

Brand management and consumer behaviour marketing essay

[Business](#), [Marketing](#)



Part 1: Dissertation Area of Research and Focus

[Influence and impact of brand image on the behaviour and decision making process of consumers in clothing industry in UK]

[Brand Management and Consumer behaviour]

ABSTRACT

Brand image plays an important and essential role in driving the consumers to get attracted towards the brand. It is a source of gathering together different consumers to be brand loyal towards the one or same brand that is called brand power. The ability to attract consumers through reach , availability , visibility and its appearance. This leads them to buy a particular brand , this is also done through brand equity and building brand image , brand knowledge and brand integrity, this is a very helpful tool to attract consumers towards a brand. This study defines the factors which contribute to brand image in the clothing industry, consumer behaviour in the clothing industry in UK , and therefore the affect of brand imagine the buying behaviour of consumer in the UK clothing industry. British (Europeans , Asians etc) respondents were used to get the findings and data collection through various means interviewing and questionnaires on different aspects of brand image, perceived quality, brand loyalty. Some structured questions were used on questionnaires structured to solicit responses from different people for analysis. The findings suggested that in the UK, clothing brands are much better developed. However, more emphasis should be given on the

marketing/advertising strategies such as rewarding customer loyalty with a view to enhance the justifiable development of the clothing brands.

1: INTRODUCTION:

1. 1: IMPORTANCE OF BRAND IMAGE IN CLOTHING INDUSTRY :

Brand plays a vital role in building brand image , this should be taken into consideration that a brand is something that has something in the eye and mind of consumers. Brand image therefore can be defined as " The impression in the consumers' mind of a brand's total personality (real and imaginary qualities and shortcomings associated with the brand). Brand image is developed over time through advertising campaigns with a consistent theme and is authenticated through the consumers' direct experience. So , brand image plays a vital role in building brand experience on which consumers draw values for the brand and with values they associate their experiences with it and become a buyer for a particular brand. A decision can be made upon the experience of the brand and the brand knowledge (how well a consumer understands or knows the brand). It is completely justifiable that human beings cannot avoid brands and clothing around them , they need clothes in daily life , it could just be for the purpose of wearing them for their physiological needs or for the purpose if fashion anything can vary between this perspective , but this signifies that clothing itself is very important for human beings . Nowadays, in addition to the basic functions, clothes can also serve as fashion items, which can tell how significant an individual is, express the status an individual has and what

their personal image is like (O’Cass, 2000). With the help of brand knowledge, experience and awareness a whole brand image is built but also important along with these aspects is brand integrity which helps a brand in creating its positive image in the mind and sight of consumers. Brand Integrity is a concept of consistency of actions, values, methods, measures, research principles, expectations, and outcomes generating from it. In ethical terms, integrity is regarded as trustworthy and something to be relied on. Thus, brand integrity in simple terms is the honesty that a brand passes to its consumers or more precisely it can be regarded as the public image portrayed positively. So it is very important, keeping this in mind it can be said that people go for shopping and experience brands around them, these brands speak for themselves as they provide tangible and intangible experiences to people. This experience builds a brand image. As people come from different ethnicities, gender, age, income level, cultural backgrounds and with different perceptions and beliefs about particular things. As mentioned by Rayport and Jaworski (2003), the purchasing processes can be divided into three stages, namely pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase. Each stage is of equal importance but is dealt differently by different people. A strong and notable brand image can really help to build an identity in the market (Aaker, 1996), helps achieve revenues and profits and their margins, supports transitional assistance and increase a chance that can lead to expansion and of brand extension (Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Aleman, 2005). As noticed and presented by DeLong et al. (2004), brand image has an influential effect on consumer minds as consumers have an inadequate amount of brand knowledge and about its image as well. Having said that, knowing

how to project a brand image in consumer mind is of greater and significant importance, not to look at the brand as individually but from the competitors point of view as well , it helps to portray point of difference and point of similarity it can help to see both. Marketing Managers or in other words ‘ Marketers’ can make brands with uniqueness and distinctiveness in order to earn a fame amongst the Market and to get adequate amount of share (Abend, 2000; Ailawadi, 2001; Corstjens and Lal, 2000). Profound understanding of brand image helps major marketing practitioners and marketing Gurus to bring forward a concept that is parallel to understanding of brand image and that is Brand Equity (Aaker, 1991, 1996; Keller, 1993, 1998, 2003).

1. 2: BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF UK CLOTHING INDUSTRY :

UK being counted amongst a European Unions has a population of around 60 million, 21% less than the population of China (Economist. com, 2007). With respect to the GDP Growth mainly due to a economic structure that is well stable and at its maturity for quite a considerate time ; its GDP growth rate depicts stabilized structure. For this the business sector (marketing and finance) are the main sources of what we call is overall gross domestic products. This contributes 30% of overall domestic products (Economist. com, 2007). Taking in view manufacturing sector includes the clothing industry, stakes if compared to development of business sector faced huge recession in the past few years . This is basically exposed by a continuous decline in employment rate across the UK clothing industry (Jones and Hayes , 2004).

1. 2. 1 SPENDING HABITS OF PEOPLE IN UK MARKET :

It seems quite surprising but is a fact that British spenders (people) has the habit od spending more rather than saving. A research that has been conducted by Weekes (2004), reveals a fact about female respondents that just one-third or even fewer than that has saving habits in comparison with male respondents. Amongst the male and female respondents, females spend more pounds on clothes than of males, half of females responded that possess to the least one outlet card , and 2-thirds stated that they own more than that (loyalty or outlet card). This phenomenon generates a fact that how shopping can be considered gender biased, where women spends more than Men (Dholakia, 1999; South and Spitze, 1994), and this is the reason why some women do shopping for Mens (Dholakia, 1999). The purpose of these gift cards or loyalty cards is a subliminal strategy to push sales and earn consumer's loyalty in return, some gift cards or loyalty cards give out promotional discounts or seasonal offers which again let the consumers to stick to one brand and be loyal towards it this is another perspective or purpose of this research which entails this purpose of using the cards on a regular basis. (Weekes, 2004). This can be supported by the argument that mostly these cards incur higher interest rates that those offered by credit cards given by banks (Intel, 2002).

