Reproaching Individuality through Brand Purchase

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Abstract

Availability of various apparel brands in the market had motivated this study on individualistic selection of apparel brands by working women. With the aim of determining the buying behavioural pattern of the apparel brands, Data was collected using questionnaire cum interview schedule from 200 working women in Chandigarh. The results revealed that majority of the working women bought clothes more than 4 times in a year in company from malls and multi-branded showrooms. Price, Discount and sales, Brand name recognition, Easy availability and Loyalty& trust were major factors considered while purchase by the working women. TV advertisements, radio, magazines, newspapers and store window displays were the main influencing mediums influencing choice of brand. "Levi's" and "Pantaloons" topped followed by "Madame" and "Meena bazaar" which were considered the most familiar and favourites brands among working women.

Key words: Purchase pattern, factors influencing purchase, top brands in various garment categories.

Introduction

"Customer is a King of past and now the emperor of the future"

The emergence of the thinking, discerning consumer resulted in the consumer being appointed as the 'kings and the queens' in developing economies for more than two decades and with their all efforts, marketers tried to satisfy the needs of their respective customers. No doubts customers is a King, but it as a story of the past, He is the emperor of the future, now, the customers are having their own set of expectations and they are always willing to get it fulfilled. If they are not getting so, they feel dissatisfied. So it becomes imperatively for a marketer to know about the expectations of the customers.

Working women now-a-days are highly informative, preferring to browse all the formats and then finally purchasing from those formats that offer better quality products and services at lucrative discounts (*Solomon & Rabolt, 2011*). They have become champions and representatives of a new model of management leadership that is more suited to the complexities and subtleties of today's global world. They are dictating terms with respect to the performance of properties and qualities of the apparel they wishes to buy. Hence, not only does they expect good quality, reasonable priced and good fit garment, but also wishes to ensures that such products are manufactured without exploiting the vulnerable class of the society or disregarding environment protection norms (*Teli, 2011*).

This study was undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To study the buying behavior for the apparel brands among working women of Chandigarh.

2. To study the factors responsible for brand choice and purchase.

3. To rank the top three popular brands in each garment category according to customer's perspective.

Methodology

To carry out the study, market survey was conducted to shortlist the brands under various garment categories and a consumer survey was done to study the brand awareness and association on the apparel purchase of working women in Chandigarh. Chandigarh was divided into four zones i.e. North, South, East and West. Sample size consisted of 200 respondents of Chandigarh comprising of 50 respondents from each zone belonging to the age group 25-35 years and earning Rs 37000 - 57000 per month from various professions like banking, teaching, administrative, I.T. and medicine. Convenient random sampling technique was used to select the sample from each zone on the basis of co-operative attitude and availability of the respondents. A questionnaire cum interview schedule was framed to collect data from working women regarding their brand awareness, loyalty, image and purchase. Ten percent of the selected sample i.e. total 20 working women were taken up for the pretesting to check the validity of the questionnaire.

Results and Discussions

The survey was conducted in two phases as follows:

a)   **Phase I: Market survey**

b)   **Phase II: Consumer survey**

Phase I: Market survey

The main aim of conducting market survey was to shortlist the brands available under different garment categories in Chandigarh. Minimum 12 brands were listed. The number varied depending on the availability of brands under different garment categories. Private labels were included in Indian ethnic category due to scarcity of national as well as international brands. The shortlisted brands for the selected garment categories were:

i.   *Denim jeans, Shorts & Caperies:* Lee, Benetton, Espirit, Levi's, Tommy Hilfiger, Guess, Diesel, H&M, Miss Sixty, Wrangler, Pepe, Flying Machine, Numero Uno, Cantabil, DJ&C, Integrity, Killer and Spykar.

ii.   *Trousers (formal/casual)*: Benetton, Espirit, Levi's, Tommy Hilfiger, Guess, H&M, Pepe, Cantabil, DJ&C, Numero Uno, Madame, Colorplus, Koutons, Allen Solly, Wills Lifestyle and Arrow.

