



Research Article

**A STUDY ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR IN THE APPAREL INDUSTRY
IN MUMBAI AND NAVI MUMBAI**

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ABSTRACT

This research paper studies the consumer buying behavior of apparel buyers in Mumbai and Navi Mumbai. It is found that most of the consumers preferred branded apparel over non-branded ones. More than 50% of the sample size preferred private label brands over the other brands as they found it pocket-friendly. They were less affected by the choices of their friends and relatives. Also, more than 50% of the consumers are dissatisfied with the after sales services and it is a big turn off for them. The exchange-time for a product also plays an important role in the buying preferences of the consumer. Their income also has a great influence on their purchase pattern. Majority of the respondents preferred readymade apparel than the stitched ones and may switch to another brand, if their preferred brand is not available. Most of them prefer western apparel over Indian apparel.

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INTRODUCTION

The Apparel Industry consists of companies that design and sell clothing, footwear and accessories. Product categories include everything from basics, such as underwear, to luxury items, for example, cashmere sweaters and alligator-skin handbags. Traditionally, apparel companies were wholesalers, selling large quantities of goods to retailers, which then marked-up items and sold them to consumers at a profit. However, it's become more difficult to draw a line between wholesalers and retailers; most apparel companies now have both types of operations.

Consumer Buying Behavior: The process by which individuals search for, select, purchase, use and dispose of goods and services, in satisfaction of their needs and wants.

Overview of the Industry

The retail apparel industry generated more than \$304 billion in revenue in 2009, according to Franchise Help. The most profitable segment is women's clothing, accounting for 53 percent of total revenue, says Franchise Help. Selling apparel is a very seasonal business, with most of sales coming during the holidays and when kids are headed back to school.

Market

Many large, well-branded retailers make up a chunk of the apparel market, but many smaller businesses, such as boutique and niche apparel stores, are part of the market, too.

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The larger apparel retailers have an advantage over smaller shops since they get better pricing from suppliers because they buy such large quantities of apparel. That means their profit margin is greater and they can offer better retail pricing to their customers. Smaller apparel retailers make up for the high pricing they pay for wholesale retail apparel by selling certain types and styles of clothing rather than offering everything for everyone like many larger apparel stores.

Trends

One of the major trends affecting the retail apparel industry is the increase in people who like shopping for apparel on the Internet from the comfort of their home rather than shopping at a traditional brick-and-mortar store. Emerging technology such as mobile applications are changing the way retailers do business. For instance, NRF Stores reports that customers who use mobile devices to buy spend eight times more than people who only shop in a store. Other mobile trends include creating mobile point-of-sale applications to make it easier to buy and offer services such as virtual fitting rooms. Another trend is the use of customer data to figure out what your customers want. A way for small retailers to get this information is to use social media to learn what their customers want.

Challenges/Competition

Staying on top of the latest styles of clothing, footwear and accessories is key to attracting apparel-hungry shoppers. Otherwise you end up with too much inventory, or worse yet, your branding suffers. Another challenge is the abundance of retail apparel shops on the Internet since these may lure local shoppers, causing you to lose revenue. On top of the Internet threat, building and operating a physical location is a costly

endeavour. If money is a big concern, counteract these costs by solely selling apparel via the Internet and eliminate the need for a costly storefront and staff.

Growth of the industry

The Indian retail market is expected to demonstrate a promising year-on-year growth of 6% to reach USD 865 billion, by 2023, from the current USD 490 billion. The share of apparel in India's retail market is 8%, corresponding to a value of USD 40 billion. In addition to fashion apparel, the growing demand for fashion accessories makes the Indian fashion market both interesting and lucrative. The Indian fashion retail market has witnessed several fascinating changes and challenges in recent years, which are indicators of the country's evolving fashion retail market. The challenges associated with these changes need to be addressed in the most efficient and prudent manner to harness the concomitant benefits.

Rationale for the study

Apparel industry plays a pivotal role in developing a country's economy in terms of revenue generation and creation of employment. The industry is undergoing a drastic change due to global sourcing and high level of price competition. Favorable demographic factors, rise in disposable incomes, change in consumer behavior and a substantial shift towards branded apparel has resulted in a positive growth in the global apparel market.



