Shopping Behaviour of Youngsters in Modern Retail Stores: A Study of Apparel Store Brands

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Abstract: *The Indian retail sector is going through a transformation phase which can be seen through its growth and investment pattern. Retailers are experimenting with new retail formats like-hypermarkets and supermarkets, which are growing very fast. Store brands are gaining more and more importance day by day in various segments. Retailers are continuously introducing various store brand products in various categories because of the growing success of store brands. Many of the retailers are increasing the percentage of private label brands in their product portfolio as the store brands will leave higher margins to the retailer and along with retailers; consumers are also preferring store brands heavily because they can save on money. The purpose of the current study is to extend the existing body of knowledge on youngsters shopping behaviour in the context of store brands. This study examines the factors which affects the decisions of the youngsters for apparel store brands shopping and the reasons behind the preference of Store Brands. The paper gives the research findings of the pilot study conducted in National Capital Region which helps in understanding the consumer buying behaviour towards private label branded apparel.*

Keywords: Consumer behaviour, store brands, fashion apparel, National Brands, Apparel retailing.

Introduction: STOP, DJ&C, RIG, haute Curry, Melange, Eliza Donatein, Vittorio Fratini, John Miller, DNMX, Gia, Shristi, Westsport, Teamspirit, Kashish – do these names ring a bell? You may not be able to place them instantly, but these apparel brands are flying off the shelves literally. The most interesting fact – these are private labels from retail chains such as Shoppers Stop, Lifestyle, Reliance Trends, Westside and the Future Group. The private labels apparel market is clearly flourishing in India and the numbers speaks for itself (Khandelwal, 2011).

The Indian retail industry has emerged as one of the most dynamic and fast paced industries due to the entry of new players. India's retail market is expected to increase by 60 percent to reach US$ 1.1 trillion by 2020, on the back of factors like risisng incomes and lifestyle changes by middle class and increased digital connectivity. While the overall market is expected to grow at 12 percent per annum and traditional trade would expand twice as fast at 20 percent. The size of modern retail in India is expected to reach US$ 11.25 billion in 2019 from US$ 13.51 billion in 2016 (IBEF, 2018).

The retail sector in India is witnessing a huge overhauling exercise as traditional markets make way for new formats such as departmental stores, hypermarkets, supermarkets and specialty stores. Western-style malls have begun appearing in metros and second-rung cities alike introducing the Indian consumer to a shopping experience like never before (Industry Insight: Indian Retail Industry, 2008).The growth is boosted by various factors such as media proliferation, various brands gaining value, availability of various funding options, VAT implementation, change in demographics of country and international exposure (Industry Insight: Indian Retail Industry, 2008). Besides, with factors such as large youth population, rising income and purchasing power, changing mindset of customers, easy customer credit and high brand consciousness makes the business environment conducive for growth (Deloitte, 2012).

Objectives & Importance of study: In a scenario where Store Brands and National Brands have a huge competition, it is very essential to study how consumers make their choices in Apparel & Fashion category where there are several brands in the consideration. Hence it would be of interest to a marketer to learn about the consumer preferences with respect to sales promotion offer; what features do consumer prefer for what kind of brands, which media do they prefer to know about the brand, product, and related schemes, who prefers the apparel store brands, the price range of the fashion apparels. These are the questions which consumer considers while choosing a brand.

The objectives of the study are:

1. To analyse the important factors that shapes the decision of the youngsters for apparel store brand shopping.
2. To reveal the important aspects for the preference of Store Brands among the youngsters.
3. To explore the reasons for preferring a particular Store for purchasing apparel Store Brands by youngsters.

