BUYING BEHAVIOUR AND PERCEPTIONS REGARDING BRANDED Vs. UNBRANDED LIFESTYLE PRODUCTS A RESEARCH PAPER

Dr. Seema G Hariramani

Assistant Professor, Shri Chimanbhai Patel
Institute of Business Administration
Affiliated To Gujarat University
Ahmedabad
E-mail: Hariramaniseema89@Gmail.Com

ABSTRACT

Nowadays due to the upsurge in media, boom in smart phone market, more internet usage, more information in hand, more leisure time, more exposure, small families, aspirations of higher standard of living, increase in the number of DINKS (Double Income No Kids), more disposable income have made people more conscious about their lifestyles. Due to increase in mall culture and flood in the branded stores, people in India now have been using branded products especially in Metro Cities, Mega Cities and Smart Cities. Looking to this shifting of the mindset, it was thought to undertake a study to know the behavior and perceptions of people regarding branded and unbranded products. With a sample of 100 respondents selected on convenience basis, the findings of the study revealed that using branded products is perceived as a sign of status symbol. More branded items are preferred in apparels, foot wears and accessories while in home-furnishings customized or designer items are preferred. Females are more fashion conscious than males. Gender, Age and Income were the reasons attracting them to branded items. Branded products attract people mainly because of quality and uniqueness of the product followed by price, colour preferences, variety and status symbol.

Key words: Branded products, Buying factors, Lifestyle, Unbranded products.

INTRODUCTION

Many consumer studies have been undertaken on the different aspects of behaviour, preferences, perceptions, buying habits, buying patterns, attitudes and so on. Nowadays due to the upsurge in media, boom in smart phone market, more internet usage, more information in hand, more leisure time, more exposure, small families, aspirations of higher standard of living, it has been noticed that people now are more conscious about their lifestyles. With the competition around, everyone is trying to show off the better life than other. With the flooding of Global brands in Indian markets after Liberalization, Privatization and Globalisation; Indian people have been really enjoying of being global customers. Secondly, increase in the number of DINKS (Double Income No Kids), more disposable income is available in their hands. Due to increase in mall culture and flood in the branded stores, people in India now have been using branded products especially in

Metro Cities, Mega Cities and Smart Cities. Looking to this shift in the mindset of people, it was thought to undertake a study to know the behaviour of people regarding branded and unbranded products. To find out what work has been done in this area, a thorough review of literature was done.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Susan Auty and Richard Elliot (1998) conducted sixteen focus group interviews to study the importance of social identity in the interpretation of brands of jeans as measured by Snyder's Revised Self-Monitoring Scale, which discriminated between people who were highly motivated to respond to social cues and those who remained 'true to themselves'. It was found that self-monitoring is a significant mediator of meaning with regard to unbranded jeans but not branded jeans. 14 to17 year olds are more positively disposed to many of Levi's attributes than older age groups. There were significant differences between the youngest and oldest age groups in the perception of Levi's with regard to cut, fit, sexiness, stylishness, desirability and trendiness. It was also found that women had more favourable opinions and attitudes to branded jeans, specifically to image, modernity, practicality, quality and trendiness than men. **Reeti Agarwal and Ankit Mehrotra (2009)** with an objective of determining customer perception regarding branded and unbranded clothes conducted a survey with 353 respondents from Northern part of India. The findings highlighted that out of the various parameters taken into consideration, cut and fit of the clothes is considered to be the most important by customers while choosing clothes. Findings of regression analysis indicated that variety was found to have the maximum impact on customer's choice of branded or unbranded clothes. The only difference in the perception of Indian customers regarding various attributes of branded and unbranded clothes is that branded products are treated as status symbol. **Mahalaxmi Krishnan, V S Pande and Mayuresh Mule (2012)** with the objective of ascertaining the determinants for consumer preference for branded and unbranded products, conducted a survey. Findings of the study revealed that quality of the products is the prime motivator for branded products, easy availability and price are the reasons for choosing unbranded products. Respondents stated that branded products fulfil their expectations. **Syed Akif Hasan and Muhammad Imtiaz Subhani and Ms. Amber Osman (2012)** with an objective to understand and judge the co-movements between the consumptions of branded and unbranded products on the basis of consumer's income, quality and the prices of both the products undertook a study with data collected from the economic survey of Karachi, Islamabad and Lahore - all the major cities of Pakistan found that an increase in consumer's income level increases their consumption of branded products. Similarly, consumers prefer to purchase branded product as there is a strong perception that branded items have good quality. While, it was also found that if there is an increase in the prices of branded or unbranded products then both have the same pattern for being consumed which is the co-movement of their consumption patterns. **Trang P. Tran (2013)** tried to examine the influence of brand names (foreign versus national) on consumer perception and how product ratings affect the relationship between brand names and consumer perception measured by brand attitude, purchase intention, advertisement feeling, and advertisement attitude. The results showed that the national brand elicits more positive consumer perception than the foreign brand and that the product attribute information moderates the relationship between brand names and consumer perception. **Md. Mazedul Islamand and et. al.**

