



CUSTOMER LOYALTY TOWARDS TRENDING FASHION OF APPARELS IN THE MAJOR CITIES OF TAMILNADU

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ABSTRACT

The Indian textile and apparel industry is one of the largest in the world which offers huge employment openings domestically and there is also a great demand for Indian textiles and apparel in foreign markets. Apparel means clothing, especially outerwear; garments and attire. Apparel is a term that refers to a covering for the human body that is worn. The people desire to purchase the specific brand because they trust the quality and comfort of that brand are appropriate for them. In this paper an attempt is made to study the customer loyalty towards the trending fashion and its related factors. Also, this study attempts to test the significance of socio-economic characteristics of customers towards the factors of customer loyalty on apparels.

Key words: IT Companies, Employer Branding, Employee Value Proposition.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Apparel is defined as clothing. But when talking about the retail apparel industry, typically, apparel includes day wear, evening wear, underwear, sleepwear, shoes, purses and various accessories such as belts. It also includes high-end luxuries, such as cashmere and fur, as well as sweats and active wear. Jewelry was not included in apparels. Millennials – defined as consumers who are ages from 22 to 37 – have high expectations for their purchases (Usharani & Gopinath, 2020a). The apparel industries dwell in a unique and vital position in India. Apparel industry is one of the most basic industries to arrive into existence in the country. Apparel industry provides the most fundamental necessities of people and grasps the value of the extended development for quality of life improvement. Value addition is added in every

stage of production up to the delivery of the products to the end consumer. This sector has establishes a major contributor to the National Income of India.

When the customer purchases the similar products and services again and again with commitment feeling consistently over a period of time and they deeply held committed to re-buy the same brand in future is known as customer loyalty which is one of the significant factor among the other factors of a company's success (Usharani & Gopinath, 2020b). The major difference between brand loyalty and customer loyalty is that customer loyalty relates to the overall spending power of customers. In short, it is the money-saving offers. Brand loyalty on the other hand not concerned about the money but how the consumers perceive about a particular brand (Karthick et al.,2020). To enhance brand loyalty can be done through reputation of particular brand, promotional activities and feeling of customers. Customer loyalty tells that consumers keep coming back for purchase due to reduction in prices than competitors. Consumers loyal to a specific brand believe that they will be offered with better service and rich quality than other brands (Kavitha & Gopinath, 2020). Hence in case of brand loyalty happens in spite of pricing and financial basis. The customer loyalty is termed as customer commitment to do business with particular organization, purchasing their goods and services repeatedly and recommending the products and services to friends, acquaintances and associates. Loyalty is more than just repeat purchase.

Study on brand experience has attracted a lot of attention during recent times. In order to focus the product experience, marketers used to develop a brand experience for their product to gain competitive advantage among other marketers.

Customer switching has become a key issue at the recent competitive business environment. It is a decisive factor to deal with the issue why customers leave a retail store without making a purchase.

A brand name is the base of a brand's image. Brands with strong images are able to influence customers' choices and control the marketplace (Gopinath, 2019).

A successful brand emerged and it becomes an exclusive product because of its quality. Product quality, place, person, service was improved in such a way that the customer perceives noteworthy and fashionable to satisfy their needs. If a brand offers good service for a greater number of years regularly, it increases added value of proven trustworthiness.

Promotion is the word which is used to telling to the consumers about the product or brand to motivate the consumers to purchase the product. Promotion is a marketing mix component, which is a kind of communication with consumers. Consumers like to shop at specific stores because they like the services provided and are assured of certain service privileges.

Service quality has become a noteworthy aspect of service and retail marketing to determine the survival of the companies, especially in the unstable emerging business environment.

Attitude of the customers now a day's changing because branded dress saves their energy, time and tailoring cost also. Compared with traditional way of fashion dressing, customers prefers to purchase branded outfits which helps to improve their outlook. So they were attracted towards readymade branded dresses and the convenience offered by it. Because of this cultivating brand awareness among customers readymade garments were accountable for the expansion of the branded apparel industry in India. Readymade apparel of exact brands has become latest style in social circles. The people desire to purchase the specific brand because they trust the quality and comfort of that brand are appropriate for them.

