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         INTRODUCTION
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         NEED/IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY
         STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
         OBJECTIVES
         HYPOTHESES
         RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
         RESULTS & DISCUSSION
         FINDINGS
         RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS
         CONCLUSIONS
         LIMITATIONS
         SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH
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BOOKS

- Bowersox, Donald J., Closs, David J., (1996), "Logistical Management." Tata McGraw, Hill, New Delhi.

- Hunker, H.L. and A.J. Wright (1963), "Factors of Industrial Location in Ohio" Ohio State University, Nigeria.

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- Garg, Sambhav (2011): "Business Ethics" Paper presented at the Annual International Conference for the All India Management Association, New Delhi, India, 19–23

UNPUBLISHED DISSERTATIONS

- Kumar S. (2011): "Customer Value: A Comparative Study of Rural and Urban Customers," Thesis, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra.

ONLINE RESOURCES

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WEBSITES

- Garg, Bhavet (2011): Towards a New Natural Gas Policy, Political Weekly, Viewed on January 01, 2012 http://epw.in/user/viewabstract.jsp

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CUSTOMER PREFERENCE TOWARDS ORGANIZED BRANDED APPAREL RETAIL OUTLETS IN COIMBATORE CITY

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ABSTRACT

The apparel industry plays a key role in economic development in terms of revenue, foreign exchange and investments and employment generation. Readymade garments have become a status symbol in social circle. The Indian consumers are attracted towards the readymade garments because of fashion consciousness, style and design, brand image, smart look, comfort and relatively less price. The footfalls of the consumers in to the branded retail outlets either Exclusive Brand Outlet or Multi Brand Outlet are increasing day by day and make the industry to grow. Rapidly changing retail environment along with sophisticated and demanding customers have made it mandatory for the retailers to differentiate themselves for meeting the needs of their customers better than their competitors. For competitive survival, retailers are focusing on areas under their control that might give them an edge in the market. In this study, the fashion and style was considered to be the most important factor followed by quality merchandise in influencing the customers in selecting the organized branded retail outlet and hence the retailers are suggested to ensure that these factors are given due importance in the present scenario.

KEYWORDS

Apparel Retail outlets, Brand preference, Customer choice of outlet, Retailing.

INTRODUCTION

Retailing is one of the pillars of the economy in India and accounts for 13% of GDP. The retail industry is divided into organized and un-organized sectors. Over 12 million outlets operate in the country and only 4% of them being larger than 500 square feet in size. Organized retailing refers to trading activities undertaken by licensed retailers, that is, those who are registered for sales tax, income tax, etc. These include the corporate backed hypermarkets and retail chains, and also the privately owned large retail businesses. Un-organized retail or traditional retail refers to small retailers consisting of the local kirana shops, owner-manned general stores, chemists, footwear shops, apparel shops, paan and beedi shops, hand-cart hawkers, pavement vendors, etc.