1. 2. 2 UK clothing market and its characteristics :

The UK clothing industry has shifted its manufacturing sector to thirds world countries like any other developed country because they offer low labour costs and skilled and semi-skilled labour, and concentrate their attention on

skilled and trained designers as their central hub in order to put more emphasis, by doing so they account for the reason of a substantial decline in employment and the overall output generated or given out by clothing sector in UK (Jones, 2003). Consequently this leads to poor development and advancement in UK clothing industry as they incur to less production of designs of those clothes probably because of fewer manufacturing (Dagworthy, as cited in Carruthers, 2004). It is noticed that for UK clothing in fashion retail sector there is an in house Brand management and expansion, focused markets, resilient competence sizeable market share, product life-cycle with shorter span, and ever changing consumer demands for it (Marciniak and Bruce, 2004; Siddiqui et al., 2003). Moore (1995) noticed out that fashion clothing industry produces distinctive and differentiated products in order to compete in the market and for high sustainability they offer products that differ in shape, size, price and quality etc, this also helps them increase market value and share as of their competitors. UK clothing industry has a huge range of fashion brand and products offered by them mainly because of the European countries which produce fashion like Spain, Italy, France, they offer huge products into the market which are different from one another, although market is said to have little differentiation (Birtwhistle and Freathy, 1998; Moore, 1995). Moreover the UK clothing industry is fragmented thus it is composed of some independent businesses that are owned by family (family owned businesses) and chain stores at large scale, chain stores contribute towards the largest share of market (Easey, 2001; Marciniak and Bruce, 2004; Mintel, 2003). Compared with other retail sector, the fashion clothing industry entails to large

number of native chains such as Zara, NEXT plc (Marciniak and Bruce, 2004). This encourages the brand image and brand growth in terms of its share in the competence of UK clothing market.

1. 3 Theoretical framework:

Along-with Brands come their well reputed name and image and large brands depict larger names amongst the consumers , with these large names consumers vest confidence to pay a premium which is an extra cost incurred by large brands with established names in the market consumers show a desire of paying an extra pound on clothes for a particular brand. For high priced products consumers demand quality and show deep concern for it , consumers prefer to buy brands with large and well reputed names (Bello and Holbrook, 1995). This phenomenon explains the concept of brand equity. As established by Aaker (1991), brand equity is mainly derived from four elements, namely brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived brand equity and brand associations. The theoretical framework explained in this dissertation is based on the concept of brand image and how it affects consumer buying behaviour and decision making , details of these components are discussed, justified and explained with the help of examples where necessary and examined in later chapters.

1. 4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE DISSERTATION :

1. 4. 1 Background ;

Main focus , aim or precisely objective of any organisation is on generating and increasing sales and revenues proliferation. It can only be possible for those organisations which better understand and grasp as how to attract

new consumers and how to retain the loyal ones. It is therefore critically important how to make a grip of the better insights of factors responsible for influencing the behaviour of consumers and their decision making. With regard to this companies (brands) make use positioning different to those of their competitors and also techniques of branding to influence the consumer behaviour in making purchases and methods of decision making process. This strategy and technique of unique branding is common in the in clothing industry UK. Consumers use clothes as pride symbol and image projection of fashion and valuable status-quo. As a resultant the 'branded clothing industry' took birth to meet the tailor needs of savvy consumers. Consumers are encountered with a varied and eclectic range of brands and their products to make their selection. This incremental increase number of choices and alternatives makes it confusing for consumers to make purchase amongst those brands and products offered, consumer behaviour is influenced by several factors. As Bery (2000) stated, emotional values of consumers play a pivotal role in impacting the purchase decision. Keeping this in mind one can say that how important it is to acknowledge the brand image and its importance as well as brand equity. Keller (2003) states that , positioning of brand image rightly is most important strategy that is being used by Marketers. Roman, Mass, & Nisenholtz (2005) presented that brand image as well as its name is reflected as a symbol of quality, reliability, and trust in consumers mind. In the same manner Fennis and Pruyn (2006) indicated that consumers give preference to the brands with reputed name and image and purchase such brands in order to portray their high class image , status and personaliy. In this dissertation , attempts are made so as

to find out and bring forward the influence and impact of brand image on consumers buying behaviour and decision making in clothing industry.

1. 4. 2. Aims and Objectives

(Kotler, et al., 2003) defined Marketing is the process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships in order to capture value from customers in return. The aim of this research project is to explore the influence and impact of the brand image on the buying behaviour and decision-making process of the consumers in the clothing industry. Some of the objectives, which will be tried to accomplish, are: Identifying the impact of brand image on consumer behaviour Exploring factors influencing the purchase behaviour and decision making process Investigating the relationship between the brand image and purchase behaviour. The research has placed remarkable question for the literature review, which is ' Influence and impact of brand image on the behaviour and decision making process of consumers in clothing industry in UK.' Many marketers have developed marketing strategies to influence consumer buying behaviour and decision making. In order to grasp a profound understanding of what is required ; researcher has studied and observed all different strategies in quest of the answers. As pointed out by (Porter, 1988) Strategy takes up rational process of deliberately calculated data analysis and examination, devised for a longer term benefit or profit. For a viable society that is competitive brand image can influence the brand's consumers keeping a positive Brand Image and sustainable share in market. Co-related with (Ins, 1992), that sustaining the Brand Image of a Brand (company) is a

process that goes in continuation. A considerate and alarming Global Warming has affected a brand image and consumer buying relationship, it is for this reason that corporate social responsibility has taken birth." Strategic management is an on going process that assesses the business and the industries in which the company is involved; assesses its competitors and sets goals and strategies to meet all existing and potential competitors; and then reassesses each strategy annually or quarterly [i. e. regularly] to determine how it has been implemented and whether it has succeeded or needs replacement by a new strategy to meet changed circumstances, new technology, new competitors, a new economic environment., or a new social, financial, or political environment." (Lamb, 1984, pg9)

1. 5 Outline of the dissertation:

The structure of the dissertation would be as follows: Chapter 1 is the introductory section, containing the background information of the UK clothing industry, the research objectives and the dissertation outline. Chapter 2 will incorporate the literature review of previous studies, mainly concentrating on clothing industry and consumer buying behaviour and decision making on basis of brand image. It is believed that this chapter could provide readers with general information like theories and issues in relation to consumer buying behaviour for clothes understandable in the forthcoming sections. Chapter 3 delineates the research methodology, focusing on the description of research design and justification of data. Chapter 4 is the core of the dissertation in which research findings are presented and discussed. Whether brand image would affect the

consumerbuying behaviour in the clothing sector is shown and also the similarities and differences regarding the circumstances the UK clothing industry are investigated. Chapter 5 would draw conclusions on the findings from the previous chapters. Implications towards the business environment and research limitations are also included. Recommendations would be made with regard to the limitations so as to provide further directions in the future studies.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW :

2 . 1 INTRODUCTION:

