ROLE OF BRAND NAME IN INFLUENCING PURCHASE DECISION-THE CASE OF FASHION INDUSTRY BRAND NAME INFLUENCING PURCHASE DECISION

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to determine the role of brand name in influencing consumer's purchase decision of garments/cloths. Data was gathered from 155 college students in Bangalore, India through structured questionnaire. Findings of the research prove that consumers were not very loyal to any brand and their decision of purchasing branded cloths was influenced by factors like durability, price, emotional association, accessibility, online availability, discounts/offers and peer pressure. This paper clearly depicts that when different brands of cloths/garments are at one place, consumers chose different brands and not the same every time. It is suggested that manufacturers of cloths must emphasise on easy availability, both online and offline, offers and discounts to enhance marketing competitiveness.

Keywords: Brand Name, Purchase Decision, Fashion Industry, Consumer Behaviour.

INTRODUCTION

The foundation of all business strategy in an organisation is an understanding of customer behaviour. For instance, a marketer needs to be fully aware of the purchasing habits of his or her customers to introduce new products or adjust existing ones (processes they use to select, secure, and dispose products). Consumer purchase decisions are influenced by so many factors, including personal, psychological, cultural, and social factors. The decision of consumers to purchase a brand over another has significant implications for the marketing team and the manufacturers of the product. Failure to comprehend these influences will have negative effects on the market and the expansion of the company.

Marketers frequently attempt to influence numerous marketing concepts so that consumers they aim to influence can decide which goods and services to purchase and which ones not to (Richarme, 2005). As a result, businesses spend billions of dollars trying to convince consumers to buy their goods, but they are unsure of the exact triggers. Why and how a brand is chosen while others are rejected are the central questions surrounding the idea of choice. Understanding customer decision dynamics and how they relate to brand names is necessary for this. Because success is the only metric that indicates how well the brand connects with the customers in the target market, brand stewards of respected brands have a higher understanding of customers than the rest of the group.

The stages of a consumer's decision-making process, according to Batra & Kazmi (2004), are more extensive and include problem identification (feeling the need for a new car), information search (online and in showrooms), evaluation of alternatives (comparing brands, for example, based on reputation and features), outlet selection and purchase (purchasing the chosen item), and post-purchase action (satisfaction or dissonance). Study apparel is seen as messaging code and understanding, according to Auty & Elliott (1998).

They added that brand users may hold diverse viewpoints about the same product within a certain product category.

One of the core components of brand equity, brand name, is frequently seen as a requirement for consumers' purchasing decisions because it serves as the primary determinant in placing a brand in the consideration set (Moisescu, 2011). Experience has shown that many retails garment merchants in India rely solely on price reduction to encourage sales, ignoring other crucial product characteristics like brand name, durability, accessibility, and online availability. For instance, it is typical to see posters and other types of advertising convincing consumers to buy a product just because the price has dropped. Additionally, retailers continue to assert that they entirely disregard the issue of brand when selecting products for resale and instead choose those that will provide them a large profit margin and high sales volume. Brand name is one of the most significant extrinsic cues, which are product-related characteristics unrelated to the physical or functional features of the product, that consumers use to evaluate products, according to previous study. However, there is little information available about its impact in fashion sector, particularly in metro city like Bangalore.

Few studies have been conducted in this field, particularly for items like mobile garments or cloths, in least developed and developing countries like Tanzania, India, Afghanistan, Brazil where consumer behaviour differs from that in developed nations. As a result, cloth manufacturers and marketers are unable to successfully position their business strategy. Studies on garment industry have been piqued by the rapid expansion of the sector in the nation. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to precisely investigate how customers' purchasing decisions are influenced by brand names in the case of a metro city, Bangalore in India.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Murphy (1990), trademarks express the personality and the sense of belonging to a specific society. Schiffman & Kanuk (2004) state that four different perspectives are considered while attempting to comprehend customer decision-making and behaviour. He claims that the "economic view" comes first. According to this perspective, consumers face imperfect market competition, and it is expected of them to be fully informed about the products available and to make logical decisions (Schmitt & Zhang, 2012; Olga, 2021).