According to IBEF (India Brand Equity Foundation), the Indian retail market currently estimated at around US$ 490 billion, is project to grow at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 6 per cent to reach US$ 865 billion by 2023. Food and grocery is the largest category within the retail sector with 60 per cent share followed by the apparel and mobile segment. Organized retail, which constituted 7 per cent of total retail in 2011–12 is estimated to grow at a CAGR of 24 per cent and attain 10.2 per cent share of total retail by 2016–17, according to a study titled 'FDI in Retail: Advantage Farmers' conducted by an Industrial body. Favorable demographics, increasing urbanization, nuclear families, rising affluence amid consumers, growing preference for branded products and higher aspirations are other factors which will drive retail consumption in India. Both organized and unorganized retail are bound not only to coexist but also achieve rapid and sustained growth in the coming years.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Naveen Arora, (2011) examined the factors that influence the customers' preference of shopping malls and multi brand retail stores while deciding to visit for shopping. He used Kruskal-wallis test to find the most influencing factors for the customers. The study identified that location, merchandise mix, physical evidences, people and image of the mall influence the customers' choice of mall or multi brand retail store. The study revealed that the location is the most important factor while Store/Mall Image is the least important factor for customers. The study also revealed that presence of unhealthy crowd (which is an uncontrollable factor) repels customers away from store/mall and the type of crowd depends on the location of the store/mall. Efforts for cross-selling by mall/store management, unavailability of free drinking water and more focus on apparels stores have also been found to be important issues for malls/stores. It is concluded that a segment of customers likes to bargain while shopping, and doesn't enjoy shopping at fixed price malls/stores. **Amarendra Pratap Singh (2013)** made a study to understand the perception of consumers about three major retail outlets i.e. Pantaloons, Shoppers stop and Globus in Lucknow. A sample of 150 respondents' was selected and finally 100 samples were left for analysis rejecting 50 samples. It is concluded that majority of consumers were satisfied with the product and services of these stores. It is suggested in the study that the retail stores should emphasize on audio-visual advertising techniques and focus on attracting youth through promotional means. The consumers visiting these stores are brand conscious and their ego must be satisfied by providing them whatever they are looking for in separate sections of these stores. **Jayaprakash Rath, Rajeshkumar Sain & Anjankumar Mohanty (2013)** made a study that investigates the time effect on brand purchase probabilities after homogenizing the data with respect to store switching, size of purchase and frequency of product purchase. Two exponential models have been proposed and their overall effectiveness compared with a naïve model. The contribution of the study is in building realistic model of consumer purchase choice by incorporating the elements of the marketing environment. The study found that in case of garment segment the factors that influence the purchase decision-making is mostly price and quality of material. The factors like brand and durability of material are next in the rank in purchasing garments. The study concludes that the management has to value their customer base by providing supporting information for equating lifetime customer value assessments. Providing criteria to evaluate the quality of competing brands of stereos facilitates the encoding, retrieval and alignment of the sensory attribute in brand choice task.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study would contribute to the body of knowledge by in-depth analysis of the various factors that influence the customers in selecting the organized branded apparel retail outlet. The study particularly useful to the retail outlets, customers and it would act as a guide to future shoppers.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Rapidly changing retail environment along with sophisticated and demanding customers have made it mandatory for the retailers to differentiate themselves for meeting the needs of their customers better than their competitors. For competitive survival, retailers are focusing on areas under their control that might give them an edge in the market. There are many factors influencing the respondents in selecting the organized branded apparel retail outlet. On this basis, an attempt was made to understand the customer's point of view while selecting the organized branded apparel retail outlet.

OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the factors influencing the customers in selecting the organized branded apparel retail outlets.
2. To identify the factors influencing the customers in purchasing a particular brand from the organized branded apparel retail outlets.

METHODOLOGY USED IN THE STUDY

AREA OF THE STUDY: Area of the study refers to Coimbatore city which is known for textiles, foundries, pumps and motor industries. It also remains as education and health care hub.

i)   **SOURCE OF THE DATA:** The study has used primary data which is collected from 200 customers visiting the organized branded retail apparel outlets using structured questionnaire method.

ii)   **SAMPLING DESIGN:** Convenience sampling method has been adopted to select the respondents visiting the organized branded apparel retail outlets.

iii)   **TOOLS FOR ANALYSIS:** The statistical tools used in the study are Descriptive analysis, spearman's rank correlation co-efficient and Friedman's two-way ANOVA. All the tests were carried out at 5% level of significance.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

a.   The study is confined to Coimbatore city and not covered all the branded outlets due to time constraint.

b.   The results obtained from this study cannot be completely generalized to all retail stores.

HYPOTHESIS

1.   **Hypothesis (H_0):** There is no significant difference in the average ranks of the factors influencing the respondents in selecting the organized branded apparel retail outlet.