Owing to the proliferation of brands in the recent decades, there is a growing number of research conducted in the field of consumer buying behaviour. However, most of them concentrate on a single country study, regardless of the importance of cross-country comparisons which will inspire innovative ideas for understanding the fast-changing consumer habits. This dissertation is going to investigate the differences of British and Chinese in purchasing clothes under the influence of brand image. In this chapter, the literatures concerning the roles of brand and brand equity are to be reviewed so as to provide a theoretical framework for the aforementioned analysis. Brand serves a pivotal role for distinguishing goods and services from those of the competitors (Aaker, 1991; Murphy, 1998). The emergence of brand equity underlies the importance of brand in marketing tactics and hence provides useful insights for managers and further research (Keller, 2003). Consumer behaviour refers to the activities in which people acquire, consume and

dispose products and services (Blackwell et al., 2001). Researcher looked into the culture and the society in which consumers were raised. The cultural and social influences fall into six major areas, culture, social class, reference groups, family, demographics and geography. As we all know, culture is learned and passed on from one age group to next, and the boundaries each culture establishes for behaviour are simply rules individual learn through social interaction. But values are consumer's beliefs, which begin with individuals needs. When needs change, the culture changes with them. That's why culture directly influences buying behaviour. For example, consumer believes in environmental friendly culture, supports local tailoring and prefer organic clothing. Subcultures are segments of a culture that share distinguishing patterns of buyers behaviour. Because unique needs and preferences often exist within subcultures, marketers of many products may find marketing opportunities in serving their specialised needs and preferences. Members of subcultures are also members of the broader culture, which means that though they differ in some behaviour, most behaviour coincide with the dominant culture.

2. 5 THE VITAL ROLE THAT A BRAND PLAYS :

(Mooij, 1998) identifies that a Brand has a certain kind of image and projection in the mind of the consumer. Followed by (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1998), who brought forward the idea that a visible brand name , slogan or even symbol can differentiate the offerings (goods and services) of a brand from its competitors. Further to this, brand has different attributes to offer as well such as packaging, promotion , advertising , positioning and overall

brand image how it portrays itself or presents itself (Murphy, 1998). In order to see a brand from the consumers point of view they see brand as a guarantee provided to them and reliability of its quality (Roman et al., 2005). As described by (Aaker, 1999; Fennis and Pruyn, 2006), consumers buy branded things or products in order to project their high and valued status and personality. Having said that consumers it can be said that consumers' use these emotional attributes in their buying and purchase behaviour (Berry, 2000). According to a research on shopping habits conducted by Freeride Media LLC (1998) almost 1/4th respondents do purchasing impulsively that is without having the actual need to buying and spontaneously choose clothes to wear or accessories to wear, this shows that , consumers have different set of mind and have different preferences deciding which products to buy and which clothes to wear, this develops a particular perception about that brand and its image.

2. 5. 1 THE ATTRIBUTES OF A POWERFUL BRAND :

According to Levitt (1983), there are four elements for building a successful brand, namely tangible product, basic brand, augmented brand and potential brand. Tangible product is something that can be touched this can be expressed as brand experience by using clothes , wearing them or feeling them physically , basic brand is a generic brand that can be described in terms of packaging , overall display , it is used to draw the attention of the consumers towards a brand , augmentation means additional benefits from a brand can be after sales services , guarantee , warranty etc, lastly a potential brand is the one which has significant affect in consumers mind

and to make them get loyal towards the brand , through this the brand image can have a significant affect on the buying behaviour of consumers and their decision making.(Batchelor, 1998; Murphy, 1998) explained that a brand can be a resourceful asset for a company if it is successful in maintaining its positive image and when it satisfies its cosumers needs through its product and services.

2. 6 BUILDING BRAND IMAGE THROUGH BRAND EQUITY :

Brand image goes hand in hand with the brand equity, before building a positive brand image in the minds of the consumers to affect their purchase decisions and buying behaviour or pattern , brand equity should be taken into consideration. After building a strong brand equity for a brand , positive brand image can be build. We have discussed what a brand image is and how it works but brand equity is also very important for a successful and growing or expanding brand (Aaker, 1991; Yasin et al., 2007). Added to this, Keller (1998) identified that a brand equity indicates the uniqueness and distinctiveness of market competition and threats arising to the brand and its image. Taking brand equity positively it occurs when consumers show willingness to pay or extra for the same level of quality and alluring brand name associated with its products (and services)(Bello and Holbrook, 1995).

2. 6. 1 PERCEIVED QUALITY

Perceived quality is usually at the heart of what customers are buying, and in that sense, it is a bottom-line measure of the impact of a brand identity.

Even when the brand identity is defined by functional benefits, most studies

will show that perceptions about those benefits are closely related to perceived quality. When perceived quality improves, so generally do other elements of consumers perception of the brand. Like brand awareness, perceived quality is determined or identified by a number of factors. To be more specific, perceived quality can further be classified into product quality and service quality. Regarding product quality, there are seven dimensions which affect the consumers' perception, namely performance, features, conformance with specifications, reliability, durability (Aaker, 1991). In addition to the aforementioned dimensions, the country-of-origin of a product is found to affect its perceived quality (Khachaturian and Morganosky, 1990). Perceived quality is defined as the customer's perception of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1998; Yasin, 2007). As the name suggests this aspect of brand equity is intangible, the feelings that are associated with the brand, the offers and promises made by brand or product are correlated with each other in order to measure the perceived quality with the actual quality received by the product or given by the product. Perceived quality of a brand could help generate values by providing a pivotal reason-to-buy, differentiating the position of a brand, charging premium price, motivating channel members to perform well and also introducing extensions into new brand categories (DeLong et al., 2004). As discussed by Srikatanyoo and Gnoth (2002), consumers are inclined to develop stereotypical beliefs about the products from particular countries. Hence, consumers could have their preferences for products made from one country over another (Papadopoulos et al., 1991).

Moreover, price is one of the important cues to evaluate perceived quality (Aaker, 1991).

2. 6. 2 BRAND LOYALTY :

Definition The extent of the faithfulness of consumers to a particular brand, expressed through their repeat purchases, irrespective of the marketing pressure generated by the competing brands. Brand loyalty is regarded as a valuable asset under different circumstances. First, it can help reduce the marketing costs of doing business (Aaker, 1991). Loyal customers confer to a higher possibility of repeat purchases and it is less costly to keep customers than to get new ones. Second, loyalty to a brand can enhance trade leverage. Some consumers with strong affiliation to one brand would switch to the shop in which a designated brand is sold. Lastly, loyal customers could influence the others to purchase the brand (Aaker, 1991). So a friend, a relative, a peer, colleague, even family are reinforced by consumers in decision making and buying behaviour, this affects the buying pattern as well, and shows how important it is to influence the behaviour of others, this process is done and driven through word-of-mouth, which spreads along the way and influence buying behaviour in a way that people tend to buy products. This suggests why word-of-mouth communication is one of the most powerful tools in the marketplace (Henricks, 1998; Marney, 1995; Silverman, 1997; Bansal and Voyer, 2000). Consumers usually depend on informal, as well as personal communication sources in making purchasing decision rather than more formal and organizational advertising campaigns (Bansal and Voyer, 2000). Consumers can be offered different services by

brands such as discounts , ease of purchasing by maintain their profiles , keeping records for them so that they don't have to be a new customer always , this shows that a company value its customers for being loyal to them also reward canbe given in the form of gift cards as brands like ZARA , TOPMAN , RIVER ISLAND , Reatil brands such as HARRODS , SELFRIDGES and JOHN LEWIS , give gift cards to their loyal members which has a certain price off on their purchases. Some services chain also give membership cards such as CATHAY PACIFIC , KLM , hotels such as HILTON , JW MARRIOT also give cards which gives discounts or points to travel and at any time these points can be redeemed as a gift of loyal customer. According to Aaker (1991), it is important to treat the customer with respect in order to keep them loyal.

