A STUDY ON FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE CONSUMER'S PRODUCT CHOICE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MEN'S FORMAL SHIRT

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Abstract

The most challenging 'M' among 9 M's (Man/Manpower, Money, Materials, Machines, Methods/Procedures, Markets, Minutes/Time, Management, Motivation/Morale, Measurement) is Man. Be as an internal stakeholder, employee, or external stakeholder, customer, it is very challenging and difficult for an organization to understand their behavior. The research aims to study the latter group of such stakeholders. With the objectives to understand the factors that influence product choice (Men's formal shirt) and the effect of the demographic characteristics on the factors, the study was conducted. Both primary and secondary data were collected. Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire. Secondary data from various published sources. Appropriate statistical tools were used to analyze the collected data. The results obtained reveal the factors that influence the respondents purchase choice.

Keywords: Men's formal shirt- demographic factors- consumer preference.

1. Introduction

Product is anything that can be offered to satisfy a need or want (Kotler, et al, 2006). Customers prefer a product for its aesthetics and for its functionality (Ravindra, et. al, 2010).However, the taste of Indian consumers is changing day by day. Some customers buy the product for its price,few, for the brand name and few for its colour, design, quality and so on. In earlier days people were not exposed to various brands and they never paid attention to the brand they are purchasing instead they were more conscious on the price they are paying for a product. However, as we are in the globalized scenario, the customers have numerous options to select a product. The customers are exposed to various features of product through various sources such as print media, electronic media and so on. Particularly the younger generation hasbecome more conscious of what they are wearing. This is catalyzed by the growing Indian economy and the change in spending nature of Indian customers. Customers are ready to pay more for the brand tag attached, especially, to apparel products.They want that they should be noted for the brand they use or wear. Keeping in mind the changing behavior of the customers with respect to apparel, it was decided to study about one of the apparel products, Men's formal wear.Hence, an attempt was made to understand the factors that influence a customer to buy a formal shirt.

2. Review of Literature

A representation of few of the studies conducted to understand the factors that influence customer preference are discussed in the following paragraphs.

William B.Dodds , Kent B.Monroe and DhruvGrewal (1991) in their study stated that when price is the only extrinsic cue available then quality is positively related to price. When the price increased the buyer's perception of quality increased. Brand name too had a positive effect on perception of quality, value and willingness to buy. The authors indicated that the combined price-alone effect is larger than any other combined price-cue effect but the effect of price with brand name is small. The brand name effect is larger in the presence of price information than it is by itself.

Grant and Stephen(2005) have found that the key decision factors that affect teenage girls when buying are parental and peer group approval, and the purchasing of fashion items is strongly influenced by brand name and its associations. The findings revealed the respondents were prepared to pay a premium for branded clothing, placing a high emphasis on the product being deemed cool. The findings provide the basis for further research into the buying behavior of elder girls.

Xuehua Wang and Zhilin Yang (2010) in their study stated that Brand image is a significant moderator between brand credibility and brand purchase intention,

revealing that consumers place stronger emphasis not only on brand credibility but also on the image of the brand being purchased.

Svetlana Bogomolova and Olga Grudinina (2011) in their research have analysedthat there are seven types of change that lead consumers to re-evaluate their brand choices. The most intrinsic was unexpected change, where consumers did not fully control their desire for change. The most varied group was that based on a change in lifestyle or stage and could be combined with financial change.

Azizi (2012) in his study says that brand consciousness is one of the consumer decision making traits while purchasing a product. The various findings from the studies are: Bachelors are more brand conscious, a negative relationship has been reported between age and brand consciousness score among Iranian consumers, the more is consumer income, the more is the hate for shopping.

Mukherjee&et al. (2012) have assessed Indian consumers' brand consciousness by examining their brand knowledge, purchase behaviour and perceptions of foreign brands. It has provided key inputs for global retailers to harness the potential in growing consumerism in India. The study found that brand purchase in India varies across product categories. At present, consumer knowledge and use of foreign brands is low, and Indian consumers are price-sensitive. However, Indian consumers are experimenting with brands and would like more foreign brands to enter the Indian market.

Wysong and et al. (2012) in their study showed that brand loyal and non-brand loyal (brand-switching) consumers desired different levels of brand personality. Specifically, the results indicated that brand loyal consumers rated their brands higher in sincerity and sophistication than brand-switching consumers. Perhaps brand loyal consumers are loyal to the brand because they have found that brand with the right amount of sincerity and/or sophistication.

Based on the above reviews, the following objectives were set and studied.

3. Objectives

The following are the objectives of the study:

1. To study the effect of demographic factors on brand loyalty in the men's formal shirt category.

2. To analyse the effect of demographic factors on preference between brand and price while purchasing men's formal shirt.