iii. *Formal shirts*: Benetton, Espirit, Levi's, Tommy Hilfiger, Lee, Wrangler, Numero Uno, Madame, Allen Solly, Wills Lifestyle, Zodiac and Cantabil.

iv.   *Casual Tops & t-shirts:* Benetton, Espirit, Levi's, Tommy Hilfiger, Allen Solly, Cantabil, Wills Lifestyle, Numero Uno, Madame, Wrangler, Lee, Zara,

Calvin Klein, Gucci, Reebok, Mango, Adidas, Miss Sixty and Zodiac.

v. *Summer Jackets*: Lee, Levi's, Tommy Hilfiger, Guess, H&M, Miss Sixty, Wrangler, Pepe, Numero Uno, Wills Lifestyle, Zodiac, Reebok, Duke, Arrow, Madame and Spykar.

vi. *Dresses & Skirts*: Espirit, Levi's, Tommy Hilfiger, Zara, Gucci, Miss Sixty, Lee, Pepe, H&M, Madame, Wills Lifestyle, Numero Uno, Koutons, Zodiac and Globus.

vii. *Suits (Salwar & chudidars):* Biba, Globus, Ritu Kumar's, Satya Paul's, Rimanika, Fabindia, Khadi, Pantaloons, Shopper's Stop, Westside, Meena Bazaar, Chhabra 555, Kala Zone and Frontier Raas.

viii. *Sarees:* Biba, Globus, Ritu Kumar's, Satya Paul's, Rimanika, Fabindia, Khadi, Pantaloons, Shopper's Stop, Westside, Meena Bazaar, Chhabra 555, Kala Zone and Frontier Raas.

Phase II: **Consumer survey-**

In the consumer survey, 200 respondents were interviewed and buying behavior was studied with special reference to working women of Chandigarh.
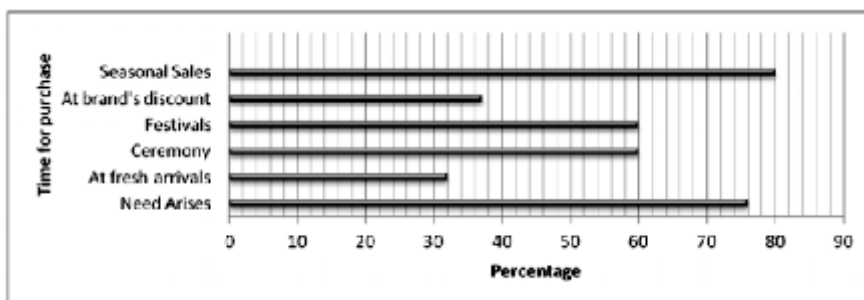

Fig.-1

Bar diagram showing respondents on the basis of preferred time for purchase*

*Multiple responses

Majority of the respondents of both the sectors i.e. 74% bought clothes more than 4 times in a year while 26% bought 3 times. 80% of them bought mostly during seasonal sales as they eagerly wait for the seasonal discounts followed by need based, festival time and ceremonies.

Survey revealed that majority of the respondents i.e. 77% purchased denim jeans , shorts and capris, 24% trousers (formal/casual) and 37% formal shirts of the brand 'Levi's'. Maximum number of the respondents i.e. 37% and 39% purchased casual tops & t-shirts, dresses and skirts respectively of the brand 'Madame'. Majority of the respondents i.e. 45% purchased summer jackets of the brand 'Wrangler'. And most of the respondents i.e. 56% and 86% purchased suits (Salwar/chudidars) and sarees of the brand 'Pantaloons'**.**

More than half of the working women (60%) spent more than Rs. 2500 at one time, 19% spent Rs. 1000-1500, 11% spent Rs.1500-2000 while shopping for the branded clothes whereas very few respondents (10%) spent only Rs. 2000-2500 on branded clothes at one go.