2. 7 CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR MODELS :

Several models canbe taken into consideration with a view to describe what affects consumer buying behaviour and how this is devised through different means. These models vary in form of presentation, mostof them are consist of stages such as pre-purchase, purchase andpost-purchase (Hoyer and MacInnis, 2001; Rayport and Jaworski, 2003). Consumer behavior involves the psychological processes that consumers go through in recognizing needs, finding ways to solve these needs, making purchase decisions , whether or not to purchase a product and, if so, which brand and where, interpret information, make plans, and implement these plans which finals leads in the actual purchase of the product. Significant foundations on consumers minds. The consumer faces a variety of sources of influences on their minds.

Influences on Consumer Minds and their Behavior :

To start with cultural backgrounds should be taken into consideration as they are oftenly ignored but they play a vital role in decision making and behaviour to be precise. An American will usually not bargain with a store owner (American study , 1998). This, however, is a common practice in much of the World. Another factor that influences behaviour are physical factors. In order to quench our thirst we would go for buying a soft drink, for example, and food manufacturers have found that it is more effective to advertise their products on the radio in the late afternoon when people are getting hungry or at the time when people go back to their homes from offices. A person's self-image will also tend to influence what he or she will buy, a high class mobile manager may buy an expensive car to show others an image of success. Social factors are also responsible for consumers on what to, consumers pursue to be inspired by others whom they aspire, and thus made purchases of probably the same brands. The social environment can include both the typical culture (e. g., rap or rock music often appeals to a segment within the population that seeks to differentiate themselves from the typical population). Like , sneaker or trainer producers are keen to have their products worn by well-regarded athletes. Lastly, consumer behaviour is influenced by learning process, you try a burger fillet and learn that it fulfils your hunger and tastes good, and the next time you are hungry, you may consider the same burger fillet.

Consumer Decision Making and Choices :

Problem Recognition. One model of consumer decision making involves several steps. Firstly a problem is recognize , you comprehend that something is needed. Example, you car has trouble in accelerating and you

cannot start it. Now comes information search, the alternative ways of problem solution ? A new car, a used car, or a repair is considered , choose other means of transport a bus , cab, train. Next step involves in the evaluation of alternatives you have. Lastly, you have purchase stage and sometimes a post-purchase decision where non satisfactory results can lead to returns (Nedungadi, 1990). Reality is , people fluctuate between these phases. Consumer involvement for expensive products and the ordinary ones differ from each other. Involvement is higher for expensive products like car , home . Consumer's motivation for buying products is also very important (Blackwell et al., 2001). Means-End chain is used to gain this goal, for example, a consumer may select a car with a large engine, a fast acceleration, performance, power, which projects consumer's self-esteem and image or status(Hoyer, 1990; Macdonald and Sharp, 2000). Information search and decision making ; According to (Alvarez and Casielles, 2005) Consumers engage in both internal and external information search. Internal search involves the consumer to identify the alternatives from their memory(Keller(1998) and Yasin et al. (2007). Low involvement products calls for good brand awareness (Aaker, 1991). People can use Yellow Pages for restaurants the consumer should be able to retrieve the brand through their memory sensation. As said by (Gabbott and Hogg, 1998), For high involvement products; consumers use external search. Before making a decision to purchase the car, consumer can ask a friend about their experiences and opinion, research about it thoroughly , Consumer Reports can be used , web sites, dealerships etc. Therefore, firms that make products that are selected largely through external search must spend in making

information available to the consumer in for need recognition, through brochures, web sites etc. Blackwell et al. (2001) define consumer behaviour as a abstract of acquisition, consumption and disposal of products or services. However, such definition falls short of the continuity of the processes. Based on this loophole, Arnoud et al. (2004) further propose the circle of consumption that recognize purchasing processes as a loop, comprising acquisition of goods and services, consumption, as well as disposal of used goods. Another consumer behaviour model is a simpler one that has seven steps starting from 1: Problem or need recognition, 2: search for information, 3: pre-purchase, evaluation, 4: purchase, 5: consumption, 6: post-consumption evaluation and 7: divestment (Blackwell et al., 2006). Rayport and Jaworski (2003) propose a similar model with slight differences regarding the terms used. Blackwell et al. (2006) add that most consumer research would primarily base on these seven stages and how different elements affect each stage of consumers' decisions, regardless of the different terms and consolidation of stages. Stage one is problem or need recognition which occurs when an individual is aware of a difference between their perception and the actual satisfaction level (Solomon et al., 2006). The buying process is initiated when people recognize their unsatisfied need (Levy and Weitz, 1992). Two needs exist namely physiological which is the basic need and functional need. Physiological needs are more intrinsic and depends on how well a product meets the expectation and whether they are delighted with the product or not whereas , Functional needs are depends on how well a product performs or functions. Stage two is information search. The length and depth of search vary for different customers and depend on

variables like personality, social class, income level, size of purchase, past experiences, prior brand perceptions (Moorthy et al., 1997), as well as customer satisfaction. As mentioned by Solomon et al. (2006), search of information can further be divided into pre-purchase search and ongoing search. Pre-purchase arises when consumers actually identify that there exists a need and therefore some information should be gathered accordingly. Stage three is pre-purchase evaluation that consumers make comparisons amongst different products and brands to finally reach a purchase decision point. In this stage, consumers pay particular attention to the attributes which are most relevant to their needs (Kolter et al., 2005). Perceived quality, size, quantity and price are used to build up decision process. Any change in these attributes can affect consumer decisions on brand or product choices (Blackwell et al., 2006). Stage four is the purchase decisions made by the consumers after their evaluation from different brands and their perspective. As stated by Blackwell et al. (2006), there are two phases contributing to the decision making processes, including retailer and store selection. Retailer selection is done by deciding which retailers to buy from after collecting results from previous phase whereas in-store selection is affected by visual displays inside the shops, as well as point-of-purchase displays. In addition to in-store purchase, Rayport and Jaworski (2003) further point out the significant impact of internet on consumer purchasing decision. Stage five, stage six and stage seven fall in the category of the post-purchase stage. In stage five, consumers actually consume the product, in stage six, consumers evaluate the consumption process. This gives rise to satisfaction when consumers' expectations are

higher than the perceived performance and vice versa (Blackwell et al., 2006). Finally, stage seven is divestment, in which consumers dispose of or recycle the product. Remarketing the product can be derived from this. This stage is crucial since customers could be possible to make repeat purchases provided that they are satisfied with the aforementioned stages (Rayport and Jaworski, 2003).

