

Customer behaviour towards local apparel brands in pakistan



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There are Pakistani Products which are very high in quality and having an ability to compete in the market, In-fact some of the products which contains Quality material and reasonable prices, but still there are problems, which they either fail or are not introduce yet as successful brands and on these basis consumer preferences and their buying behavior is changed.

Therefore the problem statement is,

“ Why Pakistani Apparel brands are not so successful in the market as compared with international brands and on which bases customer change their buying preferences?”

Objectives of Study

The Objectives of conducting this research on success factors in branding of apparel industry are;

To critically examine the theory relating to consumer behavior towards apparel brands.

To find out and analyze the factors those make a local apparel brand successful in Pakistan.

To critically examine the steps that local apparel manufacturing companies are taking to match with consumer preferences.

To measure and investigate the successful branding strategy by comparing local (Pakistani) and international brands.

To do comparative analysis of quality control standards of local and international apparel brands and also gives some recommendations for improvement.

In consumer's perspective what they want from an local apparel brand like quality, style, design, durability, comfort, fabric quality, status etc., Also to study, explore and ascertain;

Factors that stimulate users to switch from one brand to another.

The awareness level of customers regarding different local apparel brands in Pakistan.

Parameters on which consumer compare local brands with international brands.

Research Questions

Why Pakistani apparel industry is not so successful and what are the factors those make apparel industry successful or unsuccessful in Pakistan?

Which steps local apparel manufacturing companies are taking in order to achieve customers' preferences?

What are the local and international successful branding strategies of apparel industry?

What and how quality standards should be measured in local and international apparel industry?

Sub-Questions

Why do customers put high and low level of involvement while selecting local and international apparel products?

Why customers prefer more international apparel brands than local Pakistani apparel brands?

How customers rank different features of apparel brands and what are the parameters on the basis of which customers compare local Pakistani and international apparel brands?

What are the various factors which stimulate the customers to switch from one apparel brand to another?

What is the awareness level of customers regarding different Pakistani and international apparel brands?

Scope of study

This research highlights the potential strength that makes a local brand successful. After this research, it will be examined that on the bases of what factors and attributes customers prefer Pakistani or international apparel brands and why local apparel brands are unsuccessful and how local industry can make them compatible with the international brands. This study will also show about the consumer preferences, what they want from an apparel brand? What quality they want? What is their buying behavior and their involvement to a specific product etc.

This research will help to know about local manufacturers their good branded products that are able to compete with international brands. This Research will also help in the context of manufacturers to find that why consumers switch from one brand to another and what are the things that influence the purchasing behavior of the customer.

2. Critical Review of Literature

Attitudes of customers toward local and foreign luxury apparel brands

A comparison between class (status) and non-class (non-status) seeking teenagers

Studies have found that younger Australians prefer foreign made clothing to domestic ones . In fact, consumers are purchasing more foreign made rather than domestic made clothes. The relevance of using teenagers in this study is further attributed to revelation that teenagers often use clothing, which is a socially consumed product, to symbolize status. Teenagers are often in stages of uncertainty, where they are more likely to rely on luxury brands to assist them in performing their desired role. They have a valuable impact on the fashion industry with regards to their purchase of luxury brand apparel.

Teenagers and status consumption

The teenage market is a vigorous and extremely competitive environment. It represents a broad market that can be generalized. Though there is a great scope for innovation and it offers plenty of opportunities for new entrants, the target audience is notoriously hard to please. All facets of the media form significant influences, and make teens savvy towards what they want.

Also, many of the researchers have suggested that teenagers are lavish spenders when it comes to branded and luxury products. Further, proved that younger consumers are driven by the need to possess and display status brands. Many researchers have explored the trend of status, symbolic or prestige consumption for different purposes.

Researchers have defined status consumption as the driving force in enhancing social standing through conspicuous consumption.

Conspicuous consumption involves the public consumption of luxury products that signal wealth, status and power. Consumption of status or symbolic products also assists in enhancing social recognition and self-concept. Researcher pointed out that status-oriented consumer will only purchase products that represent status in the eyes of others whom they feel are significant. At some stage, status consumption is viewed as materialism.

Thus, it is arguable that status consumers are more likely to buy luxury apparel than non-status seeking consumers, as it satisfies their symbolic needs.

However, researcher indicated that teenagers from wealthier families having more disposable money are less likely to be involved in status consumption. On the other hand, teenagers from the lower and middle social classes are more likely to be involved in status consumption to display their “wealth”. Consistent with studies that status seeking consumers can come from any income or social class level. On the contrary, some researcher demonstrated in a study on cosmetics that the status seeking consumers are mostly

Caucasian, higher in education and income, and live in urban communities.
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Further people ascertain that consumers' income have minimal impact on prestige concept.