2.   **Hypothesis (H_0):** There is no significant difference in the average ranks of the factors influencing the respondents in purchasing a particular brand from the organized branded apparel retail outlet.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

SPEARMAN'S RANK CORRELATION

The rank correlation coefficient is a measure of correlation that exists between the two sets of ranks. In other words, it is a measure of association that is based on the ranks of observations. The value of Spearman's rank correlation coefficient will always vary between +1 to -1 whereas +1 indicates a perfect positive correlation and -1 indicates perfect negative correlation between the variables. In this study, the ranks assigned by the respondents for the factors influencing the respondents in selecting the organized branded apparel retail outlet were used in order to find out the agreement in assigning the ranks. When the spearman's rank correlation coefficient is positive, it indicates that the ranks assigned by the respondents are in agreement while negative indicates that they are not in agreement.

TABLE 1: SPEARMAN'S RANK CORRELATION COEFFICIENT – FACTORS INFLUENCING THE RESPONDENTS IN SELECTING THE ORGANIZED BRANDED APPAREL RETAIL OUTLET

Factors	Outlet atmosphere	Quality merchandise	Parking space	Price	Convenient location	Lighting arrangements	Fashion and style	Exclusive outlet	Promotional offers	Salesmen service
Outlet atmosphere	1.000	0.327[*]	0.312[*]	-0.249[*]	-0.007	-0.307[*]	-0.316[*]	-0.374[*]	-0.286[*]	-0.236[*]
Quality merchandise	0.327[*]	1.000	0.078	0.040	-0.089[*]	-0.325[*]	-0.281[*]	-0.322[*]	-0.387[*]	-0.200[*]
Parking space	0.312[*]	0.078	1.000	-0.151[*]	0.131[*]	-0.109[*]	-0.423[*]	-0.331[*]	-0.306[*]	-0.271[*]
Price	-0.249[*]	0.040	-0.151[*]	1.000	-0.088[*]	-0.092[*]	0.025	-0.081	-0.308[*]	-0.183[*]
Convenient location	-0.007	-0.089[*]	0.131[*]	-0.088[*]	1.000	0.015	-0.247[*]	-0.283[*]	-0.105[*]	-0.202[*]
Lighting arrangements	-0.307[*]	-0.325[*]	-0.109[*]	-0.092[*]	0.015	1.000	0.169	-0.040	-0.047	-0.143[*]
Fashion and style	-0.316[*]	-0.281[*]	-0.423[*]	0.025	-0.247[*]	0.169	1.000	0.124[*]	0.056	-0.024
Exclusive outlet	-0.374[*]	-0.322[*]	-0.331[*]	-0.081	-0.283[*]	-0.040	0.124[*]	1.000	0.292[*]	0.101[*]
Promotional offers	-0.286[*]	-0.387[*]	-0.306[*]	-0.308[*]	-0.105[*]	-0.047	0.056	0.292[*]	1.000	0.282[*]
Salesman service	-0.236[*]	-0.200[*]	-0.271[*]	-0.183[*]	-0.202[*]	-0.143[*]	-0.024	0.101[*]	0.282[*]	1.000

[*] Significant at 5% level

The correlation coefficient between the outlet atmosphere with the quality merchandise and parking space were found to be positive and significant and hence the ranks assigned are in agreement, whereas the correlation coefficient for price, lighting arrangements, fashion and style, exclusive outlet, promotional offers and salesman service were found to be significant but negatively correlated and hence the ranks assigned are not in agreement.

The correlation coefficient between the quality merchandise with the outlet atmosphere was found to be positive and significant and hence the ranks assigned are in agreement, whereas the correlation coefficient for convenient location, lighting arrangements, fashion and style, exclusive outlet, promotional offers and salesman service were found to be significant but negatively correlated and hence the ranks assigned are not in agreement. .

The correlation coefficient between the parking space with the outlet atmosphere and convenient location were found to be positive and significant and hence the ranks assigned are in agreement, whereas the correlation coefficient for price, lighting arrangements, fashion and style, exclusive outlet, promotional offers and salesman service were found to be significant but negatively correlated and hence the ranks assigned are not in agreement.