All of the working class females of Chandigarh believed in planned buying and almost all respondents (98%) spread their budget over the months. Ninety one percent purchased international brands and 95% stated that they would prefer to buy international brand over domestic brand if it would be available at the national brand's price as they believed that international brands are of high quality which add high status and prestige to their lifestyle.
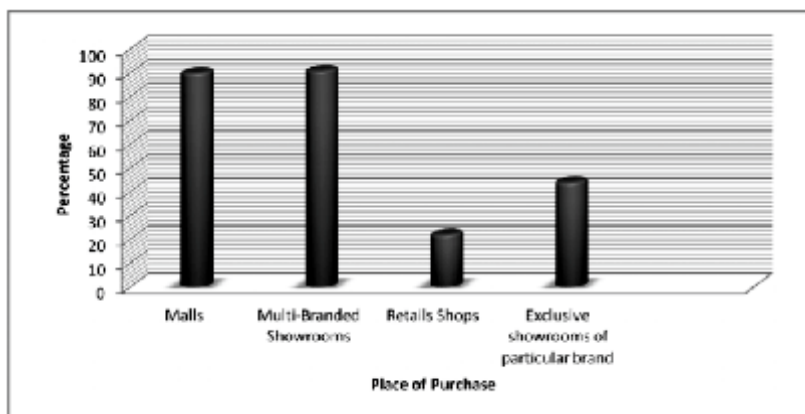

Fig- 2

Column diagram showing respondents on the basis of place preference for brand purchase*

*Multiple responses

Among the respondents, ninety one percent preferred to shop from multi-branded showrooms followed by malls (90%), exclusive brand showrooms (44%) and retail shops (22%). They believed that the malls offer various schemes regularly. A shopping trip was always a positive experience for them as they preferred to visit malls with inspiring decoration and unique touch. Ninety two of the private working sector females shopped for branded clothes from multi-branded showrooms as they believed that it offered variety and choice in brands followed by malls (88%), exclusive brand showrooms (36%) and retail shops (22%).

More than half of the respondents (64%) never paid attention to for the place of origin of the product label before purchasing a garment and 67% stated that they would avoid purchasing garments from third world countries which are famous for exploitation of labour and sweatshops.

Almost all respondents preferred to shop in company (98%) and stated that their purchase decision varied according to their company's choice especially of the family members (91%) and friends (62%) as compared to (9%) own choice. Sixty two percent of working women sought company of their friends.
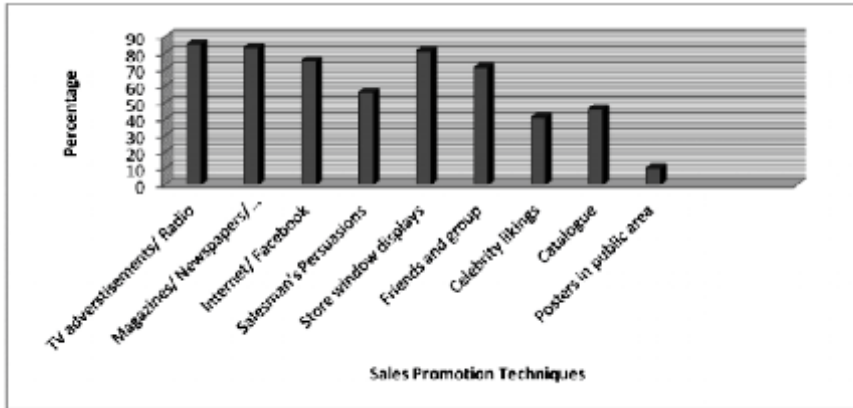
Fig.-3

Column diagram showing respondents on the basis of Sales promotion techniques influencing brand purchase*

*Multiple responses

All respondents of both the sectors considered TV advertisements, radio, magazines, newspapers, store window displays as the most influencing methods in the selection of their target brand because all these techniques were very easily available to them and they could get the latest and up to date information of the brands. Posters in public area (10%) were found to be the least influencing sales promotional technique.