1.1. Research design

The research design has been drawn by briefing the objectives of the study, methodology of the study, sampling techniques, and tools used for data collection. Statistical tools used limitations of the study and chapter scheme.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

- (i) To study the socio-economic characteristics of customers of apparels in selected cities in Tamilnadu
- (ii) To examine the relationship between customer loyalty and its factors
- (iii) To test the significance between the demographic, profile characteristics and factors determining customer loyalty

1.3. Methodology

The present study is carried out only on the selected city of Tamilnadu. The present study is based on the data pertaining study is based on the data obtained from the customers. The study area is restricted to major cities of Tamilnadu such as Chennai, Coimbatore, Tiruchirappalli and Madurai.

These two cities were selected on the basis of trending fashion. In order to analysis the brand trust, the sample of 695 customers was selected using stratified random sampling method.

1.4. Source of Data

To draw useful inference about brand trust the required data were collected through both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were collected from the customers through a structure interview schedule. The other related secondary data and information regarding the meaning, concept were collected from the books, periodical and journals.

1.5. Limitation of the Study

Due to time and cost constrain the study area is restricted to only the major cities such as Chennai and Madurai of Tamil Nadu.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sreerekha & Praveen Kumar (2018) study was to find out the factors influencing consumer buying behaviour for fashion apparel products in Coimbatore city. The sample size consists of 100 respondents and data were collected though convenience sampling method using structured questionnaire. The result of this study showed that the relationship between the variables of consumer behaviour for apparel products and also presented deep insights and proof about the relationship.

Sonika Mishra and Dr. Archana Agrawal (2017) studied that Indian markets have been very popular in fashion and it has been same in Raipur city. The main aim of the study is to find out the consumer's buying behavior towards branded apparels over non-branded apparels in this city. The purpose is also to study how consumer behavior for apparel is influenced by factors like monthly income, gender and peer influence. They are influenced by their choices of their friends, family members, celebrities, magazines etc. Quality, comfort, brand are the main criteria's which impact their buying behavior towards branded apparels over non branded apparels The study shows there are different attributes which attracts customers towards branded apparels over non branded apparels.

Pantea Foroud et.al., (2016) applied complexity theory to understand the effect of innovation capability and customer experience on reputation and loyalty. This study

investigates the contribution of consumer demographics to such relationships. To this end, this article recognizes effective and intellectual experiences as the key elements of customer experience and proposes a conceptual framework with research propositions.

Syed et al., (2014) stated that all business people have to be conscious about the customer needs & wants & what a consumer look forward to get from a company. Their research study analyzed the relationship between the decision-making styles and the choice between branded and non-branded clothing of consumers' living in Jalandhar City and to explore the dominating factor of youth buying behavior for apparel.

Pandian, Varathani, Keerthivasan (2012) study reveals that Raymond, Peter England, and John player remains the top three brands preferred by the respondents. It is clear that most of the shoppers of men's branded shirts were highly influenced by the factors such as durability, reference groups, wider choice of color and design, attractiveness, price range and celebrity endorser. Most of the customers are expecting reduced price and wider choice of color and design.

Amsamani, et.al., (2010) investigated the effect of smart technology on fashion. There is reportedly an increasing integration of technical and smart intelligent functionality into fabrics for clothing and interior environments. However, there is a huge divide between goals and reality due to the gap between designers and technologies. Among the advanced technology-incorporated fabrics/garments are temperature controlled fabrics, shape memory fabrics, color changing fabrics, conductive textiles, and self-cleaning fabrics.

Eun-Jung Lee and Jung Kun Park (2009) This study explores the dynamics of online service personalization in the online apparel retailing context, with regard to customers' actual online shopping activities.. Based on the results, Internet-based apparel retailers may benefit from developing various types of personalization services by enhancing shopping intentions of their customers, in particular, of those who are loyal to the retailers.

Vyass (2007) found that seasonality affects apparel sector and hence it becomes critical for a retailer to clear off the stock at the end of season. Otherwise he may have to incur substantial inventory carrying costs, allocate scarce shelf space and out of fashion apparels may be worthless and may remain unsold forever. Thus, stock clearance seems to be a very important objective for apparel retailer and they use end of season sale twice in a year wherein discount given is upto 50% of the MRP so as to clear the remaining stock. She also pointed out from the study that in terms of consumer sales promotions, almost every one used discount coupons and few used lucky draws, contests, gifts, buy one get one free types of promotions. The study also revealed that every retail outlet measures the impact of sales promotion activities by looking at sales made during the promotional period.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results and discussion are central steps in the research process. The aim of the analysis is to organize, classify and summarize the collected data so that they can be better comprehended and interpreted to give answers to the questions that triggered the research. Interpretation is the search for the broader meaning of findings. Analysis is not fulfilled without interpretation; and interpretation cannot proceed without analysis; so, both are inter dependent.

