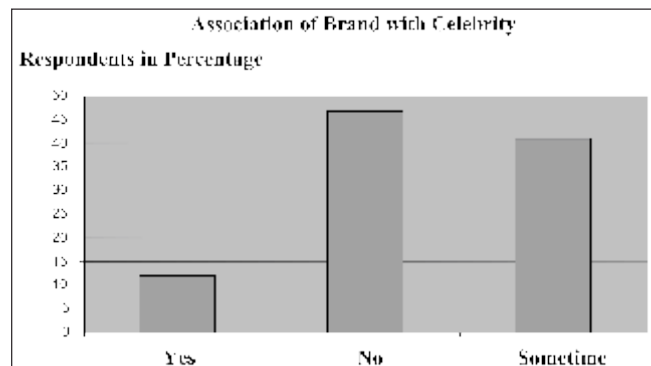
In this figure respondent was asked about the association of celebrity with the brand and there purchase decision here, 12% responded opted yes, 47 said No while 41 said sometime.

Findings

Is there any significant difference between male and female regarding purchase potential of branded garments?

The research indicated that there is no difference between the males and females tendencies regarding

the purchase of branded garments as the hypothesis was accepted. This indicates that the male and female do not perceive different opinion regarding purchase of branded garment.

Is there significance among different age groups regarding purchase potential of branded garments?

The research indicated that there is a significance difference between age groups as the hypothesis was rejected. Different age perceive different level of involvement, perception and interest for purchase of branded garments.

What are the factors which motivates and de-motivates consumer to buy branded garments?

The research shows that there are few factors which motivates consumer to buy the branded garment and the major factor highlighted is the quality and then style. Consumers are more conscious about the quality of the product and they are willing to pay for good quality. As the trend is changing and Fashion has become the style statement people purchase garment for the style.There are few factors which de-motivates the consumer or some of the people who do not purchase branded garment are due to the fact that price of the garment is very high. Other factors are the availability, size unwilling to pay etc.

Does Ads and celebrity acting in the ads affect the pricing decision?

The research brought the conclusion that the Ads affect the purchase decision of the consumers. People are motivated and directed towards purchase of branded garment due to ads but the celebrity acted in the ads does not make any difference in the purchase decision.

Conclusion

The goal of this paper was to determine the brand effectiveness and the purchase decision. Results show that brand plays vital role in the purchase decision as the trend in the fashion industry has changed the tendencies of customer. The customers have a vital role in a brands success. Within the fashion industry, customers tend to choose garments connected or in somewhat associated with their own lifestyle. Brandon et al. (2005) further presents that lifestyle is connected to the fashion trends in the

market. A customer could have different kinds of lifestyles. Research has shown that a brand is really something that controls the buying behavior and can be connected to something that lays deep in the customers' minds.

The brand has major impact on the purchase decision of consumers. Result shows that the gender difference does not play an important role to understand the perception of purchase behavior of branded garments but customer's perception may change with age as results reveal that there is a considerable difference between the buying patterns of the consumer of different age groups. Hence purchase of branded garments differs in case of different age group.

The consumers are forced to buy brands due to quality and style. Advertisements play major role in the purchase decision of consumer. A mixed respond on the advertisement effectiveness could be found in the study. While it should be noticed that celebrity endorsement does not play any momentous role in customers purchase decision. Therefore, it can be said that the market has undergone sudden change due to evolution of brands, its awareness, brand image and the consumers are delighted to go for the favorite brands.

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