2. 8 SUMMARY:

This chapter provides an overview about the major and basic research and theories regarding the consumer purchasing behaviour. Brands play a very powerful role in building brand image, and brand image is affected greatly by brand equity, if a brand has higher brand equity it surely has a positive and powerful brand image in the eye of the consumer which affects their buying behaviour and decision making. Brand equity is further divided into four categories namely can be divided brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality and brand loyalty. All of them have significant contribution to the brand equity as well as to the brand image as a whole

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In today's life, consumers have become savvy they have practical knowledge about the brands, every information is available on hand through internet and a word-of-mouth is carried through one consumer to the world and builds a perceived value for the brand, consumers go through from in-depth processes before making purchases, they acquire knowledge prior to the buying process, on the other hand brands make products in innovative ways and improve or tailor them according to the needs of consumers. Only by

understanding the consumer behaviour can the products or brands be developed in a right way. In this dissertation, whether the brand image would affect the consumers to purchase clothes in the UK is to be investigated. It is expected that by finding out the relationships of brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty and brand association with the consumer purchasing behaviour that will provide useful insights and delineates information for the advancements of the clothing sector

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In order to have view to finding out the underlying principles of the phenomenon responsible for carrying out the findings, research method is required. In terms of the science of knowledge acquisition, epistemology is about the science of knowing, whereas methodology is acknowledged to be the science of finding out (Babble, 2004). During the course of consumer behaviour research, data are gathered, recorded and analyzed in a systematic and objective manner so as to apprehend and foresee how consumers feel, think and behave (Arnould et al., 2004). In general, there are two types of research methods, namely qualitative and quantitative research. Each of them encompasses a variety of approaches, which are identified on data collection methods. The aim is to discuss different theories and research methods, and to find justifiable reasoning for most appropriate approaches for this research. Sampling methods would be discussed in detail as well, along with the online administered questions.

3. 2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In theoretical background section, tradition research their theories, validity of the data and its reliability would be discussed to provide a general view about overall Research that is being carried out and what factors play role in influencing the justification of the data and research method.

3. 2. 1 RESEARCH TRADITIONS :

In accordance with Gephart (2004), there are three research traditions, namely positivism, interpretive research and critical postmodernism. Here I would use the first two for this research. Positivism : objectivity of the reality is tested in positivism , so that its nature can be understood in the light of science and its implications. Furthermore, it predicts that objectivity of a social world should be measured externally (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002). Fisher (2004) suggests that the mainstream of positivism research participates into verdict of qualitative research and events and the influences of other variables. Where positivism pressures on objectivity, interpretive research emphasizes on subjective explanations to hinge on the meanings of reality and understand it. Fisher (2004) also explains interpretations of research aims at asking people's interpretations of how they see or perceive the world, form a structures within processes.

3. 2. 2 USING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH :

This dissertation use the Qualitative research method for its findings due to the nature of the area of research, which is based on insight of people their beliefs , ideas and perspective for which intangible aspects are taken into consideration. Quantitative research assess data based on a large population

.(Proctor, 2000)a complete category of calculations(Silverman, 2000).

Quantitative data is more actual than qualitative analysis in a way that provides findings with a large scale of numeric data. Qualitative research uses insight of people their feelings in depth, attitude (Kirk and Miller, 1986).

Contrasting with quantitative research that use procedures to define and evaluate variables (Blumer, 1956; Cicourel, 1964; Silverman, 1975), qualitative research emphasises on defining processes to outline and rationalize variables in daily life(Silverman, 2000). Qualitative analysis has a limitation of " anecdotalism" which means, the writing or telling of short narratives concerning an interesting, amusing, or curious incident or event, it just describes certain illustrations and phenomenon without the concern on a strong data into account (Silverman, 1989).

3. 2. 3 VALIDATION OF DATA AND ITS RELIABILITY

The validation and reliability of data is of crucial importance , data should be valid and reliable in order to bring about a positive research outcome.

Validation means that the data is gathered and collected from valid and reliable resources. For a research to be carried out positively validation plays a pivotal role. This means that a research can produce useful findings or not.

Reliability suggests the consistency in research results, produced by different observers on different occasions or by same observers in different circumstances, (Hammersley, 1992) as pointed by Davis and Bremner (2006), reliability of data collected can be replicated by the same research to observe whether the same results are achieved on consequent occasions or not. Reliability is consistent to correlation, on the other hand validity outlines

truth (Silverman, 2000) providing accurate measures of social occurrences (Hammersley, 1992). It is also found out that having reliable research and using reliable methods cannot always produce desired valid results (Davis and Bremner, 2006). This dissertation takes into account the usage of the qualitative research method and there have been evidence on considerations on qualitative research with respect to its reliability and validity. According to Saunders et al. (2003), the findings of qualitative research not always produce repeatable results or outcomes, since they reflect reality at the time of data collection and are more controlled by closed end questions. The research cannot be wholly claimed valid or perfect as there are only few exemplary instances reported, and the original form of the materials is unavailable (Silverman, 2000).

3. 3 Justification of research method:

Different research methods are adopted based on Qualitative nature of the research. This dissertation aims at finding out consumer purchasing behaviour on clothing in which their beliefs, opinions and attitudes towards brand image are investigated and tested. As mentioned earlier qualitative research is more suitable and reliable in terms of soliciting the consumers response based on their values and attitudes. As mentioned by Tesch (1990), there forty types of qualitative research or more in three main placements, namely language-orientated approach, descriptive/ interpretative approach, as well as theory-building approach. Language-oriented approach concerns the use of language and meaning of words. In descriptive/ interpretative approach, the thorough description and interpretation of social phenomena

are the central focus. Finally, theory-building approach tries to examine the connections between social phenomena. Online administered questionnaires are chosen as the data collection methods. Qualitative online administered questions refer to the interaction between an interviewer and interviewee on a topic which needs to follow particular pattern and order and words in questions (Babbie, 2004). Through closed end questioning, questions need to probe each answer written in a form of options to choose from which allow further questioning (Proctor, 2000). One may think or ask why online administered questionnaire but not the other types of qualitative research methods seemed vague. Suppose, focus group use a kind of research technique that brings together some interviewees, example 12-15 people in a room to engage in controlled discussion on a certain topic (Babbie, 2004). Also focus groups could be costly and more time taking than filling the questionnaires which are much more effective and cheaper than focus groups, it's also difficult to bring together large group of people and draw conclusion on their observation (Gamson, 1992). So, Questionnaires are more controllable than focus groups as they are controlled by closed end questions which end in either yes or no options, Breakwell (2006) suggests that Questionnaires start from initial or broader questions and then slowly narrow down to the mainstream or detailed ones.

