

Investigate the influence of sportswear brand names marketing essay



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ABSTRACT or EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (300-400 words – wt was intended to do n what was done)

The purpose of this research is to investigate the influence of sportswear brand names on the variety seeking behavior of UK (Birmingham) consumers. This study aims to argue that although the consumers seeks variety in a brand they have not bought before; their purchase would be highly selective with reference to the empirical investigation conducted by them on the basis of brand name and image of the company.

The data was collected from the consumers of Birmingham with the help of Exit questionnaires who made a purchase of sportswear/ athletic apparel and athletic footwear from JJB Sports, Sports World and JD sports at the city centre of Birmingham having the leading brands of Nike, Reebok, Puma, Adidas at the time of the data collection by the researcher. This was carried out with the help of exit questionnaires and was done with the intention to explore the tendency of decision making of consumers towards buying unfamiliar sportswear brands, the importance of popular versus less popular brands and the cultural and demographic influences. The discussion is based on the perceived brand difference and customer values which results in the preference of certain brands over others.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVES AND RATIONALE – 1000 WORDS

BACKGROUND

TITLE

“ To investigate the Influence of Sportswear Brand Names on the variety seeking behavior of Consumers.”

INTRODUCTION

Aaker (1996) defined brand as a multidimensional assortment of functional, emotional, relational and strategic elements that collectively generate unique set of associations in the public mind. It also helps in identifying and differentiating the products of one seller over another with the help name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a unity of all these (Kotler, 1996).

Sports clothing in the present market is a very competitive sector and according to Mintel the domestic sportswear market of UK is dominated by Adidas, Nike, Puma and Reebok. In the athletic apparel sector of UK, Nike together with Umbro holds 25-35% of the market followed by Reebok and Adidas together by 20-30% while another group consisting of Lonsdale, Lacoste, Berghaur and Timberland holds less than 10% while the other suppliers consists of 20-30% of the market. In the case of athletic footwear,

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Nike together with Umbro holds a 20-30% of the UK market (Fair Trade, 2008). Customers appropriation of sportswear and athletic footwear as a casual wear or leisure wear (market Research, 2009) has placed them in the broader market and as a result it has resulted in the increase in sales. The spending on the sports goods increased in 2003 compared to the previous year resulting in £4, 480 (Mintel-Nov 2004) and soared up in 2008, resulting in a spending of £3. 25 billion on sportswear and £1. 28billionn on sports footwear which represented 8% of their total expense on clothing and 19% of spending on footwear (market Research, 2009). The increase in the demand of sportswear has led to tremendous increase in the number of business organizations manufacturing sportswear and providing services to meet the endless demands of the people (Rncos, 2009). As a result of more than one company manufacturing the same product competition arises and as a means to attract as many potential buyers towards their products they device various methods like brand name, logo and color (Hirsh, 1996). The purpose behind a brand name is to leave the key brand message in the minds of target audience. The brand name in their extreme popular form becomes the source of product identification. Due to the increased availability of the choices of brands, customers tend to develop a variety seeking behavior in their purchase based on various factors like brand name, perceived brand image, promotions, price, quality, style, innovation and empirical research carried out by them. In this work, brand is defined as the name of the company, which usually appears on the product. This study would be conducted within the retail business environment of UK (Birmingham) and is based on the perceived brand image, name awareness, customer values, brand equity and personality traits. Although Bass(1974)

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regards variety seeking as non purposeful and random behavior, the purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of sportswear brand name on the variety seeking consumer behaviours in UK(Birmingham). Moreover, it aims to state that the purchase will be highly selective depending on the name and image the brand possesses in the market

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

AIMS

To investigate the Influence of Sportswear Brand Names on the variety seeking behavior of Consumers.”

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of brand name of sportswear in the variety seeking consumer behaviours of the British and the Ethnic consumers of UK (Birmingham) and to state that the purchase will be highly selective depending on the name and image the brand possesses in the market.

To identify the factors that influences the purchase decision of these brands.

To investigate the comparative influence of reputable brands versus less known brands on the consumer buying behaviour.