LITERATURE REVIEW

Tina Yinyin Wang (2010) in her research 'Consumer Behavior Characteristics in fast fashion Industry' found that for a fashion store to be successful, it must improve the customer involvement, make sure the word-of-mouth is positive and also the attitude of customers towards the fast fashion industry must be carefully managed.

Jessica Delace (2011) in her research 'The Psychology and Behavior of Consumers in the Fashion Industry' surveyed how psychographics play an important role in consumer behavior and assumptions like women prefer brands, etc. can mislead the company. Proper retail research is to be done to properly understand the target segment.

Sandeep Bhanot (2013) in his research on 'the Indian Apparel market for the purchase behavior of apparel among management students in Mumbai and Navi Mumbai' found that the important factors considered while buying apparel were good quality, reasonable price, suiting the personality and the convenience to wear among the management students.

Rimpy Goyal (2014) in her research 'Purchase Intentions of Consumers towards Selected Luxury Fashion Products with special reference to Pune region' found that the higher income group people buy luxury fashion brand products and media is the top most influencer for it.

Deepali Saluja (2016) in her research 'Consumer Buying Behavior towards Fashion Apparels – A Case of Delhi' has found that there were significant differences between the gender, education, monthly income and occupation. For each of the relevant demographic factors, the result found mainly differences concerning the price of fashion apparels and the various other factors such as quality, comfort and also the attributes of a store which affected their purchase intention. Reham Abdelbaset Sanad (2016) in his research 'Consumer Attitude and Purchase Decision towards Textiles and Apparel Products' investigated how visual and physical characteristics have great impact on consumer buying decision.

Angharad McLaren, Helen Goworek, Tim Cooper, Lynn Oxborrow, Helen Hill (2016) in their research 'the effect of consumer attitudes on design or product longevity: The case of the fashion industry' investigated how product longevity plays an important role in the fashion industry for certain segment in the market. They found that people show interest towards longer-lasting clothes as they want reasonable lifetime for garments, especially the expensive ones. Although comfort and look is important, longevity is implicitly required by the customers and should be addressed properly.

Dr. Pawan Kumar and Kanchan (2017) in their 'An Analytical Study of Consumer Behavior towards Fashion Apparels in Ludhiana' have found that the consumers of Ludhiana district are more interested towards fashion and branded apparels. Even though they are restricted through some financial aspects like individual income, they still are very much interested towards branded apparels and they are updated as well.

Objectives

1. To study the apparel market in terms of their preferences and after sales service.
2. To study the purchase behavior for branded and non-branded apparel.
3. To study how consumer behavior for apparel is influenced by factors like monthly income, gender and peer influence.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design: First a secondary study was conducted on the apparel market in Mumbai and Navi Mumbai through books and the internet. Then descriptive research was done in the questionnaire format to collect primary data from consumers of different areas, family income, gender, and attitude regarding buying behavior of apparel.

Sampling Design: A random sample of 180 consumers residing in Mumbai and Navi Mumbai was taken and would cover people of different incomes and gender. The sampling frame is obtained from the database of customers of apparel available with different retail outlets.

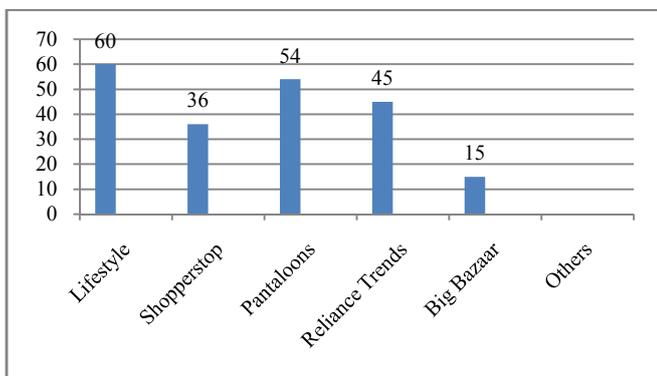
Data Collection: The primary data was collected using a questionnaire.