3.3.1 STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRES :

Structured or closed Questionnaires were advocated by Emile Durkheim (1858-1917). It is a positivist Research Method. It includes low level of involvement of the researcher and high number of respondents. A

questionnaire in a series of questions was asked to individuals to obtain statistically useful information about a given topic, when properly constructed and responsibly administered, questionnaires become a vital instrument by which statements can be made about specific group or people. This method is typically used in qualitative marketing, they are used for wide range of information from a large number of individuals. Adequate questionnaire construction is important to lead to a successful result. Online or electronic-questionnaire administering questions by email and facebook Geoff Payne and Judy Payne (2004) suggest this may be a useful way on which disperse range of people are contacted, which builds rapport with respondents as well as high response rate is anticipated. Closed ended questions, Multiple choice as well as Likert scale were used one end was strongly Agree and the other end was Strongly Disagree. Proctor (2000) outlines that the usefulness of qualitative research and its interpretations, or the design and pattern of questions are highly dependent on the skills of the researcher, the way he designs it. In Questionnaires researcher starts from much shorter and easy to ask questions, keeping in mind the discreteness of the data and then go for much narrow questions in depth, as responses will be based on the design or the way the questions are asked whether structured or in unstructured way.

3.4 CONVENIENCE SAMPLING :

Convenience sampling is used in this Research Method which is also known as non-probability sampling. The reason for not choosing the probability sampling is because it chooses a large chunk of population, whereas in

convenience sampling the relevant purpose to pursue participants are chosen (Babbie, 2004). In this research, Questionnaires were sent to respondents via email and a quick link was posted on Facebook page through the profile and responses were directly recorded. It was in a controlled pattern where in the initial phase people were asked to help me in my Research so that they can respond more accurately and effectively , everyone was asked in a way that their Responses could be controlled. non-probability sampling classifications. As mentioned by Proctor (2000), in Student samples are used in this research because they can enhance homogeneity and it is much easier to control error during theory testing and question probing (Goldsmith, 2002; Malhotra and King, 2003). Findings reveal that homogeneous respondents can help reduce the possibility of measurement model error (Assael and Keon, 1982). Table 1. 1 Gender of Respondents

Gender	%age of respondents
Male	58
Female	48

3. 5 DESIGN OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES :

The Questionnaire was made up of 12 questions , a fewer number of questions were asked so that their response remains effective , and so that more responses can be recorded , they were designed in way that it can be divided into 3 steps . The initial response , a middle more familiarization with the questions and in the end a more narrow response based on experiences and personal thinking with a continuum ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The initial response phase : What is your gender ? What is your Age ? What is your income level in GBP ? This was built to record an initial response of the respondents by asking them about general questions

loosely designed and more broader or general. Before that they were asked that their information will be remained confidential and won't be used for commercial purpose and that's why I chose not to take down their names and the area they live in or any contact details, so that they feel relaxed and feel more trust that would eventually increase the accuracy of the test.

Smith and Eatough (2006) suggest it is better to have mental prompts rather than constantly referring to the questions in the course of the Questionnaire.

They were confirmed that it won't take much of their time and was asked in a gentle way. This phase is also called ice -breaker. The reason was to make

them familiar about the topic as it appeared before they started to fill in the questionnaire, so that it can help them in later questions. Breakwell, 2006)

and Smith and Eatough (2006) suggest that questions contain both general and the personal questions , an effective questionnaire carries both. The

intermediary phase : More closed-end questions were asked in this phase

except for the last which contained the options of Brand experience ,

quality , image and Brand name , the reason for keeping this question in the middle was to design a method that general questions would first be

answered and then the most important question could be answered after

getting familiar with the questionnaire. This question entails on Brand Image

through Brand Equity. Do you consider the brand of the clothes before

making purchase? Do you think that the brand name is the reflection of high

quality? Will you pay high price for purchasing clothes from famous brand?

Will you indulge in repeat purchase from a famous clothing brand if your first

experience was not good? Will you change the clothing retail store on the

basis of the brand name and image? These question were designed as

closed- ended question where respondents only had the option to reply in Yes or No. More likely people responding in Yes would automatically call for more Yes than No (Doyle, 1999; Mooij, 1998). Please select on which basis you will select the clothing retail store? This question was the most important in carrying out responses of people on the Basis of factors like Brand name , Image , Quality and Experience. As stated in some consumer behaviour models, there are three stages for purchasing behaviour and decision making for products or services, they are pre-purchase, purchase and lastly post-purchase (Blackwell et al., 2006; Rayport and Jaworski, 2003). In order to find out what they would do before making for Brands their purchasing decisions for the particular course of action followed by these two their post-purchase behaviour to know what will they do on the basis of their experience. The last phase: The last phase in the Questionnaire was along the continuum where the respondents were encountered with the continuum ranging from strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Brand image is the most important factor influencing the purchase behaviour; The clothing products from famous brand have high quality You are inclined towards the purchase of a particular clothing product because of the brand name and image. These are very important questions where respondents , these questions were purely based on their experiences , beliefs and the overall image about the Brand and its name.

3. 5. 1 ADMINISTRATION :

Online administration was used , emails were sent and links were provided on facebook so that people can respond to them and their answers can be

recorded directly , they did that at their comfort and ease without any interruption , an the questionnaires were designed in a way so it can be completed within a short period of time , they were unaided and the responses were then articulated in Excel sheet and pie-charts auto generated their results in the form of percentages.

3. 5. 2 LINKING RESEARCH WITH GROUNDED THEORY :

The importance of grounded theory is intensified in the research, using systemic coding, which leads to the proliferation and authenticity of the reliability of the data (Babbie, 2004)and its validity. There are seven stages for grounded theory, including familiarization, reflection, conceptualization, cataloguing concepts, re-coding, linking and finally re-evaluation (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002). Based on this the respondent first can familiarize themselves by reading the prelude of the research topic then reflection of their idea how to answer in question keeping in mind the topic and support or answer it with the concepts of their own their beliefs and ideas , different ways to code data (Dey, 1993). In addition to this, grounded theory provides methodology skills that are developed in a number of areas such as handling and examining of large volumes of ill-structured, qualitative data as well asInterprete analysis of the qualitative data, which could explain why grounded theory has gained much popular ity in recent decades (Henwood and Pidgeon, 2006). As outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990), researchers can be both scientific and creative , in this theory, provided that they abide by three rules. They make the inclusion of periodically stepping back and

asking, maintaining an attitude of uncertainty, and to follow the research procedures and rules.