The purpose of this research is to know the possible factors that affect shopping behaviour of youngsters towards store brands. In India many studies have been conducted on Shopping Behaviour of consumers but in the case of Store Brands, only few studies have done. Consumers, specifically youngsters are very fashion conscious and due to this there is a need to study the young minds to cater their needs of looking good and feeling good. A long distance has to cover by Store Brands so it is necessary for Store Brand Retailers to know that how they should make their position in youngsters mind in comparison to National Brands. So, in this regard not much study has done in India and in apparel segment. Hence, this particular study will be very helpful for retailers to know the shopping pattern of consumers like what they like, why they like a particular store brand, what factors they consider while purchasing apparel store brands and many more. With the help of this study, retailers would be able to formulate and adopt the necessary policies and actions and also they will get the ways to attract the youngsters to buy their particular apparel store brands.

Literature Review: We grew in the world dominated by manufacturer brands, well known as national brands. However, with time we saw change in the retail landscape. More and more retail stores were carrying products with their own label. These products which were manufactured or provided by the retailers themselves came to be known as private labels or in – house brands or store brands. Private Labels are often positioned as the low cost alternatives to the regional, national or international brands, although some brands have also been positioned as "premium brands" due to the strong image of the retailer. Private labels help retailers to enhance category profitability, increase negotiation power of the retailer and create consumer loyalty (Rastogi, 2013). According to a survey by Nielsen (2005), among the top ten issues which has been considered critically important by the retailers, private label ranks on the sixth position. Consumers spend 15 per cent of total value sales on store brands, but the spending is with widespread diversity across the markets. As retailers have become more sophisticated marketers and they are continue to expand to the new markets, Store brands will continue to grow. Also by offering even higher quality products, retailers will also continue to build on the power of private labels. (Nielsen, 2003).

The growth in private labels has traditionally been attributed to two major causes. Firstly, retailers advertise the national brands (which attract people to the store) and sell private labels (which typically have lower variable cost and therefore potentially higher margins) to the price sensitive segment (Hoch and Banerjee 1993). In other words, retailers use private labels to compete profitably in the price-sensitive segment. Secondly, these products enable retailers to get better deals from manufacturers in the form of lower wholesale prices on national brands (Hoch and Banerjee 1993).Since the early 1990s, the developments of private label brands their powerful nature and competitive edge, their importance, and their role as a source of major concern among consumer goods manufacturers, have been discussed widely (Ashley, 1998; Laaksonen and Reynolds, 1994; Dunne and Narasimhan, 1999).

Consumer Behaviour and the Store Brands: Consumer perceptions toward store brands have changed as retailers have repositioned them over time. Consumers' perception of Store Brands have changed and these brands have reduced perceived risk associated with their purchase because of the reduced gap between store brands and national brands in terms of price and quality with the increasing promotion of retailer names and their store brands (McGoldrick, 1984). Private labels are perceived as inferior in quality to national brands. Private labels suffer from a lack of a strong, quality image (Vaidyanathan & Aggrawal, 2000).

Perceived risk is important for understanding many consumer behaviours, such as the willingness to buy private label products (Batra and Sinha, 2000; Sinha and Batra, 1999; Richardson et al., 1994). Mitchell (1992) argued that perceived risk influences the five stages of the consumer decision process, which are problem recognition, pre-purchase information search, and evaluation of alternative, purchase decision and post-purchase behaviour.

With respect to private labels, quality is at the heart of the competition between private labels and national brands in terms of both the consumer‘s desire for quality and the retailer‘s ability to deliver quality on a par with that provided by national brands (Hoch, 1996). The Price-Quality inference may influence the increase in purchasing of the consumers as consumers demand greater quality for lower prices in competitive retail markets (McGowan and Sternquist, 1998). In consumer perceptions of quality and in private label purchase, risk plays a key role. Those consumers who are not prone to store brands are concerned that their purchase will result in financial risk if the store brand's may inferior in quality (Dick et al., 1995).

According to Veale et al. (2009), consumers' evaluations and reactions to price is influenced by information and details about the product cost, transaction cost and its accessibility through mass media. Too low price set by retailers may lead to a negative perception on quality (Chandrashkaran & Grewal, 2006). Hoch and Lodish (1998) has shown the relationship between price gap among store brands and national brands. According to them as the price gap between store brands and national brands increases, consumers' perceived value for money also increases whereas the degree of value diminishes when the price gap between the store brand and national brand gets larger. Some studies indicate that the consumers have less favourable attitudes to private labels when they associate quality with price (Garretson et al. 2002; Burton et al. 1998).