4. Methodology

Both primary and secondary data were collected for the study. The primary data was collected from the respondents with the help of questionnaire and personal discussions. The secondary data for this study have been collected from the reports, books, magazines, journals, newspaper, and websites.The questionnaire was distributed to 225 respondents and received 182 complete responses. The samples were collected based on the convenience of the researchers. Descriptive research design is used to understand the character of a group of customers. The collected data were analyzed using appropriate tools. A study conducted by Kamalaveni et.al (2010) reveals that 25% of the respondents' purchase decisions are influenced by their family members. Hence, it was decided to collect opinion from female customers also.

5. Data analysis

The following portion of the article presents analysis of the primary data. The demographic details of the respondents are presented below:

Table no: 1 Demographic details of the respondent

Particulars	Details	Respondents	
		Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	114	63
	Female	68	37
	Total	182	100
Age (in Years)	18 to 25	62	34
	25 to 35	74	41
	35 to 45	30	16
	45 & above	16	9
	Total	182	100
Occupation	Student	36	20
	Entrepreneur	08	04
	Professional	112	62
	Others	26	14
	Total	182	100

Source: Primary data

Association between gender and frequency of purchase

A number of studies have been made to know the difference between men's and women's buying behavior. To understand such difference a question was included and the analysis presented below:

H01: There is no association between gender and frequency of purchase.

To test the above mentioned hypothesis, thedata was analyzed using Chi-square and the same was presented in the following table.

Table no:2. Association between gender and frequency of purchase.

Frequency of purchase	Gender			Chi-square value	P-value
	Male	Female	Total		
Once in a month	32 (28)	36 (52)	68		
Once in two months	46 (40)	12 (18)	58	14.006	0.001*
Occasionally	36 (32)	20 (30)	56		

Source: Primary data

* Significant at 1% level

From the above table it is clear that more than fifty percent of the female purchases garments once in a month whereas around 46 percent of the male purchases once in two months. It is also understood that there exists an association between gender and frequency of purchase at 1 % level of significance, as the p-value is less than 0.01

Association between demographic factors and plan of purchase of the respondents

According to research from British firm Npower (2011), modern men spend more money on impulse buys than women do.Inspired by the study, the respondents were asked about their purchase plan before they go for shopping. To test the existence of association between demographic (gender, age & occupation) with prior planning the following hypotheses were set and tested using chi-square. The result is presented in the following table:

H02: There is no association between gender and prior planning.

H03: There is no association between age and prior planning.

H04: There is no association between profession and prior planning.

Table no: 3. Association between demographic factors and plan of purchase.

Demographic		Prior planning		Chi-square value	P-value
		Yes	No		
Gender of the respondent	Male	70	44	1.254	0.280
	Female	36	32		
Age (in years)	18 to 25	34	28	3.552	0.314
	25 to 35	40	34		
	35 to 45	20	10		
	45 & above	12	04		
Occupation	Student	20	16	8.8138	0.043*
	Entrepreneur	08	00		
	Professional	60	52		
	Others	18	08		

Source: Primary data
Note: * denotes significant at 5 % level.

From the above table, it is understood that there exists an association between occupation and their prior plan for purchase. As the p value is less than 0.05, reject H04.

As the p value is greater than 0.05 in testing the null hypothesis, H02 , accept the same, i.e., there is no association between gender and prior planning. Similarly, the p value is greater than 0.05 in testing the null hypothesis, H03 and hence accepts the null hypothesis. From this, it is evident that there is no association between age and prior planning for purchase.

Association between demographic factors and brand loyalty of the respondents

A study conducted by Munafet. al (2009) stated that age play a vital role in determining brand loyalty while gender is insignificantly related to brand loyalty of customers.To understand the same following hypotheses were set and tested using chi-square. The result is presented in the following table:

H05: There is no association between gender and brand loyalty.

H06: There is no association between age and brand loyalty.

H07: There is no association between profession and brand loyalty .

Table no: 4. Association between demographic factors and brand loyalty.

Demographic factors		Brand loyalty		Chi-square value	P- value
		Yes	No		
Gender of the respondent	Male	68	46	10.107	0.001**
	Female	24	44		
Age	18 to 25	30	32	6.595	0.086
	25 to 35	32	42		
	35 to 45	18	12		
	45 & above	12	04		
Occupation	Student	18	18	2.312	0.545
	Entrepreneur	06	02		
	Professional	56	56		
	Others	12	14		

Source: Primary data

Note: * denotes significant at 5 % level.

From the above table, it is understood that there exist an association between gender and their loyalty towards brands. As the p value is less than .05, reject H05. It is also evident that there is no association between age and brand loyalty; occupation and brand loyalty, as the p values are greater than 0.05 respectively. Hence the hypotheses H06and H07are accepted.

Significant difference between the mean ranks of factors considered during the purchase of a product.

To study whether there exist significant difference between the mean ranks of factors considered during the purchase of a product; the following null hypothesis was set:

H08 : There is no significant difference between the mean ranks of factors considered during the purchase of Men's formal shirt.