According to the utility theory (Fishburn, 1970; Blavatskyy, 2014), customers should base their decisions on the results they can expect. Customers are seen in this perspective as logical actors who can calculate the probabilistic results of uncertain decisions and choose the one that maximises their well-being (Richarme, 2011). This idea states that consumers choose products they think will provide them with the most satisfaction when making purchases (utility). According to this supposition, customers will purchase garments/fashion cloths from brands they believe will provide the greatest utility (Joubert & Poalses, 2012; Forsthe, 2013). Shamsuddoha et al. (2010) conducted study on the impact of brand recognition on customer decision-making. A survey with 100 participants found that the brand name had a significant impact on consumers' purchasing decisions (Forsthe, 2013). The survey also demonstrates that branded cars are highly valued by consumers, who prefer to choose well-known brands when shopping for a car. Because they know little about the lesser-known brand, consumers are reluctant to test new or unknown branded cars. According to the study, well-known brands of cars are very well-known among people because people trust the brand name. This even indicates that people generally buy well-known brand cars as they are aware of its performance as a brand or perhaps have had a good experience in past (Anbumathi, et al. 2023).

For a private label brand, Wu et al. (2011) investigated the direct effects of store image and service quality on brand image and purchase intention (PLB). Customers from the Watsons and Cosmed network of pharmacies made up the three hundred and sixty (360) members of the study's sample. The results of this study show that store image and service quality both directly and favourably affect PLB purchase intentions, while perceived risk associated with PLB products acts as a mediating factor in the relationship between brand image and purchase intentions. According to the findings, sellers can set the PLB product's price appropriately to lower perceived financial risk, and they can offer PLB products that are high-quality and perform reliably while remaining safe to use to lower perceived performance risk and physical risk, both of which will increase consumers' desire to buy PLB products.
Jalilvand et al. (2011) used Aaker's well-known conceptual framework from the automotive sector in their investigation of the impact of brand equity components on purchase intention. Structural equation modelling is used to evaluate hypotheses using a sample of 242 consumers. According to the research, brand recognition, affiliation, loyalty, and perceived quality are all important factors that influence customers' intent to buy products. The study recommends that marketers should carefully consider the elements of brand equity when developing their branding strategies. Additionally, marketers are expected to modify their branding strategies to fit each marketing environment and foster customer loyalty to lower consumer switching behaviour.

According to a study by Laforet (2011), the use of multiple brand names (or a combination of brand names) on packaging may have an impact on consumer buying preferences. In a face-to-face survey, participants rate their preference for sixteen arbitrary brand names and combinations of brand names on packaging along with three different prices, for each of the two product categories of cereals and chocolate, on a 7-point scale. 4032 observations in total are looked at. The results demonstrate that corporate, product, and dual brand names have little direct influence on purchase preferences; rather, brand category dominance affects consumer choice, and corporate names do not have as much added value as once believed. To maximise consumer brand associations and influence purchases, the study offered trends and contexts in which corporate names and product brand names may be expanded. It also offered suggestions for strategies for doing so in distant product categories.

In their 2011 study, Moradi and Zarei investigated the connections between brand equity, purchase intent, and brand preference. Iranian students who owned a particular brand of laptop and smartphone were the source of the data. The findings showed that brand equity effects customer brand preference and purchase intention favourably. However, the data do not support the nation of origin's moderating influence. Consumer opinions of the nation usually often correlate with the uniqueness of the brands the nation generates. These consumers believe brands from countries with a positive reputation are more trustworthy than those made in less desirable nations.

In the United Arab Emirates, female customers' cosmetics purchasing decisions were examined by Khraim (2011). The results demonstrated that brand loyalty for cosmetics is positively and significantly correlated with brand name, product quality, pricing, design, promotion, service quality, and store atmosphere. The overall results of this study also demonstrated that UAE consumers favour brand recognition, product quality, price, promotions, store environment, and service quality as important variables associated with brand loyalty. To segment consumers and markets for their brands and marketing communications, marketers may find it useful to understand how loyalty factors may influence consumer purchasing behaviour in the marketplace.

The study by Coob et al. (2013) examines some of the effects of brand equity. The writers specifically look at how brand equity affects customer preferences and purchase intentions. Two sets of brands were tested for comparative purposes, one from a service

category with a reputation for having a fair amount of financial and operational risk (hotels) and the other from a generally lower risk product category. Each set consists of two brands that, according to Consumer Reports ratings, are objectively comparable but have spent significantly different amounts on advertising over the previous ten years. The brand with the larger advertising expenditure generated noticeably higher levels of brand equity across both categories. The brand that had the greatest equity in each category consequently led to a marked increase in preferences and purchase intentions.