The study of apparel is appropriate in this instance, as the act of purchasing apparel satisfies the various needs of the consumer; which signals status, expression of identity, self-concept, self-esteem, as well as gives individuals a way to impress others. Researchers observed that teenagers are often in stages of role transitions and uncertainties. These consumers therefore rely on status consumption and the needs mentioned above to assist them in performing desired roles and showing maturity. Material possessions such as apparel are seen as an important source of status for teenagers. Thus, the term luxury brand apparel is very applicable to this study.

Some researchers also indicated that consumers may recognize the brand name and image associated with a status brand. However, these same consumers may not necessarily be familiar with other features of the brand. They determined that a status product possesses good quality and a favorable brand name. Thus, country of origin image or association impacts on consumers' perceptions or beliefs toward particular brands. Study on luxury consumption ascertains that western consumers are more likely to judge each product independently regardless of the brand, manufacturer, and country of origin as compared to Asian consumers.

Country of origin

The term country of origin has been widely used for over 100 years. Country of origin, country of manufacture or country of brand origin have been considered as extrinsic cues of a product, and there has been a large amount

of evidence supporting their significant effects on consumers' product evaluation. It also proved that these cues have a significantly direct effect on attitudes and beliefs towards a product. The goal of these researchers was to investigate consumer images of countries and brands, and to measure the relative importance of certain attributes when consumers buy these products. However, these terms are becoming increasingly misleading or confusing in the current market, where hybrid products typically comprise more than one country's contribution towards the completed product.

As a result: Country of brand origin may be the reason consumers still attach certain cultural characteristics to a brand when specific information about the foreign country is not available.

Therefore, it is assumed that country of brand origin would be more appropriate term to use in the examination of consumers' perceptions on brand origins. Many studies have focused on consumers' perceptions of domestic versus foreign made products or brands in relation to ethnocentrism. As previously discussed, although most studies on the fashion industry in Australia found that the consumers have strong propensities to buy Australian made apparel, more foreign made rather than domestic made apparel is still being purchased.

Consumer ethnocentrism is displayed in this instance, where consumers believe that the purchase of foreign-made products is unpatriotic and harmful to the local economy, and imports can result in the loss of local jobs. Researchers also found that younger Australians are more likely to purchase

foreign made apparel, which means that they have lower consumer ethnocentrism.

Furthermore, ethnocentrism is also a cultural dimension besides country of brand origin. Hence, a product or brand from a highly ethnocentric country with a strong culture can be a more successful global brand than from a less ethnocentric country. For instance, apparel from Australia, New Zealand and the UK are preferred by Australians than apparel from China and South East Asia on every product attribute except for price.

The products from developed countries were perceived as expensive luxury items that have a well-known brand name and are technologically superior. This proves that Australians prefer apparel from developed countries, and that bias on apparel from developing countries may be compensated by price concessions. It is ascertain that consumers' positive attitudes towards more expensive designer products appear to be influenced by country of origin and brand status rather than price and availability. Also, country of origin has a positive relation with product quality. It is also a vehicle for creating an emotional bond with the consumer. It is therefore necessary to conduct a comparative study to investigate such biases. Hence, for this study, foreign luxury apparel was classified into three countries with different economic backgrounds; with Italy and Japan being considered as the developed countries, and China as the developing country. This was so as to identify the differences in attitudes towards luxury clothes from these foreign countries as compared to the domestic offerings.

Effects of evaluative criteria on Fashion brand extension

Image, quality, color/style, and design/beauty of fashion products are important criteria when purchasing extended brands of casual apparel and home furnishings. Image of fashion products was the strongest predictor when brands were extended from apparel to home furnishings products.

Introduction

Consumers often choose certain products, services, and activities over others because they are associated with a certain lifestyle. Lifestyle, which influences the choices made by consumers in their own anticipatory consumption or the purchase of aspired-to-lifestyle products, reflects trends and fashion expression. The “casual revolution” that began in 1990 resulted in casual dress days.

Similarly, the importance that consumers place on the home as a place to live, relax, and enjoy families reflects a lifestyle trend toward casual expression in apparel and home furnishings fashions. These lifestyle trends are affecting the fashion industry. Traditional fashion apparel designers and retailers are moving their stylistic expressions from apparel to home furnishings in fashion markets. By offering a similar aesthetic appeal across product categories, designer, national or private label apparel brands are extending into multiple product categories.

