

Factors affecting Purchase of Apparels among Working & College Going Women – A Consumer Behavior Perspective

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Abstract

Consumers are the king in the markets and without consumers no business can sustain in the market. Studying about consumer behavior has become an essential element in the current scenario. Customer behavior is based on consumer attitude, perception, and personality and so on. Business focuses on consumers and they expect consumers to get satisfied at the maximum. Studying about consumer behavior is essential for all businesses. Purchase behavior is also a significant factor which strongly determines the consumer behavior. Textile and apparel industry is a huge sector which serves almost every individual. Purchase behavior of consumers in apparel is dynamic in nature and thus it paves way for the research. Compared to men, women are more shopaholic and tend to adapt the changes & trends frequently. Thereby, there is an essential to study the women purchase behavior in apparel products.

Based on the literature review and the gaps identified, price, quality, location and promotional factors are identified as a set of factors, to analyze and study the consumer behavior. The purpose and objective of the current research study is to analyze about the selected factors influencing the purchase of apparels among working and college-going women and to compare the purchase behavior of working women and college-going women on apparel purchase. This descriptive research study used simple random sampling method to collect the data from working and college-going women in Chennai city. 236 responses were used for the further analysis. The study used Mann-Whitney Test and Friedman Test to identify the significant factors and the difference between purchases of apparel among two different groups of women. It is found from the study that; quality is found to be more important factor considered by the consumers for purchasing the apparel.

Keywords: Consumer Behavior, Apparel, Location, Price, Quality

Introduction

Marketing is a tool used by almost all the companies for exchange of information/products with its customers. “Marketing is a social & managerial sequence by which individuals & groups obtain what they need & want through creating and exchanging products & services and value with other people” (Kotler, 2000). Modern marketing techniques wholly depend on consumer behavior to assess about the product performances. Companies strive hard and put in their maximum efforts to study the consumer behavior to predict the future sales & profit. Consumer behavior depends on the individual consumers buying attitude and decision. As defined by Kotler and Keller (2006), “consumer behavior is the study of how individuals, groups and organizations select, buy, use and dispose of goods, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy their needs and wants”. Exploring about the consumer behavior pertains to the study of consumers mainly based on their demographic and behavioral factors. To be a market leader and yield more profit, analyzing on the consumer behavior for any product is essential in the recent times.

From the early times, women are more attached to the apparels in India. Women love to wear new dresses and they are very particular in the selection of apparels. In any segment of women either working or college-going women prefer apparel as most important and desirable product purchase for any occasions. There are varieties of apparels for women such as sarees, salwars, kurtis, cholis, suits, jeans & tops, etc. Women do consider and narrow down their purchase according to the quality, offers, price, past experience, word of mouth communications, royalty, etc.

This paper attempts to study about the purchase of apparels among working and college-going women in Chennai city with pertaining to some selected factors.

Review of literature

Customers are attracted through marketing strategies. The quality of marketing strategies depends on knowing, serving, and influencing the customers. The success of a business depends on achieving the organizational objectives efficiently. Knowledge and information about consumers is vital for developing flourishing marketing strategies, as it challenges the marketers to think & analyze the relationship among customers & marketers.

Consumer behavior as a discipline emerged in the 1960s and is characterized by two paradigms, they are, positivist and a non-positivist (Pachauri, 2001). The study of consumer behavior is essential to the marketers because it enables them to understand and predict purchase behavior of consumers in the market. Consumer Behavior is one of the most important in business element, because the goal of business is to satisfy the customers and earn more profit.

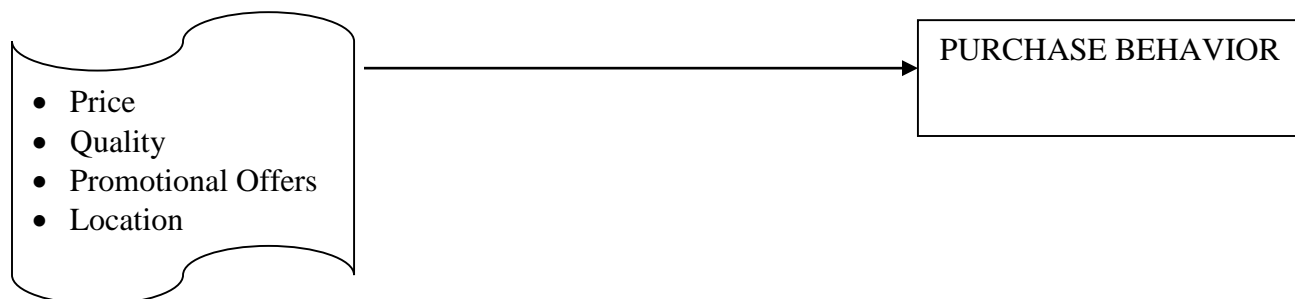
Apparel industry is a vast and big retail industry, where is a large scope for studying about the consumer purchase behavior. Asif and Kaushik (2017) found that there is a significant relationship

exists between age of the consumers and location of buying apparels. Meanwhile, Maran, Badrinarayanan and Kumar (2018) identified the buyer's behaviors and their perceived value towards branded readymade garments in Chennai city. Previously, Gurunathan and Krishnakumar (2013) also studied about the apparel buying behavior of Indian buyers through 5 variables, such as, quality, reference, store properties, advancement and item characteristics. Authors found that store quality advancement and reference groups are the significant factors of apparel buying behavior.