(2014) wanted to investigate the customer's perception in buying decisions toward Bangladeshi local apparel products. The study was conducted among 200 respondents including ten local apparel brands. The study revealed that customer desires the products quality, comfort, price, functional and aesthetic look, offer & discount and many others key buying factors suitable for them when visiting a brand showroom. **Shahimi Mohtar and Mazhar Abbas (2014)** focused on examining the teenager's preferences and choice behaviour towards branded and unbranded products and their awareness regarding branded/Unbranded products. The data was collected from 320 school students in Pakistan related to the age group of 13-19 years old. After analysing the data by using statistical analysis software (SPSS), results showed that more than fifty % teenagers are aware about the difference between branded and unbranded products. Further, female teenager is more socially influenced, fashionable, with more leisure time and puzzled over-choice as compared to male. Young males were found brand conscious and spontaneous customer who considerably rely on media. **Maliha Khakhan and Kamran Ahmed Siddiqui (2015)** with the purpose to explore the women's perceptions towards branded clothing in Pakistan conducted a survey of 200 women from posh localities of Pakistan through personal interviewed. The findings of the study by using Exploratory factor analysis revealed that women consider four major factors i.e. Status, Traditions, Quality and Values while purchasing the branded clothing. **Antonio Iazzi & Savino Santovito (2016)** with an objective to find out consumer preferences for attributes of branded and non-branded products conducted a study with structured questionnaire. The results indicated that the attributes that affect the consumer while choosing the brand are comfort, fit, fabric quality, brand, price, colour, type of wash/treatment, versatility of use, trim, design/model, originality of the model and how fashionable the model is. Further, consumers appear uncertain when there is an absence of a brand; non-brand-oriented consumers ascribe greater importance to the attributes of a product, with emphasis on those that relate to the product model (fit, comfort, design). Price is important for both the types of customers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Objectives

Due to increase in mall culture and flood in the branded stores, it was thought to undertake a study to know the behaviour of people regarding branded and unbranded products. The study was undertaken with the following objectives:

- To compare the preferences of the customers among the lifestyle products (branded & unbranded).

- To know the customer perception about lifestyle products.

  - ❖ Apparels

  - ❖ Foot wares

  - ❖ Accessories

  - ❖ Home Furnishing

- To have an idea about the parameters which customer considers while purchasing a product.

- To know the factors that provide satisfaction to the customers from branded products

- To know the relationship between demographic variables and satisfaction from branded products.

Research Design, Sampling Design, Data Collection and Scope of Study

A single cross sectional research design is adopted where in a survey was undertaken of 100 people (response rate 35%)from Ahmedabad city, through non-probability sampling technique on convenience base to know their views about branded and unbranded lifestyle products. A self-administered questionnaire was the primary survey instrument for data collection consisting of open-ended and close-ended questions.

Statistical Tools

To meet the objectives, simple techniques like frequency counts and percentages were used for data analysis. Descriptive, Inferential Measures and statistical tests were used to analyse the data and meet the objectives of the study.

DATA ANALYSIS

After collecting the data through questionnaires, all questionnaires were coded and data was checked for inconsistencies. After cleaning the data, tables were prepared, Frequencies and Percentages were derived.

The demographic profile of the respondents is as follows:

TABLE -1: Demographic Profile

AGE OF RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY
10-20 years	36
21-30 years	50
31-40 years	10
41-50 years	3
More than 50 years	1
Total	100

GENDER	FREQUENCY
Male	50
Female	50
Total	100

OCCUPATION	FREQUENCY
Service	16
Student	58
Business	11
Housewife	8
Others	7
Total	100

MEMBERS IN FAMILY	FREQUENCY
2 to 4	43
4 to 6	44
6 to 8	6
More than 8	7
Total	100

MONTHLY INCOME	FREQUENCY
Dependent	37
Up to Rs. 10,000	9
Rs. 10,000-40,000	19
Rs. 40,001-80,000	6
Rs. 80,000-1,00,000	16
Above Rs. 1,00,000	13
Total	100

To know the difference between the loyalty of males and females ANNOVA test was run on cross tabulation to find out the relationship between Loyalty and Gender.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

HYPOTHESIS 1:

H0: There is no significant relationship between Loyalty and Gender.

H1: There is a significant relationship between Loyalty and Gender.

In order to test the above hypothesis ANNOVA statistics was calculated as:

TABLE -2: ANNOVA							
Loyalty Vs. Gender							
			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	(Combined)		0.490	1	0.490	0.403	0.527
	Linear Term	Contrast	0.490	1	0.490	0.403	0.527
Within Groups			119.220	98	1.217		
Total			**119.710**	**99**			

In the above table, sig. value 0.527 is more than α value of 0.05, which suggests that null hypothesis can be accepted which means that there is no significant relationship between Loyalty and Gender.

HYPOTHESIS 2:

H0: There is no significant relationship between the Fluctuation in Purchase decision and Gender regarding the purchase of Local brands or International brands.