To investigate whether culture influences the brand purchase decision of the consumers.

ORIGINALITY OF THE OBJECTIVES AND PROBLEMS – previous works done etc

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY- what is the use

Although variety seeking behavior could be an impulse action or a usually exhibited character of a consumer, in both cases it usually involves less effort based feelings (Sharma, 2010) and hence it increases the significance of the main aim of this work which is to identify the impact of the brand name and the firm's image on the purchasing decision of the consumers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY (PROCESS AND APPROACH) – 2000 WORDS

METHODOLOGY EMPLOYED

Research methodology is the method used for carrying out the research and the justification on the usage of that method. Although there are three main research methodologies which are qualitative, quantitative and the mixed type (Denscombe, 2008). For the purpose of this work the researcher has adopted the deductive approach with the quantitative data collection in which the work started from the theory and proceeded towards the data collection which was administered through exit questionnaires.

Quantitative Research Method

According to Saunders (2003) Quantitative is defined as a method that involves numerical data or data that could be quantified in order to achieve the objectives of the research involved. The method used for the research is non-probability method as the sample is not collected in random but from those who enter the specified criteria; this is then continued with purposive

sampling as the sample is chosen with the purpose of investigating into the variety seeking behavior of consumers in the purchase of sportswear brands and put into effect by quota sampling method by which the samples are segmented into different groups.

The data was collected by means of exit questionnaires as it made it easier to collect data from large number of consumers to fill the sufficient size of the quota representing a percentage of the total population for the purpose of giving a generalized conclusion. It also helped in the standardization of the data and easy comparison of the data collected (Saunders, 2003) while economical at the same time. In order to achieve the described goals of the proposed dissertation the empirical data was collected by means of exit questionnaires which consisted of 21 questions in total by means of Face-to-face clipboard, since the researcher collected data from those who have just finished a purchase of sportswear and this was used to understand the influence on brand name on them in depth and in detail (Denscombe, 2008). The questions were both of closed and open nature (Denscombe, 2008). The data collection was carried out by waiting at a discrete distance of sportswear showrooms of JJB Sports, Sports World and JD sports at the city centre of Birmingham and asking the prepared questions to those customers who have made a purchase of sportswear and athletic footwear from these shops. This method was an added advantage, as it enhanced the benefit of personal attitudes, experience and the perception of the brand in the mind of the sample. This was followed by the re-interpretation of existing knowledge of attitudes and values on the influence of brand name of sportswear in the variety seeking nature of consumers.

Data Collection, Analysis and Interpretation

The primary data was obtained from the exit questionnaires while the secondary data was collected from journals, electronic library, ABI/INFORM, Mintel, Google scholar and materials from Google related to the previous researches conducted, market reports and articles.

ANALYSIS

The analysis of the data was done with the main aim to identify whether the brand's name and the firm's reputation plays a part in the preference of popular brands over less known brands in the purchasing decision of sportswear and athletic footwear by the variety seeking consumers. The next step was to identify the factors that influences the purchase decision, later to see whether there are any relation with the variables and finally to explore whether cultural or demographic influence in the purchasing decision.

INTERPRETATION

JUSTIFICATION OF THE METHODOLOGY EMPLOYED

The technique employed is the quantitative method which is justified by Non-probability sampling and Quota sampling where the researcher collects the sample in a non random way. This method is employed because the researcher tends to collect data on special instances from those who bought sportswear at the time of carrying out the sample collection and gives advantage to the researcher to see who fill the quota (Denscombe, 2008).

The non random method is chosen as the researcher intends to collect data from the sample in a non random manner based on residing in a Birmingham postcode area, purchasing from only JJB Sports, Sports World and JD sports at <https://assignbuster.com/investigate-the-influence-of-sportswear-brand-names-marketing-essay/>

the city centre of Birmingham, considered only if it is the first time purchase of the brand, sample being the consumer and with a variety seeking behavior on sportswear brands. This is justified by quota sampling technique as the sample is segmented into quotas based on age, ethnicity, sex and status of residency and is considered the most appropriate technique to meet the objectives of the research. The three main brands considered for this work is namely Nike, Adidas, Reebok since these are the dominant ones in the UK market and the other brands being the ones named by the sample being it a popular or a less known sportswear brand.