The Price-Quality inference may influence the increase in purchasing of the consumers as consumers demand greater quality for lower prices in competitive retail markets (McGowan and Sternquist, 1998). In consumer perceptions of quality and in private label purchase, risk plays a key role. Those consumers who are not prone to store brands are concerned that their purchase will result in financial risk if the store brand's may inferior in quality (Dick et al., 1995). Zielke & Dobbelstein (2007) found that in categories where perceived risk is low, consumers are more willing to trial new private labels and where there is high perceived risk in the categories, they will be less willing for the trial. In terms of the market share of the store brands to determining their success, high quality and quality consistency are more important in comparison to their price (Hoch & Banerji, 1993).

Demographics are factors describing a population in terms of its size (the number of people in a society), structure (age, income, education, and occupation), and distribution that means the physical location of people in terms of geographic region and rural, suburban and urban location (Hawkins, Best and Coney, 1998). According to Frank and Boyd (1965) store brands are consumed by people with similar socio-economic background. The perceived quality, perceived risk, family size, and income and familiarity influence the store brand choice of the consumers (Richardson, Dick and Jain, 1996). Those with an average income are the most sensitive households to store brands (Dick et al., 1995). Whereas Cunningham et al. (1982) found no significant relationship between these variables. There is no significant relationship between age and store brand proneness (Burton et al., 1998; Richardson et al., 1996). While talking about education; there is a no significant relationship between education and store brand proneness (Richardson et al., 1996). In some studies higher sensitivity is detected in the consumers who are less educated (Omar, 1996), whereas in other studies the only variable with consistent results is household size; households with more people buy store brands more frequently (Omar, 1996; Richardson et al., 1996; Dick et al., 1995).

Psychosocial risk is associated with the consumption of the product and its symbolic aspects, such as beliefs and status (DelVecchio, 2001; Batra and Sinha, 2000). When the consumer believes that they will be negatively evaluated due to their product/brand choice up to that extent psychosocial risk is involved. Nonetheless, not all products are consumed in public situations, that is, other people might not be aware that someone possesses and uses a certain product, as it is not highly visible to others (Bearden and Etzel, 1982). As a result of self-symbolism and social symbolism, consumers buy products not only for the functional utility, but also for the symbolic meaning (Underwood, 2003).

According to a research on building store loyalty through store brands, customers are sensitive to product quality and brand choice. So, retailers introduced quality store brands which can be used as an instrument to create store differentiation and thereby develop store loyalty and store profitability. This holds well for packaged goods categories and not for cheap private labels (Marcel ad Lal, 2000). The loyalty can contribute to repeated purchase according to Kahn and McAlister (1997). Furthermore, retailers intend to make consumers loyal to the store and take advantages from consumers‟ loyalty which can lead to continual repurchases. This loyalty can help retailers in acquiring a competitive advantage and obtaining long term profitability. Sirohi (1998) generally stated that the more frequent the repurchase is, the more existing customers recommend the store to others. East et al. (1997) said that consumers usually build positive attitude toward a store and its brands through their loyal behaviour

The overall quality of the merchandise available in the store and the perceived service quality of the brands, collectively develop an image of the store in the consumers' mind (Zimmer and Golden, 1988; Baker et al., 1994). Richardson et al. (1996) has investigated the store aesthetics which is one of the aspect of store image and found that evaluations of private labels are influenced by store attractiveness and regardless of store aesthetics, consumers judge the quality of national brands to be the same. By reducing functional and psychosocial risk associated with buying private labels in certain categories, judgements of private labels are influenced by their perceptions of store image as it can act as a risk reducer (Semeijn et al., 2004).