3. 6 SUMMARY :

This chapter explains the methodology used in this dissertation research and is justified and validated. Qualitative structured Questionnaires have been chosen as a means to collect data due to their nature of soliciting responses in relation to attitudes, opinions , feelings and ideas. In addition to this , convenience sampling method was used , in collecting data. Furthermore, the mode of Questionnaire that is online administration was used with unaided stimulus by the researcher, designed in a way to get more accurate answers. The data collection was supported by grounded theory for the qualitative nature of the research method. The research findings will be presented and discussed in the next chapter i-e ; chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS , RESULTS AND DISCUSSION :

4. 1 INTRODUCTION:

This chapter focuses on presenting and bringing forward the discussion and data collections and its interpretation through graphs , pie charts and tables. Results and findings obtained from the Questionnaires and the concerning effect brand image on consumer purchasing behaviour and decision making in clothing industry UK. As mentioned in chapter 3, convenience sampling was used and questionnaires were sent to respondents as well as links were given on Facebook to open the questionnaire and fill directly from there. Each answer was recorded directly and responses were generated and

results were drawn on Excel Sheet with the help of pie-charts and bar- charts for the purpose of data analysis. As far as the analysis is concerned, it will be based on pertinent methods, which reveal the answers from respondents respectively. According to Easterby-Smith et al. (2002), qualitative researchers need to communicate, bring forward all findings in an honest and constructive manner, distributing the findings. In addition to this , the analysis should be open to verification, authenticity, validity to make it possible, so that the others are allowed to repeat what has already been done and then draw conclusions (Breakwell, 2006). The chapter consists of three sections in which the respondents backgrounds specially age (respecting the discreetness of people they were not asked to give their names and address etc), the effect of brand image on them their experiences and also their opinions of brand are presented in a way to enhance the research area and focus.

4. 1. 1BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS :

The respondents were just selected randomly on the basis of their gender (UK only) as for this study Gender plays a vital role as discussed in chapter 2 , Women buy and spend more than Men and the saving habit of Men is more Than Women , therefore the idea of asking them about their gender was crucially important in order to generate desired or required output. Also age brackets were chose ranging from under 20 - 35+ the reason for chosing these brackets was that the spending habit can vary in any age , people spend despite their age , children spend through their parents , teenagers do the same even if they don't earn, and old age pensioners also

spend. Spending habit is not confined to specific age and Gender . Also income level was taken into consideration starting from 500(GBP) to 35000(GBP) Annually. First question is based on asking about the respondents age , Second questions is about their Age and Third is based on their income level, are some of the determining factors as outlined by (Berry, 2000). Table 1. 2 Respondents gender Table 1. 3 Respondents Age Brackets Table 1. 4 Respondents Income level.

4. 2 EFFECT OF BRAND IMAGE ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR AND DECISION MAKING:

The Significance of clothing brands has impact on consumer purchasing decisions As mentioned previously in chapter 2, brand is essential for product growth in a way that it can be inculcated in consumers' minds (Mooij, 1998) and therefore it could have a beneficial or negative effect on customers' buying decisions (Yasin et al., 2007).

4. 2. 1 BRAND CONSIDERATION :

Do you consider A brand before making Purchase ?

Table 1. 5

As it can be seen from the above figure that 17% of the respondents answered that they do not consider the brand before making a purchase, and 83% of them answered in Yes which means that they consider the brand before making purchase , linking it back to chapter 1 of the background information of the UK clothing industry the background information of people in UK , it can be seen that people do consider the brand before making their

purchases regardless of their gender , age or income(Aaker, 1999; Fennis and Pruyn, 2006).

4. 2. 2 BRAND QUALITY (PERCIEVED):

As mentioned in the literature, brand can make potential consumers aware of the quality of the products (Aaker, 1991). The issue was examined by asking the question Do you think that the brand name is the reflection of high quality? The percentage of people responding in YES was 77% which clearly shows as discussed in chapter 2 , that consumers perceive quality of the product on the basis of brand name, the answer clearly justifies that as less people only 23% of them responded in a NO.

Table 1. 6

Brand name is a powerful tool for raising brand quality and perception about the brand (Mackenzie et al., 1986; Tsai et al., 2007). This confirms with the literature review that brand equity's essential attributes such as brand quality can lead to product credibility (McGuire, 1978) and enhance attractiveness of a brand name (McCracken, 1989).

4. 2. 3 BRAND IMAGE:

In order to interpret the results from the answers issue regarding brand image and the willingness to pay and extra price or the premium it was examined through questions 6 which the respondents were asked whether they buy the same brands , this question was asked Will you pay high price for purchasing clothes from famous brand? The results are illustrated in table 1. 6.

Table 1. 6 :

From the above chart it can be seen clearly that people replied on the basis of the brand name and their values and attitudes towards a famous brand, in fact more replied in a Yes than No, which clearly show people will be willing to pay an extra price for premium products. These findings confirm what has mentioned in the literature that associated brand images can help enhance the value of brands and therefore people would pay an extra price for this (Yasin, 2007).

4. 2. 4 BRAND LOYALTY :

In order to examine how much people are inclined towards a particular brand based on retail store , brand experience , brand name , and its image. People become brand loyal when they are indulged in repetitive purchases and buy from the same brand thus becoming brand loyal towards a particular brand or store. The responses are illustrated in tables 1. 7, 1. 8 and 1. 9.

Table 1. 7:**Will you indulge in repeat purchase from a famous clothing brand if your first experience was not good?**

This question was asked because people associate values based on their previous experiences , sometimes through word of mouth as discussed in chapter 2 , there this question was very important and the major respondents replied in No 77% of them said they wont buy from the same brand which directly proves what has been outlined in chapter 2 and only a minor population said 23%.

Table 1. 8**Will you change the clothing retail store on the basis of the brand name and image?**

As cited in literature review based brand knowledge (Yoo et al., 2000), people were asked whether they change the brand name and image , the major replied in YES which again links back to chapter 2 where brand loyalty was outlined, and 32% of them said No which has a minimal affect on changing the brand name and ultimately its image.(Keller, 1998) and (Aaker , 1998).

Table 1. 9**Please select on which basis you will select the clothing retail store?**

This question was of critical importance as it build around the overall brand image through brand equity attribute that is brand loyalty. (McCracken, 1989) mentioned in chapter 2 , brand loyalty is increased by shopping experience , price and quality and brand name whereas play role in building an overall brand image which directly affects consumer buying behaviour and decision making as suggested by(Alvarez and Casielles, 2005). Four factors were chosen namely shopping experience, in which the response was 21% which scored second in the selection process , Brand name scored the least 17% , priced contributed to 19% and quality played a major role showing highest percentage that is 43%.

4.3 RESULTS OF CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR AND DECISION MAKING :

In the last three questions respondents were asked to answer the questions based on what they have experienced so far , and on their insight of brand image in their mind , their beliefs and ideas in a more detailed way along with the continuum. Consumer make their final decision of purchase after understanding or being loyal with the brand (Dholakia and Uusitalo, 2002).

