



Effect of Branding On Consumer Buying Behaviour: A Study in Relation to Fashion Industry

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Abstract:

Customers all over the world now prefer branded products. This study is aimed at analyzing the effect of brand on consumer buying behavior. Along with finding the effect of brand on consumer buying behavior the purpose of the study is to have an in depth knowledge of what actually is branding and consumer behavior. To study the relationship between brand and consumer behavior the following methodology is opted: Consumer Survey on the effect of brands on their buying behavior through questionnaire. The key results of the study are: The degree brand of consciousness goes on decreasing in higher age groups; price & brand were the major attributes that customer's gave most importance and 80% people believe that Brands in fashion industry have become a status symbol.

Keywords: *Branding, Consumer, Consumer buying behavior, Fashion industry*

1. Introduction

Brand these days have become a status symbol. Customers all over the world now prefer branded products. But why is the question. Is it the quality that attracts customers towards brand or some other related factor? This study is aimed at analyzing the effect of brand on consumer buying behavior. Along with finding the effect of brand on consumer buying behavior the purpose of the study is to have an in depth knowledge of what actually is branding and consumer behavior.

All the study has been conducted with reference to fashion industry in India. Firms in fashion industry are competing to increase their profit share in the market and among these firms; branded clothing & accessories has shifted the conventional style & interest of people. A brand which is sold at a high price and the other which is sold at low price while both have same quality and attributes, why is that? Brand studies always have remained the key attention of the marketer's because of its importance and direct relationship with consumers.

Marketers use brands as to get the competitive advantage on other competitors playing an imperative role in the success of companies. Brand holds a great importance in consumer's life. Consumer's choose brands and trust them the way they trust their friends and family members to avoid uncertainty and quality related issues. India has a successful growing economy and the Fashion industry of the country has advanced tremendously in the recent years. The increasing use of fashion goods and the emerging market has intrigued foreign as well as local brands to provide services to its customers.

2. Objectives of the study

- To understanding the concepts of branding.
- To study the factors affecting consumer behavior.
- To study the effect of brands on consumer buying behavior in relation to Fashion goods & accessories.

3. Research Methodology

- Consumer Survey on the effect of brands on their buying behavior through questionnaire.
- Sample Size: 100 Respondents.
- A sample questionnaire is annexed.

4. Understanding consumer behavior

Consumer behavior refers to the mental and emotional process and the observable behavior of consumers during searching, purchasing and post consumption of a product or service. It involves study of how people buy, what they buy, when they buy and why they buy. It blends the elements from psychology, sociology, socio psychology, anthropology and economics. It also tries to assess the influence on the consumer from groups such as family, friends, reference groups and society in general. There are several factors affecting consumer buying behavior, which can be broadly classified as:-

- Social Factors- Which refer to forces that other people exert and which affect consumers' purchase behavior. These social factors include culture and subculture, roles and family, social class and reference groups.
- Psychological Factors- Which are internal to an individual and generate forces within that influence her/his purchase behavior. The major forces include motives, perception, learning, attitude and personality.
- Personal Factors- Which include those aspects that are unique to a person and influence purchase behavior. These factors include demographic factors, lifestyle, and situational factors.

5. Understanding Branding

Products are what companies make, but customers buy brands. Therefore marketers go for branding in order to distinguish their offerings from similar products and services provided by their competitors. Additionally, it carries an inherent assurance to the customers that the quality of a purchase will be similar to earlier purchases of the same brand.

Branding is a process, a tool, a strategy and an orientation.

- To build long term relationship with the customers
- Used as a differentiation strategy when the product cannot be easily distinguished in terms of tangible features.
- A conscious customer satisfaction orientation process.

Kotler (1999) expands on the concept of identity by stating that a brand is capable of conveying up to six different levels of meaning to a targeted audience. This is known as the "Six Dimensions of The Brand"

Attributes	A brand will communicate specific attributes, such as prestige
Benefits	A brand strengthens a product's attributes by communicating a set of benefits that makes it more attractive
Values	A brand represents a company's core values and belief system
Culture	A brand is representative or target a target audiences socio cultural characteristics
Personality	A Brand can project behavioral personality patterns of targeted consumers
User	The brand, in some cases, can emulate the end user

6. Effect of branding on consumer behavior

A Consumer's behavior may be either positive or negative, depending on the outcome of their learning and evaluating process. The evaluation of consumer attitudes towards brands has quickly

become a major part in conducting marketing research. The development of positive attitudes towards brands can lead to not only the sustaining of competitive advantage, but in the bettering of the financial health of a company. Branding has been found to be a key in formation of positive attitudes towards products, especially those involving low-levels of consumer involvement. However it has been noted that there are factors that might negate the effects of the formation of positive attitudes. One being that the effects of positive attitudes can dissipate should the consumer not purchase the product within a certain timeframe. Another factor that might negate the effects of positive attitudes might be an overtly high pricing policy, which might have a contrary effect to the consumer's positive attitudes towards the brand and result in a non sale.

7. Questionnaire results

7.1 Age

44% Respondents belonging to the age group of 11-25 are the most brand conscious group and prefer following their desired brands on social networking sites. 32% belonging to 26-40 are also brand conscious & the degree of loyalty towards brands is high among this group. The degree of brand consciousness goes on decreasing in higher age groups.