Brand extension refers to using an established brand name identified with a product in one market for a new product in another market. The effect of brand extension on fashion products appears to involve cross-shopping behavior where consumers of a specific brand in one product category (i. e.

apparel) purchase products with the same brand in another product category (i. e. home furnishings). By building on consumers' brand loyalty, preference, and recognition, brand extension strategies seek to increase revenues by prompting consumer purchases across product categories. In the 1990s, 81 percent of all new products introduced were brand extensions. For example, brick and mortar retailers redesigned retail spaces so consumers could cross-shop products. As e-retailers focus on blended categories with strong brand identities, consumers can cross-shop brands on-line. Fashion, home décor, fitness, sports, and culinary arts are among the industries catering to markets with specific lifestyles. Thus, there are opportunities for merchandisers to extend and combine product categories across these lifestyle industries.

Fashion products can reflect self-image and they assume personal importance to the individual. Some researchers suggested that as an attribute gains importance when evaluating apparel, the more critical that characteristic is in determining a product's ultimate acceptance or rejection. Moreover, a lifestyle trend toward casual expression in apparel and home furnishings has led to extending brands from apparel to home furnishings. This increased importance is bringing much attention to brand extension in marketing research, but not in research related to fashion products.

Therefore, these trends suggest a need to understand the importance of evaluative criteria when consumers purchase extended brand products in different product categories associated with fashion. This study examined the effects of evaluative criteria on the brand extension of fashion products (casual apparel and casual home furnishings). Identifying the evaluative
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criteria consumers use when selecting fashion products may provide retailers with a tool for aligning brand appeal with that evaluative criteria. Retailers could use brand extensions strategically for increasing sales across product categories. In turn, consumers would benefit from improved merchandise selection and shopping environments.

Brand extension

Consumers buy mainstream brands in a habitual shopping mode. This allows them to spend minimal time at point of purchase. Thus, a strong brand name can substantially reduce the risk of introducing a new product by building on consumers' familiarity with and knowledge of an established brand. A further benefit of brand extension is that companies can create new market segments without the expense of launching a brand. This can decrease the costs of gaining distribution and/or increase the efficiency of promotional expenditures.

A brand extension that broadens a successful brand name by launching new or modified products or lines offers consumers wider access to that brand in multiple product contexts. Branding is essential to building product image and it influences a product's perceived worth, increases the brand's value to the customer, leads to brand loyalty, and enhances the effects of brand extensions. Brand extension can leverage brand name recognition and image when entering new markets. Thus, extended brands should serve as particularly valuable cues for inferring quality and facilitating the decision-making heuristic. Researchers pointed out that consumers who buy counterfeit Gucci or Coach products from street vendors typically know the items are not authentic, and hence, not of the same quality. Indeed, they

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would not buy these products without the forged brand name. A brand name can, like advertising, become a potential complement in consumption that raises consumers' willingness to pay. Because consumers are becoming more selective, retailers are well advised to meet not only the different needs of diverse customers, but also the needs of the same customer in different contexts by offering the set of products or brands that seem to be linked to a specific lifestyle in consumers' minds.

Evaluative criteria

Evaluative criteria are the specifications or standards that consumers use when comparing and assessing alternatives. They reflect underlying consumer values, lifestyle, attitudes, knowledge, and experiences, and play a prominent role in the decision process. Evaluative criteria are key concepts in understanding consumer choices. Identifying the evaluative criteria that a consumer uses in the decision-making process provides insight into wants and needs relative to a specific product. Since consumer needs vary not only by product but also in terms of information, evaluative criteria can provide manufacturers with the basis for product design and advertising tactics and retailers with merchandising and promotion strategies. The relative importance of evaluative criteria may vary by purchase situation, the nature of alternatives evaluated, involvement level, social class, gender, and purchase experience. Numerous evaluative criteria could conceivably be applied in different purchase situations, but some general factors may apply across a wide range of products, consumers, and retail stores. Evaluative criteria are likely to be significant forces influencing consumer response to market stimuli. Consumers judge products during information gathering, at