Rank	Ambience of the retail outlet		Loyalty & trust		Positive image		Price		Quality		Brand name recognition		Discount & sales	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Rank I	3	6	21	21	18	24	19	13	1	1	0	0	23	21
Rank II	2	4	15	15	43	58	19	13	44	50	9	9	16	15
Rank III	16	31	12	12	13	18	25	17	9	10	65	62	28	26
Rank IV	0	0	39	38	0	0	30	21	22	25	31	30	0	0
Rank V	31	60	15	15	0	0	51	35	12	14	0	0	42	39
	52	26	102	51	74	37	144	72	88	44	105	53	109	55
RANK				V				I				III		II

Easy availability		Good designs		Good fit		Status symbol		Durability		Satisfaction after first purchase		Ethical practices	
f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
32	31	11	12	1	1	9	12	46	88	9	28	2	50
20	19	50	54	0	0	11	15	2	4	2	6	0	0
21	20	9	10	16	17	2	3	4	8	0	0	2	50
12	12	7	8	37	39	6	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
19	18	16	17	41	43	45	62	0	0	21	66	0	0
104	52	93	47	95	48	73	37	52	26	32	16	4	2
	IV												

TABLE-1

Ranking of factors considered for the purchase of a brand

It was revealed that majority of the respondents considered price, discount and sales, brand name recognition, easy availability and loyalty & trust as the top 5 factors for the purchase of a particular brand, whereas ethical practices followed by company was least ranked by the respondents.

Most of the respondents (71.5%) agreed to the statement that "People buy certain brands so that they can be accepted in a particular social group" because they believed that brands add status as well as helps in improving their personality and impressing other people in the society. Therefore branded clothes count a significant role in their lifestyle.

Ninety three percent respondents agreed that agreed that in a situation where all the other parameters influencing your buying decisions of apparel remaining

are fixed, Corporate Social Responsibility would be the propelling force to make the selection. They believed that company engage themselves in such practices for the welfare of the society therefore the image of such company will be more positive than the other companies. All of the respondents agreed that their choice of a brand would be hampered if they came to know that the company was engaged in child labour and exploitation as they didn't wanted to be a part of such black listed company.

BRANDS	Number of respondents	EXCELLENT (4)	GOOD (3)	FAIR(2)	Wt Avg Score	RANK
TOMMY HILFIGER	37	28	9	0	113	III
LEVI'S	150	150	0	0	600	I
LEE	16	14	2	0	56	IV
DIESEL	9	7	2	0	29	VI
WRANGLER	36	3	33	0	15	VII
PEPE	61	54	7	0	216	II
MADAME	10	1	9	0	7	VIII
NUMERO UNO	14	9	5	0	37	V
SPYKAR	9	0	0	9	2	IX

TABLE -2

Ranking of brands by the respondents on the basis of perceived quality and past experiences

TABLE -2(a) *Denim jeans / shorts / capris*

BRANDS	No. of Respondents	EXCELLENT (4)	GOOD (3)	Wt Avg Score	RANK
ESPIRIT	11	0	11	3	VII
LEVI'S	61	59	2	236	I
TOMMY HILFIGER	22	12	10	49	III
PEPE	29	27	2	108	II
MADAME	10	10	0	40	IV
ALLEN SOLLY	3	3	0	12	VI
KOUTONS	34	9	25	38	V
CANTABIL	7	0	7	3	VII

TABLE-2(b) *Casual trousers*

BRANDS	No. of Respondents	EXCELLENT (4)	GOOD (3)	Wt Avg Score	RANK
ESPIRIT	2	0	2	3	VI
LEVI'S	35	35	0	140	I
TOMMY HILFIGER	2	2	0	8	V
LEE	2	0	2	3	VI
MADAME	21	12	9	49	II
NUMERO UNO	9	9	0	36	III
WRANGLAR	3	3	0	12	IV
CANTABIL	3	3	0	12	IV
ZODIAC	2	2	0	8	V

TABLE-2(c) *Formal shirts*

BRANDS	No. of Respondents	EXCELLENT (4)	GOOD (3)	Wt Avg Score	RANK
LEVI'S	76	76	0	304	I
TOMMY HILFIGER	14	0	14	3	VI
ADIDAS	13	0	13	3	VI
REEBOK	5	0	5	3	VI
LEE	27	13	14	54	III
WRANGLER	12	3	9	14	IV
CALVIN KLEIN	2	2	0	8	V
MADAME	45	45	0	180	II
NUMERO UNO	10	0	10	3	VI
WILLS	9	0	9	3	VI