160 respondents provided information for Rasheed et al (2014) study about customers' intentions to buy counterfeit mobile phones in Pakistan using self-administered questionnaires. The findings showed that there was no correlation between low price and buy intention, and that there was a strong correlation between simple access and counterfeit purchase intention. The goal of Siddique et al (2014).'s research was to investigate the connection between features and purchase decisions and to quantify consumer variation in feature-specific purchasing decisions. Eighty respondents were chosen at random from a sample of students at Comilla University in Bangladesh. The findings showed that factors like internet access, multimedia, a long-lasting battery, a camera, brand recognition, performance, and the colour of a mobile phone influence purchases more than other factors like warranty length, price, customer service, and phone memory capacity.

Lee (2014) investigated what factors led college students to become early adopters of smartphones. The study's findings indicate that college students who adopted cell phones earlier than other students may have been influenced by their friends, their financial situation, and other family members. The study made clear that a retailer's brand image significantly influences customers' purchasing decisions. A study also suggested that the perceived quality and risk of purchasing store brands are significantly influenced by the retailer's brand image.

According to study by Gupta et al. (2014), consumers' purchasing decisions are ultimately influenced by how store brands are viewed in terms of quality and risk. According to a study, a retailer's brand image significantly influences customers' purchasing decisions. The study also contends that the perceived quality and danger of purchasing store brands are significantly influenced by the retailer's brand image. In other words, although consumers' opinions of the store brand will potentially have an impact on the store's reputation, it is more likely that consumers' willingness to try the brand was influenced by the store's reputation.

As per Saeed et al (2013), there is no correlation between brand image and purchasing decisions. Although Suroto et al. (2013) found that price had no effect on purchase decisions in Indonesia, culture did. In a controlled experiment, Macdonald and Sharp (2000) discovered that consumers have a strong propensity to use awareness as a heuristic and exhibit some inertia when trying to break the habit of doing so.

In the study The Crucial Role of Brand Image in Purchase Decisions in Pakistan, Forsthe et al. (2013) discovered that, in the absence of a strong and positive brand image, product evaluations, attitudes, and purchase decisions will be greatly influenced by the price and other intrinsic product attribute information. In their 2012 study Analysis of the Influence of Brand Assets on the Buying Decisions of Final Consumers, Doostar et al. found that "brand assets on pricing and perceived quality of dairy products had a positive impact and therefore have a direct impact on consumers' purchase decisions."

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research used cross-sectional survey tools where data was collected in Urban Bangalore, India. Choice of location as influenced by the truth that, Bangalore is a metro city

and an IT hub, full of youths with number of colleges and IT parks, motivating people towards purchase of garments/cloths both branded and non-branded

Sample Size and Sample Type

155 college students were involved as respondents in the study. List of colleges were sought and later two colleges were used to collect data based on simple random sampling technique. Respondents were approached based on convenience and reach considering they are regular branded/non-branded garment purchasers.

Research Approach

Initially the study was undertaken by using interview method, which was a qualitative approach, where researcher targeted 30 college students. Findings of this pilot study was used to redesign the questionnaire and in second phase the research was undertaken through quantitative method where questionnaire was used to gather primary data majorly from branded/non-branded garment users.

RESULTS

Brand Used: Extent of Consumer's Preference towards Branded Clothing

The research sought after finding garment/clothing brands that are used by respondents regularly. Findings depict that majority (55%) of respondents preferred using branded cloths like H&M, Forever21, Zara, Allen Solly, Louis Phillipe, Calvin Klein, and U.S. Polo etc. However, some also preferred to use non-branded cloths, for which they favoured local garment market. This finding indicates that, branded clothing was more favoured by respondents. According to Rahman & Mannan, consumers make buying decisions based on emotional association with the brand. Brand levels have been seen building confidence in consumers regarding the originality of the product.

Replacing the Brand

The research sought to find if the user's current brand of clothing is the same which they used to purchase before. Analysis depicted that 89% of respondents used different brand of what they used earlier and only 11% were stuck and loyal to their older clothing brand. This implies that customers were seen only very loyal to a single brand when it came to clothing/fashion. Brand switching is the decision to switch from the consistent use of one brand or product to that of a different but comparable producer (Keller, 2003). Extrinsic incentives, such sales promotions, can sometimes cause consumers to switch brands. However, customers frequently change brands due to internal motivations like a desire to try a new brand (Mazursky, et al 1987).