H1: There is a significant relationship between the Fluctuation in Purchase decision regarding the purchase of Local brands or International brands and Gender.

TABLE -3: ANNOVA							
Fluctuation in Purchase Decision regarding the Purchase of Local brands or International brands Vs. Gender							
			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	(Combined)		10.890	1	10.890	9.520	0.003
	Linear Term	Contrast	10.890	1	10.890	9.520	0.003
Within Groups			112.100	98	1.144		
Total			**122.990**	**99**			

In the above table, sig. value 0.003 is less than α value of 0.05, which suggests that null hypothesis can be rejected which means that there is a significant relationship between Gender and Purchase Decision Fluctuation regarding the purchase of Local brands or International brands.

HYPOTHESIS 3:

H0: There is no positive association between Gender and Satisfaction from purchase of Branded Products.

H1: There is a positive association between Gender and Satisfaction from purchase of Branded Products.

In order to test the above hypothesis chi-square statistics was calculated as:

$$\chi^2 = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \sum_{j=1}^{n} \frac{\left(O_{ij} - E_{ij}\right)^2}{E_{ij}}$$

Where $E_{ij} = \dfrac{R_i \, x \, C_j}{G}$

Where O_{ij} = observed frequency in the i-j[th] cell

E_{ij} = expected frequency of the i-j[th] cell

R_i = Row Total of ith Row

C_j = Column Total of the jth Column

G= Grand Total

The p value of chi-square statistic for Hypothesis 3 was found to be 0.646 which is more than the α value of 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted thereby concluding that Gender does not have positive association with Satisfaction from purchase of Branded Products.

HYPOTHESIS 4:

H0: There is no positive association between Age and Satisfaction from purchase of Branded Products.

H1: There is a positive association between Age and Satisfaction from purchase of Branded Products.

The p value of chi-square statistic for Hypothesis 4 was found to be 0.305 which is more than the α value of 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted thereby concluding that Age does not have positive association with Satisfaction from purchase of Branded Products.

HYPOTHESIS 5:

H0: There is no positive association between Income and Satisfaction from purchase of Branded Products.

H1: There is a positive association between Income and Satisfaction from purchase of Branded Products.

The p value of chi-square statistic for Hypothesis 5 was found to be 0.694 which is more than the α value of 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted thereby concluding that Income does not have positive association with Satisfaction from purchase of Branded Products.

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study revealed that:

- People are very much influenced with lifestyle products and adopting it very well.

- People prefer branded items more in apparels, foot wears and accessories while in home- furnishings respondents choose to go for customized or designer items.

- Females are more fashion conscious than males.

- Want/desire is the most important factor that stimulates them to shop lifestyle branded products, followed by special occasion, pleasure/fun, need and Sales & offers.

- Gender, age and income were the reasons attracting them to branded items.

- When asked their shopping locations, a whooping majority of 65% of respondents prefer shopping malls for buying the lifestyle products followed by retail stores and factory outlets. Very few preferred super markets and department stores.

- About 65% of the sample is willing to spend from Rs. 1000 to 5000 every month on branded lifestyle products.

- Around 75% respondents expect excellent product performance from branded items.

- 50% respondents admitted that sometimes their decision fluctuate between local and international brands.

- Characteristics of branded products that attract the respondents are mainly quality of the product and uniqueness followed by price, colour preferences, variety and status symbol.

- More than 50% of the respondents revealed that they are loyal to the branded products.

- The general perception of respondents about branded lifestyle products is that they are of good quality, highly expensive and shows high status.

- The buying of home furnishings is affected by the personal taste followed by family and friends suggestions and price. Very few of them consider vastushastra before purchasing home furnishings.

- 90% of the people are satisfied with the branded lifestyle products available in the market.

- The overall perception about of the respondents is that Branded lifestyle products are status symbol.

- There is no significant relationship between Loyalty and Gender.

- There is a significant relationship between Gender and Purchase Decision Fluctuation regarding the purchase of Local brands or International brands.

− Age, Gender and Income don't have any positive association with Satisfaction from purchase of Branded Products.

IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

The study is an eye-opener for the marketers of branded and unbranded products. The marketers will be able to know the expectations of people from branded items, what factors they consider while purchasing branded or unbranded items. Marketers can accordingly formulate the strategies. How much does the family or friends impact the customers' decision of buying branded or unbranded products? Are the various promotional strategies adopted by brands to combat competition? Can the prospective brands survive the ongoing competition? To get the answers of these questions and a few more, a cross-sectional, regional study can be conducted in future.

CONCLUSION

Looking to the shifting of the mindset, it was thought to undertake a study to know the behavior and perceptions of people of Ahmedabad regarding branded and unbranded products. Branded products are perceived as a sign of status symbol. More branded items are preferred in apparels, foot wears and accessories while in home - furnishings customized or designer items are preferred. Females were found more fashion conscious. The study will help the marketers of branded and unbranded products to understand the behavior and perceptions of people regarding products. It will help them to create the strategies to hook the people.

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