Research Methodology:

This study will include both – Primary as well as Secondary data. Primary data collection will include both in-depth interview and survey through a structured questionnaire that will be well designed and non-disguised in nature. In-depth interview will be conducted from the 'consumers' of the apparel store brands to ascertain the difference in their perception towards National Brands and Store Brands in apparel retailing. The present study will clarify the thoughts, opinions and perception of the users of apparel store brands of NCR and it will also describe the characteristics of the apparel store brand consumers.

A sample of all main Apparel Store Brand retailers like Shopper's Stop (Stop, Kashish, I jeans wear, Insense, Indivisual), Tata Trent (Westside- Mum soon, Street Blues, West Sport, Gia), Pantaloon (John Miller, Bare Denim, DJ&C, UMM, Rig, Lombard, Srishti), Lifestyle, Globus, Ebony, Madura Garments (Louis Phillipe, Van Heusen, Allen Solly, Peter England) etc. will be taken as for the present study. The consumers and managers of all these apparel store brands will be the respondents of the survey.

A sample of 360 youngsters of age group 16 to 35 years has been taken. Young users of the apparel store brands have been taken for the survey. A pilot survey has done for ensuring the reliability and validity of the data collection instruments followed by the final survey.

Results & Discussions: Data collected from the youngsters has shown the very interesting facts about the youngster shopping behaviour towards apparel store brands which has been shown the below mentioned analysis of the data:

1. <u>Frequency of shopping across Age</u>

Table1: Frequency of shopping across Age

Age	**2-3 times in a week**		**Once in a week**		**Not specific**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
16-25	37	27.2	82	60.3	17	12.5
26-35	81	36.2	119	53.1	24	10.7
Pearson Chi-Square	Value		Df		Asymp. Sig.(two sided)	
	19.397^a		4		.001	

Source: Primary Survey

The Table no. 1 deals with shopping frequency across the Age of the respondents. As per the table the shopping frequency preferences changes with the Age. Majority respondents preferred shopping once in a week but this preference was falling with the Age, as 60.3 percent of the respondents in the Age group of 16-25 preferred shopping once in a week and 53.1 percent in the Age group of 26-35.

2. <u>Shopping Destination preference across Age</u>

Table2: Shopping Destination preference across Age

Age	**Known Shop**		**Nearest Market**		**Big Malls**		**No Specific Destination**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
16-25	22	16.2	20	14.7	42	30.9	52	38.2
26-35	22	9.8	27	12.1	109	48.7	66	29.5
Pearson Chi-Square	Value			Df		Asymp. Sig.(two sided)		
	33.581^a			6		.000		

Source: Primary Survey

From Table2, a clear relation can be seen between the two Age groups and shopping destination as majority of respondents from all Age groups of 16-25 years (30.9%) and 26-

35 years (48.7%) generally preferred Big Malls for shopping and the preference of big malls has increased with the Age. Opposite is the case with all the Age group of respondents, as their preference towards shopping from 'no specific destination' is decreasing with Age. Respondents from Age groups of 16-25 years (38.2%) and 26-35 years (29.5%) preferred to shop from any specific destination. In the same fashion, respondent's preference towards known shops and nearest market is also decreasing with Age.

Respondents from Age groups of 16-25 years (16.2%) and 26-35 years (9.8%) preferred to shop from known shop and 14.7% respondents of Age group 16-25 years and 12.1% respondents of Age group 26-35 years preferred to shop from nearest market.

3. Frequency of apparel shopping from organized retail outlets across Age

The preference for shopping from organised retails was seen increasing with the Age. Majority of respondents in the Age group of 16-25 years were buying their apparel from organised retail outlets 'only sometimes' (49.3%), relatively lesser proportion preferred buying almost always (36%) and very little were willing to buy always (5.9%) from organised retail outlets. Whereas the proportion of respondents preferring organised retail was increasing with Age as 45 percent of respondents in the Age group of 26-35 were buying almost always from organized retail stores.