Though there are many studies which have focused on purchase behavior and apparel purchase, there is a vast gap to study about the purchase of apparels among working and college-going women in Chennai city with reference to specific factors. That paved way for the current research.

Research Gap

There is more competition in the sale of apparels and the sellers are not much aware of the factors which dominantly influence the consumers on their purchase of the same. From the literature it is found that, many research studies have focused on the areas of retail sales but the current study very specifically analyses about the certain selected factors which influence the purchase behavior of apparels among working and college-going women in Chennai city.



Purpose & Objective of the Research

The basic purpose of this research is to identify the selected factors which strongly influence the purchase behavior of apparels among working & college-going women. The study also attempts to compare the purchase behavior of apparels among working & college-going women in Chennai

The objective of this study is to analyze about the selected factors influencing the purchase of apparels among working and college-going women and to compare the purchase behavior of working women and college-going women on apparel purchase.

Research Methodology

As it was easy and less expensive to collect the data from the sample respondents, this descriptive research used simple random sampling method to collect the data from the samples. Working and college-going women in Chennai city were shortlisted as the sample for the study. 350 survey instruments were circulated based on the pilot study and 236 responses were statistically fit for the further analysis.

The purchase of apparels among 2 different groups of women was analyzed through SPSS 14. As per the objective framed for this research, the analysis was carried down to find comparatively, which factor (price, quality, location and offers) strongly influenced the purchase behavior of apparels among working & college-going women. Mann-Whitney Test and Friedman Test were used to identify the significant factors and the difference between purchases of apparel among two different groups of women

Analysis and Discussion

Table 1: Showing Mann-Whitney Test: Purchase Behavior and working & college-going women

| Dependent Variable | Category | Mean Rank | Z-value | Sig |
|--------------------|---------------------|-----------|---------|------|
| Purchase Behavior | Working Women | 123.5 | -0.35 | 0.72 |
| | College-going Women | 118.0 | | |

Since, the p value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted at 95% of significance level. Thus, there is no significant difference between working women & college-going women on their purchase behavior of apparels. All women explicit the same purchase behavior when it comes to apparels.

Table 2: showing the mean rank (Friedman Test) of the purchase behavior related factors

| Factors | Mean Rank | Chi-square | Sig |
|------------------------------------|-----------|------------|-------|
| Apparel sale Location | 2.50 | 69.30 | 0.000 |
| Price of the Apparel | 2.11 | | |
| Quality of the Apparel | 2.89 | | |
| Promotional offers for the Apparel | 2.51 | | |

This study results portrayed that, quality of the apparel is the most important factor considered by the respondents and it also possess 2.89 as the mean rank. Comparatively, promotional offers and

location is also considered as nearly important while both categories of women making their purchase of apparels. Though price is also a significant factor while making purchase of apparel, working & college-going women consider comparatively less important (mean score of 2.11).

Recommendations

Women tend to purchase more but their purchase behavior is diversified. The scope for sale of apparel is more as the consumers' needs and wants are always at its high on demand. Drafting of attractive sales promotion strategies to consumers will fetch more profits. Eye catchy offers and gifts will pull the customers into the shops and it would increase the sales volume. Customers always look forward for a better-quality of apparels during their purchase decision process. Rendering of superior quality of apparels at a reasonable price will retain the customers for a longer period of time and it will also enhance them to be a loyal customer.

Conclusion and Limitations of the Research

It can be concluded from the results of the current study that, both the working and college-going women determine their purchase of apparels based on price, quality and gift offers provided for the apparels. It is also found that both the categories of woman are not particular with location of the shop for the purchase of apparels. Consumers feel very happy even to travel more distance and buy what they like and love. Distance does not matter in consumer purchase decision process. But, consumers are very particular about the price, quality and the sales promotion offers which are provided to them while making a purchase decision.

The present study also faced some of the limitations in the process of the research. As the sample size is less, the result may not be exact and may not be generalized to other locations. Moreover, it was even very challenging to collect data in a very short span of time. Personal bias among the respondents was also an uncontrollable factor.

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