Brand Recommendation

This research required to know if the branded garment users recommend their brands to others or not. Analysis depicted that very few (36%) of users did not recommend the used brand to others. Majority i.e., 64% of respondents at times recommended their brands to their families and friends. According to a study by Del Rio et al. (2001), customers are more likely to recommend a product to others when they are extremely satisfied with it. Recommendations, particularly those made by the reference group, are a crucial source of information for buyers (Zhang, Zhang, & Sakulsinlapakorn, 2020).

Repeated Purchase

This study proved that people (67%) were not ready to repurchase the same brand of cloth. Few reasons like bored of using same brand, no discounts, too costly, not many variants etc. were laid down by the respondents. Repeat purchasing is the act of a buyer who has already purchased a product from the same brand on another occasion. Repeat business from customers is frequently used as a gauge of brand loyalty. This indicates that the respondents included in the survey were not devoted to any one brand. According to the study by Lin and Wang (2006), perceived value, trust, habit, and customer satisfaction all have an impact on a customer's loyalty. Customer satisfaction also acts as a critical intermediary in the interaction between perceived value and trust and loyalty (Putra, Astuti, Kusumawati, & Abdillah, 2020; Luo & Hamlin, 2022).

Brand Recall and Brand Image

When people were asked about their favourite brands and their image in their mind, majority (49%) supported H&M and (25%) ZARA, followed by other brands like Calvin Klein (6%) and U.S.Polo (20%). Respondents informed that these brands hold special place in their heart as they are amongst world's top clothing retailers with exceptional brand identity. They even informed that these brands honour their consumer's feelings along with delivering rustic designs, high quality, and affordable pricing in branded fashion industry. The impact of brand image (Luo & Hamlin, 2022) on consumers' purchasing decisions is significant. According to Aaker (1991), images produce value in a variety of ways, including by assisting consumers in the processing of information, differentiating the brand, generating reasons to purchase, evoking positive emotions, and serving as a foundation for extensions (Kuehn, et al. 2013; Aharony, 2017).

Brand Purchase Intention

When consumers were asked about a brand they wished to purchase in future, although several respondents were users of brands like Forever21 and H&M and Zara, their inspiration is possessed high in acquiring quality brands like and some designer clothing, Chanel, Burberry, Prada, Gucci etc (61%). Utility Theory (Fishburn, 1970) states that when consumers receive more advantages from a product than they pay for it, the likelihood that they will make a purchase will rise (Dickson & Sawyer 1990). Thaler (1985) also thought that perceived value, which is composed of transaction utility and acquisition utility, is a significant antecedent to affect consumer purchase intention (Uddin & Ahmed, 2010; Agarwal, et al. 2019).

Brand Association

The study was undertaken to get the favourite brand of consumers and understand the reasons why and how much they feel linked to that brand. Analysis depicts that, if people wanted to buy gifts for their friends, then H&M, Forever21, Mufti and Allen Solly were their first choice followed by Zara and Calvin Klein and U.S.Polo Assn. This depicts that H&M and forever21 is perceived as valuable brand. Brand association is the name given to this technique. Brand associations, according to Keller's definition from 2003, are knowledge nodes that are connected to the brand node in the consumer's memory. Both marketers and consumers value brand associations. Brand associations are used by customers to aid in the organisation, storage, and retrieval of information in their minds as well as the decision-making process.

Consumers' Judgment of Different Brand Names when Purchasing Mobile Phones

This research sought to establish consumer's judgement of several fashion brand names while making purchase decisions. Findings depict that, variables majorly influencing consumer's judgement to buy fashion brands are durability, price, emotional association, accessibility, online availability, discounts/offers and peer pressure. Physical durability can be summed up as how long a product can endure when used normally or whether it can withstand damage from unusual use. As a fashion brand, branded clothes are expected to be in-trend and updated as well as durable. Additionally, fashion brands phones need to be affordable (Blavatskyy, 2014; Anbumathi, Dorai, & Palaniappan, 2023). Fashion firms find it difficult to stand out from consumers who are becoming more and more disinterested. Fashion retailers use emotional branding to engage their customers and combat the rising tendency of consumers wanting emotional connections with brands to become more competitive. Today, internet has become the most enticing method of purchasing (Uddin, Zahan Lopa, & Md, 2014). The ability to shop quickly and easily online combined with the rapidly expanding computing power has given consumers newfound power. Like how online shopping experiences have boosted potential for the clothing industry to use cutting-edge tools to boost sales of branded cloths, the sector has undergone rapid transformation because of the growing popularity of online apparel purchasing (Sata, 2013; Agarwal, Sahoo, & Agarwal, 2019).