A detailed analysis of the collected data has been attempted as per the objectives stated earlier. In this study the following statistical techniques for the analysis of the data gathered for the present study viz., Descriptive analysis and inferential statistics etc.

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of customers

Demographic characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	612	77.0
	Female	183	23.0
	Total	795	100.0
Age (in years)	Below 25	138	17.4
	26 - 30	176	22.1
	31 - 35	190	23.9
	Above 30	291	36.6
	Total	795	100.0
Educational status	High School	145	18.2
	Undergraduate	406	51.1
	Postgraduate	244	30.7
	Total	795	100.0
Marital Status	Married	421	53.0
	Unmarried	374	47.0
	Total	795	100.0

Source: Primary data

The table 1 summarizes the demographic characteristics such as gender, age, education, and marital status of the customers in the study area. Majority of the customers in this study were male 612(77.0%) and 183 (23.0%) were female. Regarding the distribution of age, majority 36.6% of them under the age group of above 30 years, 23.9% of them were between 31 and 35 years. . The educational status of the customers, 51.1% of them were undergraduates and 30.7% of them were postgraduates. Regarding the marital status of customers, 53.0% of them were married and 47.0% of them were unmarried.

Table 2 Profile characteristics of customers

Profile characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Location	Urban	538	67.7
	Semi-urban	257	32.3
	Total	795	100.0
Annual Income (Rs. In lakhs)	Below Two	280	35.2
	Two – Four	183	23.0
	Above Four	332	41.8
	Total	795	100.0
Type of brand	Domestic	322	40.5
	International	365	45.9
	Others	108	13.6
	Total	795	100.0

Source: Primary data

The table 2 reveals the profile characteristics such as location, annual income and type of brand preferred by the customers in the study area. Majority of the customers, 67.7% were from urban area and 32.3% of them were from semi-urban area. 41.8% of the customers were under the income group of above rupees four lakhs and 23% of them were between rupees two and four lakhs income group. 45.9% of the customers in this study prefer international brands and 40.5% of them prefer domestic brands.

Research Hypothesis: There is a significant mean difference between male and female towards factors of customer loyalty among customers.

Table 3 Student t test for testing the significant mean difference on factors of customer loyalty across gender

Factors of customer loyalty	Gender				t -value
	Male (n=612)		Female (n=183)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Product Quality	14.73	2.03	12.97	2.35	9.925**
Brand Name	14.21	2.65	14.22	2.57	5.068**
Store Environment	14.32	3.16	14.31	2.85	4.966**
Service Quality	15.03	2.29	13.42	3.34	7.450**
Promotion	17.70	2.52	15.04	3.82	10.983**
Price	11.83	1.12	10.44	2.17	11.534**
Brand Trust	23.55	2.30	20.05	5.19	12.936**

**Significant at 1% level

Table 3 on t-test reveals that, the two tail significance for the two groups of gender (male and female) indicates that $p < 0.01$ and, therefore, is significant. It shows that there exists a significant mean difference among the customers on customer loyalty towards product quality ($t = 9.925$, $p < 0.01$), brand name ($t = 5.068$, $p < 0.01$), store environment ($t = 4.966$, $p < 0.01$), service quality ($t = 7.450$, $p < 0.01$), promotion ($t = 10.983$, $p < 0.01$), price ($t = 11.534$, $p < 0.01$) and brand trust ($t = 12.936$, $p < 0.01$).

Research Hypothesis: There is a significant mean difference between married and unmarried towards factors of customer loyalty among customers.

Table 4 Student t test for testing the significant mean difference on factors of customer loyalty across marital status

Factors of customer loyalty	Marital Status				t -value
	Married (n=421)		Unmarried(n=374)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Product Quality	14.61	2.18	14.00	2.25	3.874**
Brand Name	14.19	2.66	14.23	2.59	-2.203*
Store Environment	14.81	3.16	13.76	2.91	4.864**
Service Quality	15.07	2.37	14.20	2.88	4.658**
Promotion	18.17	2.66	15.86	3.06	11.401**
Price	11.87	1.19	11.10	1.79	7.224**
Brand Trust	23.56	2.69	21.82	4.08	7.189**

**Significant at 1% level; *Significant at 5% level

Table 304 on t-test reveals that, the two tail significance for the two groups of marital status (married and unmarried) indicates that $p < 0.01$ and, therefore, is significant. It shows that there exists a significant mean difference among the customers towards customer loyalty on product quality ($t = 3.874$, $p < 0.01$), brand name ($t = -2.203$, $p < 0.05$), store environment ($t = 4.864$, $p < 0.01$), service quality ($t = 4.658$, $p < 0.01$), promotion ($t = 11.401$, $p < 0.01$), price ($t = 7.224$, $p < 0.01$) and brand trust ($t = 7.189$, $p < 0.01$).