Data Analysis

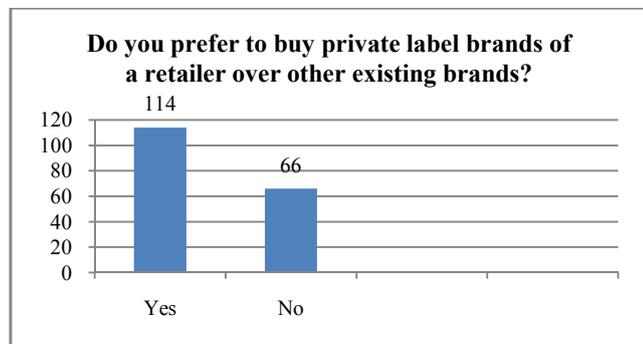


Conclusion: Majority (63.33%) customers prefer to buy branded clothes over non-branded ones.

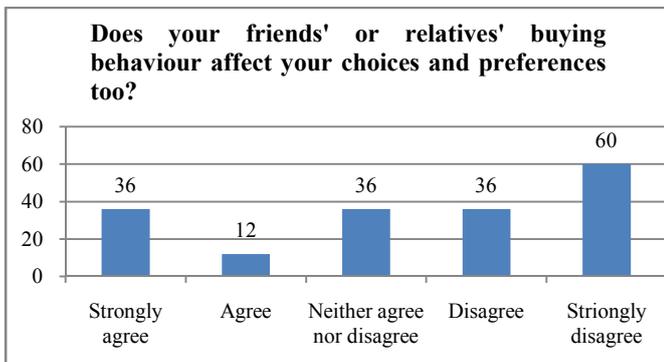
Which retail outlets do you visit frequently?



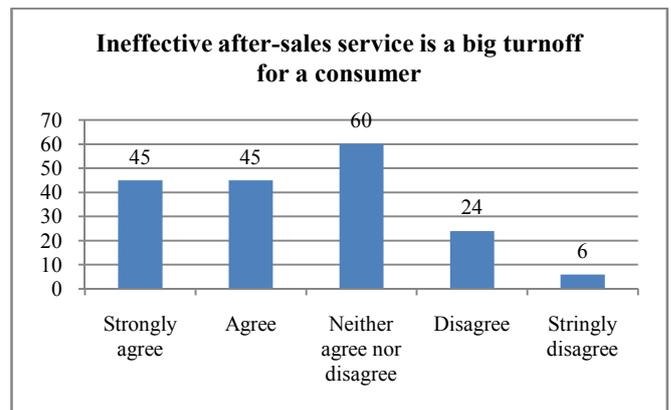
Conclusion: Majority of the people visit retail outlets like Lifestyle, Pantaloons, Reliance Trends and Shopperstop.



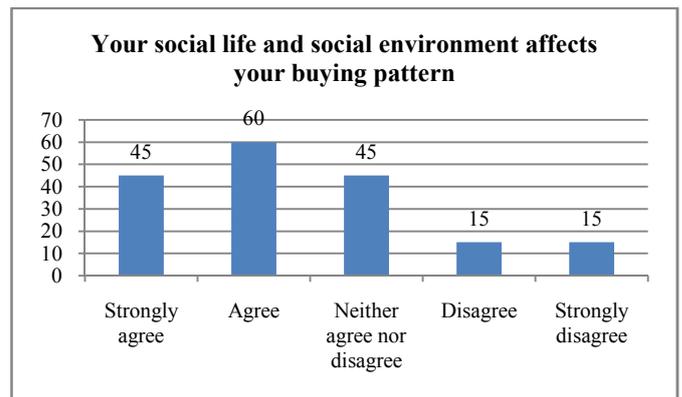
Conclusion: Majority (63.33%) of the customers prefer to buy private label brands of a retailer over other existing brands.



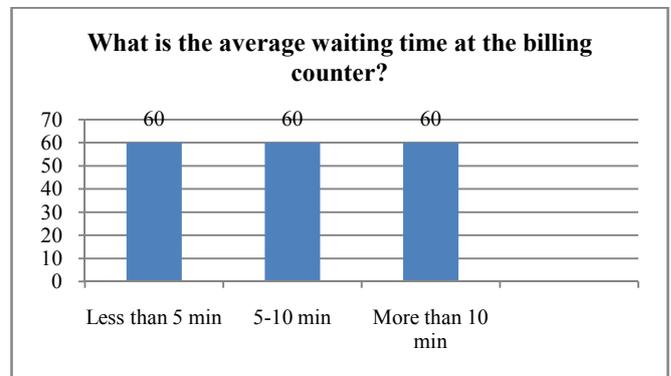
Conclusion: Majority (53.33%) of the customers feel that their friends' or relatives' buying behavior does not affect their choices and preferences.