COHERENCE AND RIGOR OF APPROACH

APPROPRIATENESS OF THE METHODOLOGY TO THE PROJECT (GIVEN PROJECT OBJECTIVES)

DESCRIPTION OF THE POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The researcher anticipates in covering more than 100 consumers from Birmingham. The sample initially chosen was based on possessing a Birmingham postcode and were from a wide ethnic and demographic background from different places in Birmingham. The sample are those people who buys Nike, Adidas, Reebok, Puma or other brands for the first time and this sampling is done from the consumers of JJB Sports, Sports World and JD sports of Birmingham due to the fact that these stores constituted a quarter of the overall consumption of sports clothing (Mintel-May 2005). The age group considered is between 16 and 65+ years of both sexes. The lower age limit is reduced to 16 as many consumers become

brand conscious and establishes brand preferences at a very young age (Radder, 2008).

The sample was divided into different quotas based on age, sex, ethnicity and status of residence. Although the researcher initially planned to adopt proportional quota sampling in which the sample chosen would exactly represent a proportion of the total population, taking 0.01% of the total population the researcher was faced with the issues of quotas becoming negligible (Denscombe, 2008) with respect to ethnicity (African, Asian and others) in which out of the 12 quotas; 5 was below 1, 3 was below 5 and 1 below 8, which meant that the sample could not be considered a representative of the total population as a result of which the overall work would not be able to be generalized to the total population of Birmingham. Hence, the researcher adopted the non proportional quota sampling and increased the sample of each quota to 10 hence reaching a sample of 120 consumers in total.

QUALITY OF DATA

The quality of the data entirely depends on the sample considered for the work with respect to the overall population.

QUESTIONNAIRE (DESIGN, QUALITY AND ADMINISTRATION)

Structure of questionnaire

The questions were straight forward, and there were no barriers of social climate involved and this enabled to collect the data in an easier way which were later used for analysis. The questionnaires were of both open and

closed type questions (Denscombe, 2008) and consisted of an overall of 21 questions. The first few questions were the screening questions to find out the customers who had bought a sportswear, who has a Birmingham postcode and to identify the ones with variety seeking behavior. By carrying out these initial questions the right sample for the work was selected. This was followed by the rest of the questions whose motive was to investigate functional/fashion aspect, buying behavior exhibited, factors influencing the purchase, brand research, popularity Vs less known brands, brand preference, frequency of purchase, cultural and lifestyle.

The questionnaire consists of 6 questions of closed type comprising of complex alternatives ranging from 2-10 from which the respondent can choose, 10 questions were of open type while 5 employed Likert scale. The questionnaire mainly refers to issues with regard to nature of buying behavior, factors influencing consumers in their purchases, perception of brand name and cultural and demographic influence.

RELIABILITY AND CREDIBILITY

5. 6. 2 Reliability

Reliability according to Jaffe (2000) is that result which is consistent over course of time. The validity and reliability has its limitations, as the data obtained would be small compared to the total population of that country.

Objectivity

The objectivity is based on the facts of the findings derived from actual data and not on the subjective or emotional values (Blurtit).

VALIDITY

According to Denscombe (2008), validity of the data refers to the accuracy and precision of the data and tests the truthfulness or the falsity of the conclusion obtained. With the help of carefully prepared exit questionnaires, the author herself collected the data from the respondents in Birmingham City Centre to test the influence of brand name among these consumers. The validity and credibility of the research is increased by the fact that the researcher was present during the collection of the data and was directly done by herself (Saunders, 2003).

LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

There are limitations to branding as well as doing the methodology employed to find out the brand effect in people. The issue in branding is the location based multiple identities on brand suitable in a place would be unsuitable in another place. The limitations of this research includes the exploratory level of study conducted and the authenticity of the answers obtained, impact of approach of number of people who involved in the study and the time involved in the collection of the data (Denscombe, 2008). The main limitations were the availability of a recent census data with respect to ethnic origins and gender in which case the researcher used the data available from the 2001 census which had the main ethnic category but still lacked a gender classification and the age group from 16-65+ was broadly divided into 3 categories, due to which the sample could not be collected based on proper ratios of age and gender with respect to the total population from the data available. Another drawback was that the number of people in

each category of minority ethnic groups got smaller with the increase in the categories (Denscombe, 2008) and hence was negligible compared to the total population in the area who purchases sportswear.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW - 2000 WORDS

Consumer Buying Behaviour

According to Holbrook, 1981, consumer behaviour is defined as the acquisition, use and disposition of goods and services while the Individual decision making depends on the personal characteristics (Rallapalli, 1994) and ultimately is the result of how, what, why and when the customer buy (Kotler, 1994). The choice of purchase is a mixture of the cultural, social, personal and psychological factors (Kotler, 2008) while the personal characteristics is determined by factors like behaviour, attitude, beliefs and demographic characteristics (Rajagopal, 2005) and hence differs how consumers perceive the brand.

Marketing plays an important role and by positioning the brand, attributes them with personality traits of consumers and Guildford (1973) defined personality trait as any distinguishable characteristics which one individual differs from another (Rajagopal, 2005). Brassington (2002) and Keller (2003) consider advertising effective which influences the customers in evaluating alternative brands and brand name attributes. The overall brand positioning in the mind of the consumer depends on the brand attributes, satisfaction and the use of the product and the purchase is guaranteed if the perceived values are greater than the cost (Yee, 2008).

The demand in the popular sportswear brands like Nike, Adidas and Reebok are increasing and used by wide range of the UK population and are bought by 7 in 10 of the UK consumers and are also influenced by the cult celebrities of UK football (Intel-Nov 2004). Redembeck (2002) argues creation of personality is highly done by advertisements and followed by brand association by famous celebrities (Rajagopal, 2005) and Erdogan (2000) points out that the hiring of well known celebrities to lend their personality to at least a century. This results in symbolic meaning and emotional value which contribute to brand preferences among the consumers.

There are four types of buying-decision behaviour which are Complex buying behaviour, dissonance-reducing buying behaviour, habitual buying behaviour and variety seeking buying behaviour (Kotler, 2008).

High involvement Low Involvement

Variety-seeking buying behavior

Complex buying behavior

Significant

Differences between

Brands

Habitual buying behavior

Dissonance-reducing buying behavior

Few Differences

Between Brands

Adopted from Kotler (2008)

The first two categories are the ones where consumers are highly involved where the former has significant differences between brands while the latter has a few differences between brands. The habitual buying behaviour and the variety seeking involves less involvement but with few differences between brands and with significant differences in brands respectively. Due to nature of objectives involved in this work, the researcher would be dealing with variety seeking behaviour alone.

Variety Seeking Behaviour

Variety seeking behaviour according to Kotler (2004, 2008), is the buying behaviour exhibited by the consumers where there is a significant perceived brand difference but low consumer involvement. There are different approaches to variety seeking behaviour such as psychological processes that creates needs for variety or as a result from boredom from the previous brand used or out of curiosity or special features offered by the new brand. There are various factors which influence the variety seeking behaviour of the consumers; brand belief, brand image, product quality, price, lifestyle, attitudes, perception, promotions, service etc (Rohm, 2004). Although this is the case the researcher tends to argue that as a result of priority to quality by consumers the probability of ending up buying the popular brands is more due to the brand perception in the mind of the public.

In the present UK market there are popular/reputable brands as well as less popular and national brands. The three dominant brands are the Nike, Adidas and Reebok while the national sports specialized brands include Speedo, Umbro, Asics etc while the brands occupying both sports and fashion are Ellesse and Fila (Market Research, 2003). There are also other brands such as Lonsdale, Lacoste, Berghaur and Timberland. The researcher assumes that due to the large number of sportswear brands available to the consumers of Birmingham there also arises vast evaluating criteria for the consumers and differs from people to people. But the researcher assumes that although there are many evaluative factors it would be all influenced by the Brand name and the brand image it has in the market. For the purpose of this work, the researcher would be considering the variety seeking behaviour of consumers changing from a popular brand to another popular brand and from a less popular brand to a more popular one and argues that although people tend to have variety and unexpectedness in the sportswear the purchase would be highly based on the empirical research conducted by the consumers.