Research Hypothesis: There is a significant mean difference between annual income towards customer loyalty factors among customers

Table 5 ANOVA for significant difference between annual income towards factors of customer loyalty among customers

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Product Quality	Between Groups	284.701	2	142.351	30.587**
	Within Groups	3685.920	792	4.654	
	Total	3970.621	794		
Brand Name	Between Groups	82.401	2	41.200	6.040**
	Within Groups	5402.673	792	6.822	
	Total	5485.074	794		
Store Environment	Between Groups	423.870	2	211.935	23.445**
	Within Groups	7159.514	792	9.040	
	Total	7583.384	794		
Service Quality	Between Groups	233.685	2	116.842	17.209**
	Within Groups	5377.254	792	6.789	
	Total	5610.938	794		
Promotion	Between Groups	1594.370	2	797.185	106.238**
	Within Groups	5942.984	792	7.504	
	Total	7537.353	794		
Price	Between Groups	126.046	2	63.023	28.095**
	Within Groups	1776.634	792	2.243	
	Total	1902.679	794		
Brand Trust	Between Groups	582.764	2	291.382	24.809**
	Within Groups	9301.858	792	11.745	
	Total	9884.621	794		

**Significant at 1% level

One – way ANOVA was applied to find the significant mean difference between annual income towards factors of customer loyalty among customers and the result showed (Table 3.05) that there is a significant mean difference in the annual income towards product quality (F-value = 30.587, $p < 0.01$), brand name (F-value = 6.040, $p < 0.01$), store environment (F-value = 23.445, $p < 0.01$), service quality (F-value = 17.209, $p < 0.01$), promotion (F-value = 10.238, $p < 0.01$), price (F-value = 28.095, $p < 0.01$) and brand trust (F-value = 24.809, $p < 0.01$).

Table 6 Inter- Correlation between brand preference and factors of customer loyalty

Correlations (N=795)								
	Brand Preference	Product Quality	Brand Name	Store Environment	Service Quality	Promotion	Price	Brand Trust
Brand Preference	1	.523**	.050	.117**	.558**	.596**	.765**	.828**
Product Quality		1	-.073*	.125**	.202**	.442**	.430**	.502**
Brand Name			1	-.153**	.104**	-.001	.035	.048
Store Environment				1	.213**	.325**	.083*	.084*
Service Quality					1	.537**	.724**	.707**
Promotion						1	.630**	.695**
Price							1	.943**
Brand Trust								1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The correlation matrix presented in table 4.50, shows the significant and positive relation between brand preferences the factors of customer loyalty among the customers of apparels. The results shows, there exist a strong significant positive relationship with the independent variables product quality ($r=0.523$, $p <0.01$), service quality ($r = 0.558$, $p <0.01$), promotion ($r = 0.596$, $p <0.01$), price ($r = 0.765$, $p <0.01$) and brand trust ($r = 0.828$, $p <0.01$) and moderate significant positive relationship with store environment ($r = 0.117$, $p <0.01$). Also, there exist a low positive correlation with brand name ($r = 0.050$, $p > 0.05$).

4. CONCLUSION

This study explains the important factors that play an vital role in the development of brand trust of consumes in the Products and services of apparels in Tamilnadu. Different brand trust factors such as Brand name, Product quality, Brand preference, service quality and promotion were discussed in this study. It is concluded that all the factors were important and were effective to influence brand trust. Current study highlighted the important factors of brand trust to develop a new thinking of brand management practices for marketing managers in developing new ideas and differentiated products and services for consumers in developing countries. This study was limited to project and investigate only few factors in view of past research, so it is suggested that for the likelihood of enhancing positive attitude of customers towards accepting apparels. For many foreign and private brands, department stores offer the ideal retail format for apparel product category. A new focus on apparel retail sector has attracted attention in recent days. As the lifestyles of India's prospering urban consumers have evolved, their clothing needs have broadened, reflecting more varied usage occasions. Rapid growth and rising urbanization have spawned a new class of consumers with more money to spend, and a growing passion for fashion. With the growth and rising of urbanization has given rise to fashionable generation consumers having attitudes of spending huge amount of money to look trendy.

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