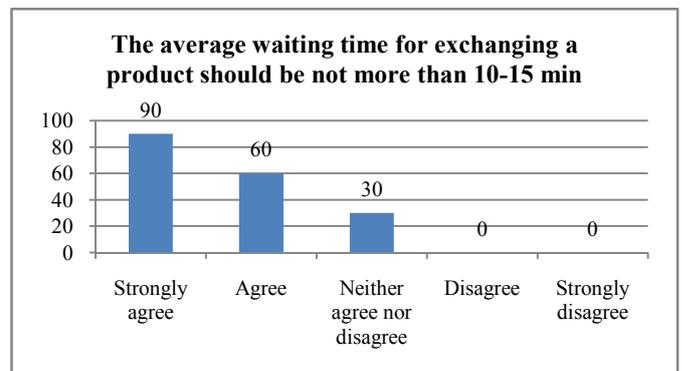
Conclusion: For 50% of the customers, ineffective after-sales service is a big turn-off.



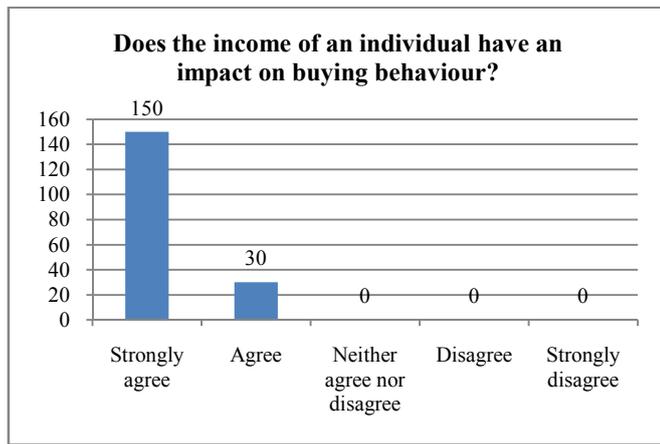
Conclusion: For majority (58.33%) of the customers, their social life and social environment affects their buying pattern.



Conclusion: Majority (66.67%) of the customers want the average waiting time at the billing counter to be not more than 10 minutes.



Conclusion: Majority (83.33%) of the customers feel that the average waiting time for exchanging a product should be not more than 10-15 minutes.



Conclusion: All the customers feel that income has an impact on buying behavior.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

A sample size of 180 consumers was taken in total from Mumbai and Navi Mumbai on a random basis.

Following were the findings among them:

1. Most of the consumers preferred branded apparel over non-branded ones.
2. More than 50% of the people preferred private label brands over the other brands as they found it pocket-friendly.
3. The survey indicated that the people were less affected by the choices of their friends and relatives.
4. More than 50% of the consumers are dissatisfied with the after sales services and it is a big turn off for them.
5. The exchange-time for a product also plays an important role in the buying preferences of the consumer.
6. An individual's income also has a great influence on the purchase pattern.
7. Majority of the respondents preferred readymade apparel than the stitched ones.
8. Majority of them may switch to another brand, if their preferred brand is not available.
9. Most of the people prefer western apparel over Indian apparel.
10. The important factors considered while buying apparel are:
 - Good quality
 - Reasonable price
 - Suiting the personality
 - Convenient to wear
 - Size availability
11. The acceptable average waiting time at the billing counter is 10 minutes.

Benefits of the study

1. The study gives in-depth knowledge on the buying behavior of the consumers in case of apparels.
2. Apparel brand companies can use this study to understand a customer's requirements and ensure that these are met and they get a satisfied customer.

Limitations & Scope for further research

1. Due to limitations of time, the sample size is restricted to only 180 customers. This can be increased so that the results are more representative of the population.
2. The study has been conducted only in Mumbai and Navi Mumbai. It can be extended to other metros and cities also, to see if the results are similar or different.

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