DISCUSSION

Consumer's Loyalty towards Fashion Brands

The findings show that the fashion brand users are loyal to specific brand name. For, example; their current brands are the same as the previous one they purchased. Furthermore, the study shows that consumers are ready to recommend to the others the brand name that they are using. Loyalty is regarded as "a deeply held commitment to repurchase or re-patronize a preferred product or service consistently in the future despite situational influences and marketing efforts." Any size of business requires devoted customers since they will buy from it again and again and suggest it to others, who will then bring in new clients. Studies reveal that client loyalty accounts for 50% of many organisations' sales.

Businesses with a strong customer base typically enjoy large market shares and profitability. The sources of brand loyalty are perceived risk, inertia, habit, involvement, satisfaction, and relationships between product or service providers; the influencing variables of brand loyalty are corporate image, perceived service quality, trust, and customer switching costs. Like the previous study by (Aharony, 2017), this study also proved that consumers are loyal to a specific brand name; they are flexible to switch from one brand to another. These findings imply that, other marketing strategies e.g., availability, quality, positioning, price, offers, discounts, and promotions influence consumer purchase decision. However, the marketers of fashion brands need not to create brand loyalty more by using other marketing strategies, because loyalty has a significant effect on the marketability of a product/service (Luo & Hamlin, 2022).

Brand Recall in Purchase Decision of Fashion Brands

The results demonstrate that consumers of fashion brands do remember the brand names while making pre- and post-purchase decisions. The survey also reveals that consumers have a great memory for brand names and can recall them accurately. When considering the category, consumers were discovered to ponder about various brand names.

Fashion brand vendors acknowledged that while occasionally customers change their minds, most customers arrive at their store knowing exactly which brand name they want.

The results also demonstrate that brand recognition among consumers is very strong; for instance, shoppers were able to identify a product's brand name just by glancing at it. These results confirm previous research by Luo & Hamlin (2022) that shows brand recall significantly affects consumer purchasing decisions. A product's likelihood of being included in a consideration set is increased by high brand recall, which may also have an impact on the formalisation and potency of brand associations in customers' memories.

Judgment of Different Brand Names in the process of making Purchase Decision

According to the study, factors like accessibility, emotional associations, price, availability online, durability, discounts/offers, and peer pressure affect customers' judgement while making purchases. The study demonstrates that consumers of fashion brands do not consider other aspects such as prior knowledge, necessity, place of origin, physical characteristics, or even advertising Sutcliffe, (1993).

This is like those who cite physical characteristics, cost, charging and operating options, size and weight, recommendations from friends and co-workers, advertising, brand preference, social impact, and quality as deciding factors when purchasing a name-brand mobile phone (Putra, Astuti, Kusumawati, & Abdillah, 2020; Zhang, Zhang, & Sakulsinlapakorn, 2020). According to utility theory, consumers seek absolute maximisation of expected value when making a purchase decision. They do this by logically weighing all available options and selecting the one that will yield the highest return. Customers will purchase branded clothing in this situation because they want to get the most out of it.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to investigate the influence of brand name on the consumers buying decision the case of fashion brands. To comply with these, questionnaires were administered, and the interview was carried with users of branded fashion products and sellers. The findings show that the fashion brand users are not loyal to a specific brand name. This has been evidenced by the fact that, they are repeating purchases, recommend to the others and they are very proud to possess it. Additionally, the findings show that during pre-purchase and purchase process consumers recall the brand names. Besides that, during the purchase they judge a fashion brand by factors like durability, price, emotional association, accessibility, online availability, discounts/offers and peer pressure. This means that the fashion brand buyers go beyond the name simply. Generally, the study shows that, the though people sometimes tend to switch the brands, yet brand name matters in purchase decision, and is the ultimate deciders of purchase of fashion brands.

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