The correlation coefficient between the price with the outlet atmosphere, parking space, convenient location, lighting arrangements, promotional offers and salesman service were found to be significant but negatively correlated and hence the ranks assigned are not in agreement.

The correlation coefficient between the convenient location with the parking space was found to be positive and significant and hence the ranks assigned are in agreement, whereas the correlation coefficient for quality merchandise, price, fashion and style, exclusive outlet, promotional offers and salesman service were found to be significant but negatively correlated and hence the ranks assigned are not in agreement.

The correlation coefficient between the lighting arrangements with the fashion and style was found to be positive and significant and hence the ranks assigned are in agreement, whereas the correlation coefficient for outlet atmosphere, quality merchandise, parking space, price, exclusive outlet, promotional offers and salesman service were found to be significant but negatively correlated and hence the ranks assigned are not in agreement.

The correlation coefficient between the fashion and style with the lighting arrangements and exclusive outlet were found to be positive and significant and hence the ranks assigned are in agreement, whereas the correlation coefficient for outlet atmosphere, quality merchandise, parking space and convenient location were found to be significant but negatively correlated and hence the ranks assigned are not in agreement.

The correlation coefficient between the exclusive outlet with the fashion and style, promotional offers and salesman service were found to be positive and significant and hence the ranks assigned are in agreement, whereas the correlation coefficient for outlet atmosphere, quality merchandise, parking space and convenient location were found to be significant but negatively correlated and hence the ranks assigned are not in agreement.

The correlation coefficient between the promotional offers with the exclusive outlet and salesman service were found to be positive and significant and hence the ranks assigned are in agreement, whereas the correlation coefficient for outlet atmosphere, quality merchandise, parking space, price and convenient location were found to be significant but negatively correlated and hence the ranks assigned are not in agreement.

The correlation coefficient between the salesman service with the exclusive outlet and promotional offers were found to be positive and significant and hence the ranks assigned are in agreement, whereas the correlation coefficient for outlet atmosphere, quality merchandise, parking space, price, convenient location and lighting arrangements were found to be significant but negatively correlated and hence the ranks assigned are not in agreement. The other correlation coefficients were not significant.

Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant difference in the average ranks of the factors influencing the respondents in selecting the organized branded apparel retail outlet.

FRIEDMAN'S TWO-WAY ANOVA

To test is there any significant difference in the average ranks assigned by the respondents for the factors influencing in selecting the organized branded apparel retail outlet, the non-parametric tool namely Friedman's two-way ANOVA was applied and the results are presented in the following table.

TABLE 2: FRIEDMAN'S TWO-WAY ANOVA - FACTORS INFLUENCING THE RESPONDENTS IN SELECTING THE ORGANIZED BRANDED APPAREL RETAIL OUTLET

Factors	Average Rank	Rank
Outlet atmosphere	5.82	VII
Quality merchandise	4.40	II
Parking space	6.42	IX
Price	5.15	III
Convenient location	5.58	V
Lighting arrangements	7.19	X
Fashion and style	3.33	I
Exclusive outlet	5.64	VI
Promotional offers	5.28	IV
Salesman service	6.18	VIII

Chi-square	Degrees of freedom	Significance
566.60	9	0.000

(p> 0.05 Not Significant, p< 0.05 Significant)

It is clear from the above table that the fashion and style was ranked first in influencing the respondents in selecting the organized apparel retail outlet. The quality merchandise was ranked second, price was ranked third, promotional offers was ranked fourth, convenient location was ranked fifth, exclusive outlet was ranked sixth, outlet atmosphere was ranked seventh, salesman service was ranked eighth, parking space was ranked ninth and lighting arrangements was ranked tenth among the factors influencing the respondents in selecting the organized apparel retail outlet.