the time of purchase, and during consumption based on objective or verifiable characteristics as well as on abstract features ascribed to the product by the user such as beauty, value, and usability. Other researchers also segregated attributes broadly into two categories; intrinsic cues refer to product attributes that are inherent in the product (e. g. fiber content, style, color) and extrinsic cues are attributes that do not form part of the physical product but are added by retailers and manufacturers (e. g. brand name, price, packaging). Some people elicited attributes related to consumers' decisions to buy clothing. The effects of extrinsic cues on overall judgment have been investigated more frequently than the effects of intrinsic cues. Many people found complex and abstract evaluative criteria related to aesthetics were important estimators of the overall quality of women's pants. It is also suggested grouping the assortment of attributes into four major themes (physical appearance, physical performance, expressive, and extrinsic) that are composed of uni-dimensional and multidimensional attributes, which are intrinsic and extrinsic in nature. They confirmed that both uni-dimensional and multidimensional attributes appeared to be important to consumers in decision making. Retailers need information about how consumers react to apparel products so that important attributes can be emphasized through visual displays and salesperson interaction with customers. Apparel researchers also need insight on a broad range of consumer-perceived attributes to design studies that realistically reflect consumer decision making. The purpose of this study was to first, identify the dimensions of evaluative criteria used when purchasing casual apparel and home furnishings, and then determine which evaluative criteria served

as predictors of brand extension purchase behavior for casual apparel and home furnishings products.

Apparel product development: measures of apparel product success and failure

Findings revealed that the performance measures for apparel products are multidimensional. The combination of consumer acceptance and financial performance measures, especially sales and profitability, served as critical measures for apparel product performance. Both long- and short-term performances were considered.

Introduction

A company's new product development (NPD) capacity is the mainstay for survival and growth. NPD literature has focused on identifying what promotes or inhibits the outcome of new product development. The evaluation of this outcome has called for either the performance measure of product or measure of product success or failure.

Numerous NPD studies investigated how product performance is measured in companies. Studies either looked at multiple product categories or focused on specific product categories. Although few studies dealt with the performance measures of apparel products, literature on apparel product development has not given specific research attention to how to measure performance of apparel products.

The most appropriate performance measures of products depend on the company's product and business strategy. Apparel products are unique in that products are developed in seasonal lines and product life cycle is

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relatively short. Thus, a limitation exists when attempting to explain the performance measures of apparel products based on the studies of other product categories. The purpose of this study is to explore how the performance of apparel products is measured from the perspectives of the US apparel business.

Background

Performance measures of products in NPD Studies of product success or failure have been largely confined to financial and sales measures, internal operational measures, and others. The measures focusing on financial and sales were profit, financial break-even point, return on investment, and sales. Internal operational measures related to cost and the proficiency of NPD process. Other measures included innovativeness, quality, and technological success, creation of new market, market share, time to, and customer satisfaction. The performance measures were utilized against how well the product met the company's planned objectives. While the majority of studies used multi-items to measure product success or failure, other studies used uni-item measures.

The literature review indicates that researchers also have attempted to organize a set of performance measures into independent dimensions. There are identified five categories of 16 core-measures: customer acceptance (unit sales, market sales, revenue, revenue growth, customer acceptance, customer satisfaction), financial performance (margin, profitability, break-even time, IRR/ROI), product-level (cost, launched on time, product performance level, quality, speed to market), firm-level (percent of sales by

new products), and program-level measures. All but one (program-level) of the 16 core-measures was divided into the four categories.

In the field of textile and apparel, there has been little research that has dealt with the performance measures of apparel products. It mentions here that retail profitability was reflected in sales, unit-sell through, and gross margin. On-time shipment and quality evaluation of final products in comparison to quality standards were signs of success. Research also identified retail performance measures: service level, lost sales, product substitute percentage, gross margin, gross margin return on inventory, and sell-through percentage. Reviews of commonly used performance measures of general products along with the dimensions of product performance give background information about the performance measures of products in general, but cannot provide the depth or specific information to be applied to apparel products. Therefore, this study borrowed information extracted from NPD studies to explore performance measures for apparel products.

Discussion and implications

The purpose of this study was to explore the performance measures of apparel products in the US apparel business. The emergent themes for measuring apparel product performance were classified as “ core success/failure measures.” The study was found to be useful in the interpretation of the findings in this study. Apparel product performance was multi-dimensional. A total of 11 sub-themes under four major themes of apparel product performance measures emerged. This study elicited new sub- and third-order themes, supporting the notion that the measure of product performance may vary by product strategy.

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Measuring performance of apparel product relies more on quantitative forms. Performance of apparel products is measured mainly by one of the customer acceptance measures and one of the financial performance measures, namely sales and profitability, measured in terms of whether or not goals were achieved. Furthermore, this study identified how the goals are established. Retailers plan sales and profitability goals and both apparel manufacturers and retailers agreed that apparel product performance should be measured by sales with profitability to consumers at retail.

