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Digital Influence on Customer Perception of Branded Clothes: A Study on Changing Trends and Purchase Behavior

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ABSTRACT

Retailing has emerged as a booming sector in last one decade and retailing practices have also undergone a drastic change witnessed by continuous innovations and more and more consumer orientation while formulating retail strategies and day-to-day operations. However, retail strategies may differ depending on the product assortment, brands available and store location.

Furthermore, like brand image, it is the store image which is again important for customer patronage. Infactstore image plays a key role in attracting store traffic and ensuring consumer loyalty. In this study an attempt has been made to understand shopping behaviour of men's while purchasing shirts and to understand store attributes that are considered vital, while selecting the store. To decide important store attributes and to measure perceived store image, John Players and its close competitors namely Allen Solly, Peter England, Excalibur and Zodiac are selected. Nine important attributes were identified namely variety & quality, location, appearance of the store, etc. A competitor analysis was also done. The methodology was to find the perception about the different brands and the attributes which they consider vital for choosing a store. This study has definitely provided an insight in understanding store attributes and in formulating retail store strategies.

INTRODUCTION

Fashion is broad term which typically encompasses any product or market where there is an element of style that is likely to be short-lived.

Evolution of Lifestyle Retailing in India

Lifestyle retailing is the buzzword today. Retailers are discarding the old formats of selling; architects from abroad are being called in to transform their dull looking stores into snazzy- looking, great ambience stores; the retail industry is experiencing unprecedented growth in all quarters. And this phenomenon permeates the small and big cities of India. Shopping is no longer drudgery, even for men.

Disposable incomes are on a rise, consumers are evolving, but then, so is competition. Mega stores and larger-than-life malls are rapidly changing metro skylines. In fact, we find most stores selling the top brands in each category, be it kids, men and women

Rise of Lifestyle Branding in the Fashion Industry

An increasing no. of brands today are positioning their products as lifestyle brands-whether through 'complete wardrobe solutions' or through a more wide angled target consumer base, or both. Today, even traditional menswear brands that offered formalwear are getting into portfolio extensions by either accessorising their core offering or by 'casualising' them.

Understanding the Shift Towards Lifestyle-Oriented Consumer Preferences

Today's consumer is more interested in brands that address lifestyles, rather than brands that produce clothes. A lifestyle brand is one that either offers merchandise for a particular occasion/situation or spurs certain trends in peoples' lifestyle habits through powerful imagery. A lifestyle brand must, therefore possess tremendous aspirational value. But, contrary to popular belief, just offering accessories or other ancillary products to compliment the brand's core product does not make a lifestyle brand.

Dynamic Landscape of the Textile and Apparel Industry: Growth, Challenges, and Innovations

Over the past years the textile and apparel industry has been building upon its capacities at various levels, expanding its product base, incorporating innovative technology, and engineering newer avenues of business. This sector, being one of the largest sectors of the country, is a major propellant of the economy's growth. Interest issues and challenges dominate the industry. With the changing dynamics of doing business in a rapidly changing global economic scenario, this sector needs to identify scopes for potential business ideas and overcome challenges by covering demand into fresh opportunities.

The industry has already given ample indication of ingenuity as seen in the resurgence of consumer enthusiasm in the seemingly stagnant menswear, casual wear and formal wear segment. The apparel market has grown 15.5 per cent to INR 1224 billion.

Thriving Indian Fashion Industry: Trends, Growth, and Consumer Mindset Shift

The Indian fashion industry (including Garment retail, fashion designing and accessories trade) is booming like never before. The rapid increase in job opportunities and expanding earning capabilities has resulted in inculcating a brand mindset among Indian consumers. Spending on brands is no longer improbable.

The country is experiencing an organised retail boom because of increasing private income and changing lifestyle and consumption pattern of consumers, which has had a positive effect on the apparel industry. There has been a rapid increase in the market size of ready-to-wear clothing and lifestyle apparel brands. The clothing and apparel segment is the largest organised retail category, constituting Rs. 21400 crore of the country's 55000 crore organised retail sector in 2010. The changes that came in the buying pattern of consumers in this segment came primarily because of the rising disposable income of Indian consumers, changing lifestyles, and increasing brand consciousness among them.

CONCLUSION

- Mixed responses were found with reference to their time of shopping.
- Majority of them go out shopping only once a month.
- With reference to store preference while buying shirts, 42% of the respondents gave first preference to Levi's while Raymonds stood out at No.2 position. It indicates that customers have a clear mind set and build strong preference on the basis of their evaluations & experiences.
- With reference to store patronage it was found that wider range and quality products are given the foremost importance.
- Preference for store is dependent on the occupation background.
- Willingness to buy is independent of age group & occasion of purchase & dependent on frequency of purchase.

Recommendations

The implications of the findings for marketers, retailers, and fashion brands are discussed. Practical recommendations are offered for enhancing brand positioning, marketing strategies, product development, and customer engagement initiatives. Suggestions for future research based on gaps identified in the literature or limitations of the current study are provided.

The key findings and contributions of the study to the existing body of knowledge. It reflects on the significance of the research in advancing understanding of customer perceptions regarding branded clothing and emphasizes the importance of ongoing research in this area. Final thoughts and recommendations for practitioners and academics are offered.

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