The calculated Chi-square value (566.60) was found to be significant. This indicates that there is significant difference in the average ranks of the factors influencing the respondents in selecting the organized branded apparel retail outlet.

TABLE 3: SPEARMAN'S RANK CORRELATION COEFFICIENT – FACTORS INFLUENCING THE RESPONDENTS IN PURCHASING A PARTICULAR BRAND FROM THE ORGANIZED BRANDED APPAREL RETAIL OUTLET

Factors	Quality	Durability	Brand image	Good colors and design	Smart look & comfortable	Fabric	Price	Availability
Quality	1.000	0.182*	-0.079	-0.353*	-0.471*	0.140*	-0.272*	-0.175*
Durability	0.182*	1.000	-0.139*	-0.523*	-0.456*	0.302*	-0.472*	-0.282*
Brand image	-0.079	-0.139*	1.000	-0.234*	-0.113*	-0.129*	-0.203*	-0.104*
Good colors and design	-0.353*	-0.523*	-0.234*	1.000	0.476*	-0.316*	0.174*	0.047
Smart look & comfortable	-0.471*	-0.456*	-0.113*	0.476*	1.000	-0.224*	0.083	-0.066
Fabric	0.140*	0.302*	-0.129*	-0.316*	-0.224*	1.000	-0.448*	-0.344*
Price	-0.272*	-0.472*	-0.203*	0.174*	0.083	-0.448*	1.000	0.256*
Availability	-0.175*	-0.282*	-0.104*	0.047	-0.066	-0.344*	0.256*	1.000

* Significant at 5% level

The correlation coefficient between the quality with the durability and fabric were found to be positive and significant and hence the ranks assigned are in agreement, whereas the correlation coefficient for good colors and design, smart look and comfortable, price and availability were found to be significant but negatively correlated and hence the ranks assigned are not in agreement.

The correlation coefficient between the durability with the quality and fabric were found to be positive and significant and hence the ranks assigned are in agreement, whereas the correlation coefficient for brand image, good colors and design, smart look and comfortable, price and availability were found to be significant but negatively correlated and hence the ranks assigned are not in agreement.

The correlation coefficient between the brand image with the durability, good colors and design, smart look and comfortable, fabrics price and availability were found to be significant but negatively correlated and hence the ranks assigned are not in agreement.

The correlation coefficient between the good colors and design with the smart look and comfortable and price were found to be positive and significant and hence the ranks assigned are in agreement, whereas the correlation coefficient for quality, durability, brand image and fabrics were found to be significant but negatively correlated and hence the ranks assigned are not in agreement.

The correlation coefficient between the smart look and comfortable with the good colors and design was found to be positive and significant and hence the ranks assigned are in agreement, whereas the correlation coefficient for quality, durability, brand image and fabrics were found to be significant but negatively correlated and hence the ranks assigned are not in agreement.

The correlation coefficient between the fabrics with the quality and durability were found to be positive and significant and hence the ranks assigned are in agreement, whereas the correlation coefficient for brand image, good colors and design, smart look and comfortable, price and availability were found to be significant but negatively correlated and hence the ranks assigned are not in agreement.

The correlation coefficient between the price with the good colors and design and availability were found to be positive and significant and hence the ranks assigned are in agreement, whereas the correlation coefficient for quality, durability, brand image and fabric were found to be significant but negatively correlated and hence the ranks assigned are not in agreement.

The correlation coefficient between the availability with the price was found to be positive and significant and hence the ranks assigned are in agreement, whereas the correlation coefficient for quality, durability, brand image and fabric were found to be significant but negatively correlated and hence the ranks assigned are not in agreement.

Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant difference in the average ranks of the factors influencing the respondents in purchasing a particular brand from the organized branded apparel retail outlet.

FRIEDMAN'S TWO-WAY ANOVA

To test is there any significant difference in the average ranks assigned by the respondents in purchasing a particular brand from the organized branded apparel retail outlet, the non-parametric tool namely Friedman's two-way ANOVA was applied and the results are presented in the following table.