TABLE-2(d) *Casual tops and t-shirts*

BRANDS	No. of Respondents	EXCELLENT (4)	GOOD (3)	Wt Avg Score	RANK
LEVI'S	7	7	0	28	III
TOMMY HILFIGER	3	0	3	3	VI
WRANGLER	9	2	7	10	V
REEBOK	9	9	0	36	II
DUKE	20	0	20	3	VI
MADAME	11	11	0	44	I
NUMERO UNO	4	2	2	10	V
SPYKAR	3	3	0	12	IV

TABLE-2(e) *Summer jackets*

BRANDS	Number of respondents	EXCELLENT (4)	Wt Avg Score	RANK
TOMMY HILFIGER	2	2	4	I
LEVI'S	5	5	4	I
MADAME	39	39	4	I

TABLE -2(f) *Dresses & skirts*

BRANDS	Number of respondents	EXCELLENT (4)	GOOD (3)	Wt Avg Score	RANK
BIBA	9	0	9	3	IX
REMANIKA	2	2	0	8	VIII
GLOBUS	46	42	4	168	III
KHADI	12	12	0	48	IV
WESTSIDE	66	11	55	47	V
PANTALOONS	116	82	34	329	I
SHOPPER'S STOP	7	0	7	3	IX
MEENA BAZAR	78	74	4	296	II
CHABRA 555	38	8	30	34	VI
KALA ZONE	7	7	0	28	VII

TABLE 2(g) *Suits (salwar/chudidars)*

BRANDS	Number of respondents	EXCELLENT (4)	GOOD (3)	Wt Avg Score	RANK
BIBA	2	0	2	3	VI
GLOBUS	37	20	17	81	III
WESTSIDE	28	2	26	11	V
PANTALOONS	65	52	13	209	I
CHABRA 555	26	14	12	57	IV
KALA ZONE	7	0	7	3	VI
SHOPPER'S STOP	7	0	7	3	VI
MEENA BAZAR	22	22	0	88	II

TABLE 2(h) *Sarees*

Respondents were asked to select one option among excellent, good, fair & poor for only those brands they had purchased and used under various garment categories on the basis of perceived quality (in terms of seam strength, fabric durability, color fastness etc) and past experiences (past purchases). Quality Excellent option was given 4 marks, Good option 3 marks, Fair option 2 marks & Poor option was given 1 mark. Weighted average scores were used for rankings. The brands which were been top listed by the respondents for various categories of the garments are as follows:

i.   For denim, respondents trusted on *Levi's* (weighted score 600; ranked I) the most, followed by *Pepe* and *Tommy Hilfiger* for purchase.

ii.   For trousers, respondents trusted on *Levi's* (weighted score236; ranked I) the most, followed by *Pepe* and *Tommy Hilfiger* for purchase.

iii. For formal shrts, respondents trusted on *Levi's* (weighted score140; ranked I) the most, followed by *Madame* and *Numero Uno* for purchase.

iv.   For tops and t-shirts, respondents trusted on *Levi's* (weighted score 304; ranked I) the most, followed by *Madame* and *Lee* for purchase.

v.   For summer jackets, respondents trusted on *Madame* (weighted score 44; ranked I) the most, followed by *Reebok* and *Levi's* for purchase.

vi.   For dresses, respondents trusted on *Madame*, *Levi's* and *Tommy Hilfiger* had same weighted score.

vii. For suits, respondents trusted on *Pantaloons* (weighted score 329; ranked I) the most, followed by *Meena Bazar* and *Globus* for purchase.

viii. For sarees, respondents trusted on *Meena Bazar* (weighted score 209; ranked I) the most, followed by *Meena Bazar* and *Globus* for purchase.

Conclusion

Brands are introducing new fashion concepts creating their demand which go well with Indian working women. The purchase decisions of the working women are governed by the complex interplay of product attributes, company's social and environmental commitment individual and cultural values and social systems. So marketers should devise strategies to increase the sales revenue by not only publicizing and advertising their apparel attributes but also about their involvement in the activities of Corporate Social Responsibility.

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