Factors Affecting Purchase Decision

Sales promotion, Brand name, brand image, quality, attitude of reference groups,

Attributes And Impact on purchasing decision

According to Dillon et al (2001) brands are analyzed on the basis of the impressions brands leave and specific associations with brands while, the superiority of the brands depend upon how the brand is perceived,

evaluated, and the commitment of the consumers to the brand (Srinivasan, <https://assignbuster.com/investigate-the-influence-of-sportswear-brand-names-marketing-essay/>)

1979; Lee, 2008) and Blackwell et al, 2001 pointed it out that this is influenced by the values such as lifestyle, attitude, knowledge, and experiences of the consumer (Hwang, 2007). The utilitarian function is a combination of needs and the product attributes while the attributes depends on the experience of consumers with the product, media exposure etc and this reflects the belief on the firm (Anand, 2004). The superiority of the brands is decided by the price and the brand name which together constitute the perceived quality of the product (Pecotich, 2007) which puts them on top of the competing brands while the feelings of status fills them with emotional value (Lee, 2008). The effect of firms profile in the increased probability of being purchased is significant when the product considered is lesser known or with diverse product profile and ultimately influences the purchasing decision of the product (Anand, 2004).

The decision criteria is based on the benefits the consumer gains and is broadly divided into extrinsic and intrinsic where extrinsic comprises of the price, brand name, and store image while the intrinsic consists of style, color, quality (Solomon & Rabolt, 2004 from Jinsook Hwang, 2007). The researcher argues that both the extrinsic and the intrinsic factors have an impact on the final purchasing decision of the consumer. Ahtola, 1985; Blackwell et al, 2001; described this as utilitarian and hedonic where the former comprises of the concrete factors such as objective, economic, rational, concrete and functional purchase dimensions and Ahtola, 1985; Hirschman, 1982 explained the Hedonic relates to the abstract ones such as relate to benefit arising from experiential, abstract, subjective, emotional, symbolic, sensory, non-rational and aesthetic purchase attributes and

benefits (Jinsook Hwang, 2007). Lee(2004) found that the consumers value for sportswear depended on the evaluation of the brand attributes and identified the seven attributes to be design, color, fabric, sewing, quality, enterprise image, and brand advertisement (Jinsook Hwang, 2007). The researcher thus assumes that the firms profile and the popularity of the brand would be the main criteria for the purchasing of the sportswear brands for the first time purchasers.

Brand and its influence on Sportswear or Attitudes towards brand names

Kotler (2008) defined Brand as a name, term, sign, symbol or design or a combination of these which identifies the goods and services of one or group of sellers and differentiates from its competitors. Schiffman & Kanuk, 1994 defined attitude as the learned predisposition to behave with respect to a given object always in a favourable or unfavourable manner (Jinsook Hwang, 2007) while Baron & Byrne, 1987 defined it as the general evaluation of people, objects, advertisements or issues and has a lasting effect (Jinsook Hwang, 2007).

Although there are more and less familiar brands in the market, the consumers are influenced by the information accessed from family and friends (Kotler, 1994) and are attracted by the prestigious brand names and their images (Aaker, 1996) due to famous brands disseminating product benefits than a non-famous brand (Keller 1993 as in Rajagopal 2005). The desirable image and the effective marketing simultaneously adds value to a product by giving the buyer a feeling of confidence (Ohkvisit, 1989) and hence certain brands enjoy brand preferences over other brands (Kotler, <https://assignbuster.com/investigate-the-influence-of-sportswear-brand-names-marketing-essay/>

1996). The preference for brands is determined by the brand attribute values by the consumers.