It was crucial to note that sell-through at the retail floor plays a dominant role in measuring apparel product success and failure. Each product's performance is based on weekly sales reports. The performance of apparel product is also measured after considerable time elapsed since product introduction. With regard to the long-term performance, longevity and growth emerged. Revenue growth was one of the customer acceptance measures in this study but longevity has not been identified in previous research.

Product-level and firm-level measures emerged as viable measures, but were less frequently discussed by participants. Cost efficiency, product value for the consumer, style mixes of the line, and excitement emerged under the product-level measure, while product's contribution to firm's business and brand building emerged under the firm-level measure. Participants discussed that the product value would come from quality, price, wear-ability, and versatility. It is stated that quality compared to the standard specs is a sign of apparel product success. Style mixes of the line and excitement were new themes that have not been reported in previous studies. While cost

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efficiency concerns short-term performance of apparel products, the remaining measures stand for long-term performance.

Important contributions from this study include theoretical support of previous NPD studies. This study supports the findings from previous NPD research in a number of ways including sales and profitability; but this study also explicated the additional measures of longevity, style mixes of the line, and excitement that were not identified in prior NPD studies. Second, the emergent measures in this study may be used as a baseline for further studies as well as for the apparel industry where it is important, particularly in an increasingly competitive marketplace, to measure apparel product performance. The small, convenience and purposeful sample should be considered as a limitation. Based on the findings of this exploratory study, suggestions for future research could be to develop a broad-based empirical study that would further investigate the domains of inquiry found in this study.

Parental influence on purchase of luxury apparel brand

Ethnic identity, consumption of cultural apparel, and self-perceptions of ethnic consumers

Regression analyses revealed that strength of ethnic identification was a significant predictor of cultural apparel consumption and attribution of emotions and meanings to the consumption. Further, consumption of cultural apparel perfectly mediated the influence of strength of ethnic identification on consumers' attributions of emotions, and partially mediated this influence on consumers' attributions of meanings.

Introduction

In the context of apparel retail, the success of such endeavors largely depends on the retailers' ability to understand why ethnic consumers' "choose to" or "choose not to" wear apparel products associated with their ethnic culture. Specifically, a key question that has been infrequently addressed in past literature relating to ethnic consumer behavior is: "do ethnic consumers attribute positive (or negative) emotions and meanings to the consumption of cultural (ethnic/ethnic-inspired) apparel, and what do these attributions depend upon?" This study explores this question through survey research conducted among four ethnic subcultures in the USA. The study specifically investigates if consumers' use of cultural indicators in dress, and attribution of emotions and meanings to this usage, is predicted by their strength of ethnic identification. The study also examines whether the consumption of cultural apparel, operationally defined as the usage of ethnic/ethnic-inspired apparel, mediates the effect of strength of ethnic identification on consumers' internal attribution of emotions and meanings related to cultural apparel consumption.

Literature

Individuals within the US culture are surrounded by a context that can be defined as postmodern and multicultural. Both terms signify a pluralism of meanings; a multiplicity of individual meanings in the case of the former; and a pluralism of shared meanings in the case of the latter. Actually clothes are rooted in successive contexts, which range on a continuum from "micro" to "macro" dimensions.

Viewed from the micro perspective, which focuses on individual perceptions and behavior, an individual's attempt to manage his or her appearance involves "negotiating identities" through a "cultural dialogue or struggle for meaning".

Based in the symbolic inter-actionist perspective, a compelling argument that linked individual identity, social interactions, and the physical setting through a dramaturgical performance of one's self in the front, back and outside stage settings. The actor or individual uses this performance as a medium to communicate information about the self and manage impressions that others receive based on implicit and explicit goals. This exchange of information facilitates the development of identity, and particularly social identity or "collective representation" in the front stage performance of the individual. In constructing this social or collective representation, the individual may use variety of verbal and non-verbal communicative cues such as dress in the process of tailoring an appropriate representation of the self to specific groups of audiences. This dialogue in the construction of identity through dress is particularly visible among individuals belonging to ethnic minority groups operating within the broader context of the mainstream American culture. These individuals often encounter two distinct groups of audiences associated with the ethnic and the mainstream cultures with differing expectations of "appropriate self-presentation."

An ethnic minority group has been defined as a sub-cultural group within a dominant culture that has a distinct cultural background, and is

differentiated from the dominant culture through externally visible

characteristics, which may be physical or cultural (Forney, 1981). Dress is
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one such externally visible characteristic, which in the case of members of ethnic subcultures can serve two functions: to visually indicate sub-cultural ethnic affiliation or membership; or to visually integrate