Friedman's test was administered to test the null hypothesis and the results of the test are given in the following table.

Table no:5. Significant difference between the mean ranks of factors considered during the purchase of a product.

Financial factors	Mean Rank	Chi-square value	P value
Brand	2.43	7.707	<0.001 **
Design	3.04		
Price	1.89		
Quality	2.64		

Note: ** denotes significant at 1% level.

Since P value is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected at 1% level. Hence, there exists significant difference between the mean ranks of parameters considered during the purchase of a product. Based on the mean ranks, Design (3.04) is highly influencing followed by Quality (2.64), Brand (2.43), and price (1.89) in purchasing a garment.

Significant difference in the opinion of male and female customers.

To test the existence of significant difference in the opinion of male and female with respect to different factors while purchasing a formal shirt.

H09 : There is no significant difference in the opinion of male and female, with respect to different factors in selecting a formal shirt.

Table no 6 :Significant difference in the opinion of male and female customers.

| Factors | Gender | | | | t-value | P value |
| | Male | | Female | | | |
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Brand	67.05	30.22	53.23	29.85	2.772	0.006*
Design	53.23	29.85	77.50	25.25	0.543	0.588
Price	77.50	25.25	75.38	23.17	0.300	0.765
Quality	75.39	23.17	47.16	22.88	3.413	0.001**

Note: * denotes significant at 5 % level.

Since the p value is less than 0.01 for the factors brand and quality, the hypothesis is rejected. Hence, it may be concluded that there exists significant difference in the opinion of the male and female customers with respect to brand and quality. Further, considering the mean values on the opinions regarding brand, 67.05for male which is higher than 53.23 for female, implies that male customers give more priority to brand than female.

Further, as P values for the factors design and price are greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted at 5 % level, i.e., there is no significant difference in the opinion of male and female.

Association between age groups and factors considered in selecting a formal shirt.

H10 : There is no significant difference in the opinion of different age group respondents, with respect to different factors in selecting a formal shirt.

Table no 7 :Association between age groups and factors considered in selecting a formal shirt.

| Factors | Age group (in Years) | | | | F value | P value |
	18 to 25	25 to 35	35 to 45	45 & above		
Brand	56.00	65.00	67.31	53.57	1.424	0.238
	(28.82)	(32.29)	(27.17)	(35.16)		
Design	75.00	77.27	77.68	78.33	0.138	0.937
	(25.67)	(23.50)	(26.65)	(20.85)		
Price	49.00	46.67	40.38	60.71	2.200	0.091
	(27.18)	(22.30)	(25.57)	(18.90)		
Quality	71.00	63.79	65.38	57.14	1.607	0.190
	(22.22)	(24.41)	(18.81)	(30.11)		

Note: The value in bracket refers to standard deviation

From the above table, it can be seen that P values with respect to all the factors are greater than 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level. This implies that there is no significant difference between the age groups with respect to the factors considered while purchasing a formal shirt.

Association between profession and factors considered in selecting a formal shirt.

H11 : There is no significant difference in the opinion of different profession of the respondents, with respect to different factors in selecting a formal shirt.

Table no 8 :Association between profession and factors considered in selecting a formal shirt

Factors	Profession				F value	P value
	Student	**Entrepreneur**	**Professional**	**Others**		
Brand	59.38	91.67	58.52	66.67	2.555	0.058
	(32.22)	(12.91)	(29.82)	(31.85)		
Design	70.59	82.14	79.25	72.92	1.393	0.247
	(26.45)	(12.20)	(24.37)	(23.22)		
Price	51.56	33.33	47.16	47.92	0.956	0.415
	(27.63)	(12.91)	(24.10)	(24.36)		
Quality	68.75	41.67	65.91	68.18	2.413	0.069
	(21.06)	(12.91)	(23.42)	(26.93)		

Note: The value in bracket refers to standard deviation

From the above table, it can be seen that P values with respect to all the factors are greater than 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level. This implies that there is no significant difference between the professions of the respondents with respect to the factors considered while purchasing a formal shirt.

6. Discussion and conclusion

The primary and secondary data collected have been systematically processed and statistically analyzed. Based the analysis the inferences and findings were presented below.

According to the study Women purchase more frequently than men, as they purchase for their family members also. Male customers are more loyal to the brand than female customers. Customers belonging to the age group above 45 years are more loyal to brands than the other age group customers.Most of the entrepreneurs are loyal to the brands.Customers give more preference to the design of the product than to price while purchasing a garment.

Though the study focused on the preference between brand and price, it is noted that design of a product influence highly than those factors. To increase the sales volume, variety in the products, design may be concentrated by the stores. As male customers are more loyal to the brand, they may be retained by offering more privileges.

From the study it is certainly proven that the customers prefer a product for its uniqueness and sound quality, no more price domination exists. \

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