7.2 Work Status

Work status greatly influenced the choice, preference and habit of a person. Work status influences a person's fashion choices.

Students and the working class are more brand conscious as compared to other groups.

Students prefer branded casual wear & accessories, whereas the working class likes more of branded formal wear.

7.3 Household Income

Household income is the sum of all the wages, salaries, and other forms of earning received by a household during a given period of time.

Data indicate that 6% belong to income category of Rs less than 10000 and 16% fall between Rs 10000-50000. Then 42% fall between income categories of 50000-100000. And another 32% come under income group of 100000 & above. Household income highly influences the consumer behavior towards fashion goods; families having income above Rs 50000 monthly prefer more of the branded fashion apparels & accessories as compared to families having income less than Rs. 50000 a month.

7.4 Factors Affecting the Purchasing Decision

Study reveals that price & brand were the major attributes that customer's gave most importance to while purchasing readymade garments, followed by other attributes.

7.5 Who Influence Purchasing Decision

Advertising is the art of influencing human action to buy or possess one's product. The term 'media' refers to the means through which the advertising information is communicated by the advertiser to the prospective customers. Advertising helps the brands to popularize their products among the mass, which in turn helps them to influence the purchasing decision of the consumers.

Analysis reveals that 38% of the total respondents become aware about particular brands through Print media (newspapers & magazines), 30% through advertisements on TV & Radio, 26% through Online Media, and another 6% through words of mouth.

7.6 Brand Loyalty

Study indicates that only 32% are loyal customers and 68% may change their brand or look out for offers before making the purchasing decision if all the qualities are available with the new products.

7.7 Status Symbol

Approximately 80% people believe that Brands in fashion industry have become a status symbol.

8. Conclusion

Brand is a guarantee, an assurance for a defined standard of quality for the first time and for every time. Brand is name or logo that plays the role in the mind of the customer. Brands do not compete in the product area but compete for the mind space of the customer. A brand once established in the mind of the customer becomes indelible when customer identifies itself with that particular Brand. Branding is an effective marketing strategy tool that has been used with frequent success in the past. Branding can be an effective and powerful tool for all types of business organizations. If brand owners use their product correctly, the payoffs can be substantial. However, if brands are mismanaged, the results can be damaging. From the overall research we came to the conclusion that brands have an effect on the consumer mind in many ways like quality, rates, income, age group's etc. Even in the fashion industries brand have a significant effect on consumer behavior.

References

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Annexure BRANDING IN FASHION INDUSTRY

Questionnaire

(Tick whichever applicable)

The following questionnaire is being used for the purpose of a survey on '**The impact of branding on consumer buying behavior with respect to brands in fashion industry**'. The results of the analysis done on the basis of the responses will be used for educational purposes only. Thank you for your time.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Name: Mr. Ms. _____
Address: _____
City: _____
Phone: _____

OTHER INFORMATION:

Age: _____
Gender: Male Female
Marital status: Unmarried Married

WORK STATUS: (tick one)

Working Student
 Retired Self-employed
 Others _____ (Please Specify)

MONTHLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME:

<10000 10000-50000 50000-100000 >100000

1. How often do you shop for apparels & other fashion accessories?

Once in a month once in 3 months
 2-3 times a month once in 6 months

2. Factors you consider while purchasing a readymade garments?

BASIS	Large Extent(3)	Some Extent(2)	Least Extent(1)
Cloth type			
Color			
Brand			
Fashion/Trend			
Price			
Availability			

3. Who influence you to purchase the brand?

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends | <input type="checkbox"/> Advertisement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self | <input type="checkbox"/> Celebrity's style | |

4. How much do you care about using brands?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not much | <input type="checkbox"/> Never |

5. Which of the following fashion brands are you aware of?

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jack & Jones | <input type="checkbox"/> Gucci | <input type="checkbox"/> Zodiac |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provogue | <input type="checkbox"/> Levi's | <input type="checkbox"/> Louis Vuitton |
| <input type="checkbox"/> United Colors of Benetton | <input type="checkbox"/> Wills Lifestyle | <input type="checkbox"/> Allen Solly |

6. How did you hear about the brand?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> TV or Radio | <input type="checkbox"/> Online Media advertising |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Print media (Newspaper/magazines) | <input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth. |

7. Which all categories of products you would like to have branded?

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Casual clothes | <input type="checkbox"/> Accessories | <input type="checkbox"/> bags |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate wear | <input type="checkbox"/> Watches | <input type="checkbox"/> All of the above. |

8. When shopping for fashion products....

- You return to the same brand
- Try out new brands
- Look out for special offers & then decide on brand.

9. Do you follow brands on social networking sites?

- Yes
- No

10. How much do you agree that social media help in acquiring information about the fashion brands?

- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree

11. How important are the following factors of a shopping experience to you?

	Very important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant
Price				
Trend				
Brand Name				
Quality				
Convenient location				

12. How relevant are the following factors while choosing a clothing brand?

	Irrelevant	Neutral	Relevant	Very Relevant
Advertising				
Styles				
Online shopping				
Customer service				

13. Brand has now become a status symbol. Do you agree?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree.

14. Do you think focus on branding while purchasing is correct?

- Yes
- No Not Sure.