TABLE 4: FRIEDMAN'S TWO-WAY ANOVA - FACTORS INFLUENCING THE RESPONDENTS IN PURCHASING A PARTICULAR BRAND FROM THE ORGANIZED BRANDED APPAREL RETAIL OUTLET

Factors	Average Rank	Rank
Quality	2.34	I
Durability	4.39	IV
Brand image	3.50	II
Good colors and design	4.80	V
Smart look & comfortable	5.03	VI
Fabric	5.76	VII
Price	4.20	III
Availability	5.97	VIII

Chi-square	Degrees of freedom	Significance
826.23	7	0.000

(p> 0.05 Not Significant, p< 0.05 Significant)

It is clear from the above table that the quality was ranked first in influencing the respondents in purchasing a particular brand from the organized apparel retail outlet. The brand image was ranked second, price was ranked third, durability was ranked fourth, good colors and design was ranked fifth, smart look and comfortable was ranked sixth, fabric was ranked seventh and availability was ranked eighth among the factors influencing the respondents in purchasing a particular brand from the organized apparel retail outlet.

The calculated Chi-square value (826.23) was found to be significant. This indicates that there is significant difference in the average ranks of the factors influencing the respondents in purchasing a particular brand from the organized branded apparel retail outlet.

FINDINGS

- Majority (61.8%) of the respondents belong to the age group of 26 - 46 years.
- Majority (62.4%) of the respondents are male.
- Majority (56.2%) of the respondents are married.
- Most (35.0%) of the respondents have completed Under Graduation.
- Most (30.8%) of the respondents are doing business.
- Most (41.0%) of the respondents have one earning member in the family.
- Most (45.4%) of the respondents monthly income of the family is between Rs.25,000 - Rs.50,000.
- Majority (79.6%) of the respondents are in nuclear family type.
- Majority (59.8%) of the respondents are residing in urban area.
- Majority (55.2%) of the respondents make purchase mostly during festival times.
- Most (45.0%) of the respondents are aware of the branded retail outlet through advertisements.
- Most (51.5%) of the respondents are aware of the branded retail outlet through television/radio advertisements.
- Majority (48.2%) of the respondents do shopping for 3 to 5 times in a year.
- Majority (49.8%) of the respondents generally spend Rs.3,000 to Rs.7,000 per shopping.
- Most (38.4%) of the respondents generally spend between 2 to 4 hours per shopping.
- Majority (48.8%) of the respondents are influenced mostly by themselves in purchasing the apparels.
- Majority (46.6%) of the respondents make purchase mostly for themselves.
- Majority (48.2%) of the respondents prefer to buy from multi brand outlets.

SUGGESTIONS

1. As majority of the respondents have given high priority to the factor fashion and style which influences them in selecting the retail outlet, the retailer are suggested to make sure the availability of the branded products which suits the needs of the customers not only to retain the existing customers but also to create new customers.
2. The study reveals that one of the important factor that influences the customers in selecting the organized branded apparel retail outlet is quality, so in order to increase the sales of the retail outlet both multi-brand outlet as well exclusive brand outlet, the retailer must ensure to provide quality products.
3. It is understood from the study that the customer always look for additional benefits while purchasing the apparel either from multi-brand outlet or exclusive brand outlet. Hence the retailers should introduce additional benefits with their products in order to gain competitive advantage in the form of schemes such as buy one get one free, scratch cards, lucky draws and gifts on specific amounts.

CONCLUSION

Competition is getting intense as far as Indian organized retail is concerned. Not only big Indian corporate but big foreign retail brands like Wal-Mart, Metro Cash & Carry are expanding in the retail industry. Due to an increase in economic prosperity and better lifestyle, there is a growing tendency of the consumers to shift towards the organized retail outlets in India. The products offered, the store format, the pricing and the services provided definitely influence the consumers to a great extent in making them loyal towards the outlet.

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