TABLE 2

Brand image is the most important factor influencing the purchase behaviour

Strongly Agree 28%

Agree 36%

Neutral 30%

Disagree 4%

Strongly Disagree 2%

This is the 3rd last question which helped in delineating the result. From the above it can be seen clearly that BRAND IMAGE is the most important factor in purchase behaviour thus , a large amount of people 36% of them Agreed, 28% strongly Agreed which adds up to 64% which clearly justifies what has been discussed earlier in chapter 2. This clearly explains why brand image is so important for purchase behaviour as only 6% Disagreed which can be on the basis of lack of understanding of the topic that they were asked.

Table 3

The clothing products from famous brand have high quality

Strongly Agree 15%

Agree 43%

Neutral 30%

Disagree 13%

Strongly Disagree 0%

Although this question is more linked to the question asked earlier this is a later question which is build around the same idea of paying a higher price for a famous brand question 4 , this is a resultant of that question which clearly describes that clothes from famous brand have high quality that's why they charge an extra money from the consumers. 43% Agreed and 15 % Strongly Agreed which is a result of what was mentioned in chapter 2 about brand quality and consumer behaviour also it has some link with chapter 1 if UK clothing industry and the consumer buying behaviour in clothing industry UK.

TABLE 4

You are inclined towards the purchase of a particular clothing product because of the brand name and image

Strongly Agree 23%

Agree 34%

Neutral 26%

Disagree 15%

Strongly Disagree 2%

The last but not the least question asked was about the purchase decision on the basis of brand name and image this directly refers to chapter 1 and chapter 2 , that more people are inclined towards the purchases with brands who have bigger names and image. The result clearly justifies that idea as 34% Agreed , 23% Strongly Agreed and only 17% of fewer Disagreed. The neural amount resulted on 26% still lower than the respondents who agreed.

4. 5 SUMMARY :

In the results the respondent's answered are interpreted and the information is gathered through their responses. These responses from Questionnaires were quoted and analysis was made through them in order to highlight the importance of findings for further brand image building. At the beginning of the chapter, respondents' background was introduced (age , gender and income level) after that some thorough understandings on their purchasing habits in the clothing industry UK. After that the c analysis and discussion of Questionnaires and their responses to find any similarities or differences on the area of focus and dimension along brand image through brand equity.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

5. 1 INTRODUCTION :

Based on the research findings and the results in chapter 4, this chapter draw final conclusions on what basis the analysis of data was made and discussion drawn upon it, also to provide insight for understanding consumer purchasing behaviour in detail through various methods and further investigations for validity and reliability. It was found that brand image plays a vital role in consumer purchasing decision and decision making through and equity and its attributes like perceived quality and brand loyalty. The above chapter provided an overview of the research findings and their results as well as the brand image. This chapter will aim at the research limitations and recommendations for further research which are also very important.

5. 2 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS OR SHORT-COMINGS :

During the course of research and delineating value to the research procedure, several limitations were encountered that put constraints to the findings and put error to the overall accuracy. There are few limitations regarding the sampling method, time and also how results are interpreted. As far as convenience sampling method is concerned, qualitative research do not provide demonstrative samples from the target (population) even though they can help to find out minor problems that are not understandable in a quantitative study (Proctor, 2000). A wide range of audience was chosen as a subjects for investigation and they tend to be more liable to the views, ideas

and beliefs (Netemeyer et al., 1991), having a tendency of getting accurate results. In deciding a wide range people the convenience sampling was used (Proctor, 2000). In terms of time, an in-depth and constructed questionnaire for the method of data collection, the number of sample Questionnaires was limited. The obligation to submit dissertation in a shorter span of time decreased the efficiency of the research. If more time allowed, more samples could be gathered in order to enhance the overall conclusiveness of the questionnaires. The last thing that could affect is the responses from the structured in depth Questionnaires that could be subject to researchers effects. During the designing of questionnaires, the characteristics of the respondents, gender and age or income could effect the nature of answers. In addition to this, the researchers designing of questionnaire and questioning skill is also one of the elements for answer accuracy and reliability (Levy and Weitz, 1992) and data obtained can be influenced by the Researchers' manner and skill of handling follow-up and probing questions and questions built along the continuum (Proctor, 2000). This is the Researchers' first time to do the dissertation so, aspects like nervousness and lack of practical knowledge and experience could be regarded as some of the limitations for this dissertation and its results.

5.3 IMPLICATIONS :

The motive of this dissertation is to find out the effect of brand image on consumer purchasing behaviour and decision making in clothing industry UK. There are thousands of brands alone in the UK, whether the brand is dominant or not it all depends on how it is perceived by the consumers. A

brand for marketers is regarded as equity, this is divided into four different areas namely brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty and brand association. Two of them are used in this dissertation due to the nature of the subject perceived quality and brand loyalty as they directly affect the brand image and questionnaire was built around two as they alone helped finding out the result, through understanding how customers behave in these aspects, marketers can think of strategies relevantly. In terms of perceived quality customers judge the quality mostly based on some factors like materials, style, colour, durability, price and performance, retailers and manufacturers need to produce better quality clothes for the consumers to choose from a variety. In addition to this, the investments in brand loyalty can help enhance the chance of repeat purchases and also broaden the customer base. To retain loyal customers, marketers can plan different reward methods in different forms such as discounts or price offs. Such positive implications are achieved through working closely with brand equity and its attributes such as perceived quality and brand loyalty. For the UK market specifically, due to the presence of famous clothing brands that are very common in established and prospering countries with lucrative clothing industry, strategies should be made to increase brand image through brand equity. For instances, it could think of making online clothes purchasing more common and easy to access also introducing variations and most importantly reward loyal customers and retain them. Loyalty cards are common amongst the UK respondents for buying clothes. Marketers can see the feasibility of attainment and this idea can widen the clothing/ retailing

industry as the supermarkets have done which are other types of retail industry.

5. 4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH :

Although the findings of this research subject are remarkable and useful, as one may think, there are also several other limitations as mentioned earlier. So, its essential to make improvements for further research and investigation in order to provide more profound and illustrative findings. More samples of questionnaires should be gathered by different means not just online could be direct face to face or postal mail, as long as time and money are not the barriers. More Questionnaires could be sent to more people to attain as much data as they can for more accuracy. This could provide much more conclusive results for the research. Another thing added to constructive structured questionnaires could be other kinds of research methods such as focus groups , semi-structures or unstructured questionnaires and even some quantitative research methods could be used in order to provide more accurate findings from different standpoints. Other sampling groups specifically mentioned as students, business class could also make an impact on the findings of the research , By considering above recommendations, researcher could delineate more illustrative and profound findings from different perspectives, reconnoitring the research to a higher band as for development with in the procedure is concerned.