Consumer Perception Of Brand Name Perceived

Involvement Quality

Brand Name Benefits

Value

Consumer

Demographic Willingness To Buy

Model adopted from Srinivasan (1979)

Consumers perceive brand (Bilkey, 1982) to be a symbol of quality (Rao, 1989), high status (Anholt, 2005), and hence opt for brands that are modern and cosmopolitan (Lee, 2008) in order to enhance their identity in the society (Kotabe, 2006) and considers brands not only as the representation of a company but also as status, identity, financial background and the general living of a person and hence many consumers buy brands due to the brand image in the market (Radder, 2008).

Although Brand names are created by marketers to promote products, ideas or personalities, a strong corporate brand name communicates meaning and defines image and hence considerable attention is paid to the tastes, values and norms of the society. This gives a great impact on the society and consequently results into beliefs, perceptions, attitudes and concept in the

minds of the customers and hence use the brand image for selection criteria of their purchase (Oh, 2002).

The growing interest of consumers both as participants and speculators adds to the increased demand in sportswear (Haverson, 1998). According to the study conducted in China the purchase is considerable with brands (Li, 2004) and increasing consumers are seeking specific brands for sportswear (Hirsh, 1996). They consider the records of accomplishment of brands as the selection criteria for quality of the product. Customers believe that brand name is a symbol of quality and status and hence is used as a source of information about a credence property (Teas, 1996).

There are various factors that influences the increased purchases of sports clothing and the major ones are the trend of using sportswear for fashion, casual wear, lifestyle, increase in the number of brand aware young adults, population, leisure time, income, consumer expenditure and employment, popularity of sports media, brand image of sports events (Intel-Nov 2004). Hence the buying behavior in sportswear shows a change in pattern from function to fashion/leisurewear and the researcher assumes that this could be as a result of the brand name and the perception of the brand in the mind of the consumers. The change in the pattern of buying behavior is evidenced by the survey by Market Research in 2005 showing that 50% bought for sports purpose, 26% wear without taking part in sports while 35% buy as a fashion and leisurewear. Although this is the case it was estimated that only 20% of the total purchase of sports shoes were for actual sports or exercise (Market Research, 2003). Chae & Rhee, 2005 pointed it out that behavior of the consumers could be predicted with the attitudes exhibited (Jinsook
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Hwang, 2007) and is evidenced by the Market Research, 2009 which showed an increase in the demand for convenience, fashion, style and performance due to the changing lifestyle and attitudes towards the fitness outerwear.

Changing lifestyles, and attitude towards fitness outerwear, are dictating fashion trends with women exhibiting a proclivity towards fashionable workout wear. Growing emphasis on versatility, convenience, fashion, comfort, style, and performance is creating a strong demand for sports and fitness clothing, which offers both functional performance and style appeal. The increased usage of sportswear such as trainers, track suits and other items of sports clothing as leisure wear and the replacement of traditional raincoats and jackets with fleeces and outdoor clothing has resulted in increased sales (Intel-Nov 2004). The researcher assumes that moving of sportswear from function to fashion (Intel-Sept 2009) could be a reason for variety seeking behaviour of consumers in sportswear.

Brand Association

Brand associations is defined as thoughts and ideas held by individuals in their memory related to a specific service or a product (Aaker, 1991). It represents base for purchase decision and brand loyalty. The different ways associations create value are to retrieve information, differentiate the product, reason to buy, create positive attitude and feelings and provide basis for extensions. The eleven types of brand association are product attributes, intangibles, customer benefits, relative price, use, customer, celebrity, personality, product class, competitors and geographic area.

Psychological benefit relates to feelings engendered while buying or using

the product and Aaker (1991) urges that it could be a powerful type of association.

Cognitive Behaviour And Brand Equity

Brand equity is a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand that add or subtract its value (Aaker, 1991). Chay, 1990; and Farquhar, 1989 pointed it out that a brand's equity enhances the value of a product by adding value to the firm, trade and the consumer beyond its functional use (Ettenson, 1993) at the same time consumer loyalty is very im