Table3: Frequency of apparel shopping from organized retail outlets across Age

Age	Always		Almost Always		Sometimes		Once in a while		Almost Never	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
16-25	8	5.9	49	36.0	67	49.3	7	5.1	5	3.7
26-35	32	14.3	101	45.1	79	35.3	8	3.6	4	1.8
Pearson Chi-Square	Value				df		Asymp. Sig.(two sided)			
	27.006[a]				8		.001			

Source: Primary Survey

Similarly higher proportion of respondents in higher Age groups was buying 'always' from organised retails, whereas proportion of the respondents buying only 'sometimes' from such outlets was falling with Age. Fewer proportions of respondents in all Age groups did not prefer to buy from such outlets. This clearly speaks of liking for modern organised retail outlets in all Age groups though younger ones opting to try many outlets, organised and traditional ones.

4. Average spending on Apparel Store Brands shopping per visit across Age

Table 4: Average spending on Apparel Store Brands shopping per visit across Age

Age	Rs.1000-2000		Rs.2000-3000		Rs.3000-4000		Rs.4000-5000		Rs.5000 and above	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
16-25	55	40.4	48	35.3	17	12.5	5	3.7	11	8.1
26-35	43	19.2	84	37.5	68	30.4	12	5.4	17	7.6
Pearson Chi-	Value			Df				Asymp. Sig.(two sided)		
Square	91.587[a]			8				.000		

Source: Primary Survey

A clear trend has been found from the Table that with Age, per visit spending on apparels has also increased. It can be seen that, majority of respondents from Age group of 16-25 years spent on an average 1000-2000 rupees on apparels per visit as respondents belonged to this Age group were either students or unemployed and hence could not afford to spent much on apparel shopping. Majority respondents from Age group of 26-35 years spent on an average 2000-3000 rupees.

5. Factors affecting Apparel Store Brand shopping destination across Age of the respondents

Table 5: Factors affecting Apparel Store Brand shopping destination across Age

Age	Family		Friends		Proximity		Occasion		Advertisements		Any Other	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
16-25	18	13.2	54	39.7	21	15.4	37	27.2	5	3.7	1	.7
26-35	48	21.4	47	21.0	60	26.8	41	18.3	24	10.7	4	1.8
Pearson Chi-Square	Value				Df				Asymp. Sig.(two sided)			
	39.359[a]				10				.000			

Source: Primary Survey

As per the Table 5, Age was a defining factor that was affecting the way different factors were playing their roles in deciding shopping destination for apparels. Majority of respondents from Age group of 16-25 years (39.7%) have decided their shopping destination with the suggestion of their friends, whereas, majority of respondents from Age group of 26-35 years (26.8%) proximity of shopping destination was the main consideration while shopping for apparels. As the youngsters (16-25 Years) spent most of their time with their friends and in this Age group the opinion of friends and peer group is a major factor so they were highly influenced by their friends for the shopping destination, and rest of the majority respondents belonged to Age group 26-35 years were married and working, hence they had less time for shopping and preferred the proximity of shopping destination for apparel shopping.

Second important factor which affected the 27.2% of respondents from 16-25 years old Age group was the occasion for which they bought their apparels. Occasion was their consideration for shopping destination for apparels.

6. Most suitable time for Apparel Store Brand shopping across Age

Table 6: Most suitable time for Apparel Store Brand shopping across Age

Age	Seasonal Sales		Weekends		Festivals		Vacations		When Need change		Any Other Occasion	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
16-25	16	11.8	41	30.1	14	10.3	12	8.8	53	39.0	0	0
26-35	34	15.2	105	46.9	4	1.8	21	9.4	55	24.6	5	2.2
Pearson Chi-Square	Value				df				Asymp. Sig.(two sided)			
	46.017[a]				10				.000			

Source: Primary Survey

As per above Table, majority of the respondents (39%) from Age group of 16-25 years preferred to went for shopping whenever they looked-for a change from their daily routine, whereas, majority of respondents from Age group of 26-35 (46.9%) years went for shopping on weekends. For the second most preferred and suitable time for shopping, the situation was exactly the opposite with the respondents as for the first most preferred time for shopping was. Alike, majority of 30.1% respondents from Age group of 16-25 preferred to went for shopping on weekends whereas, majority of 24.6% respondents from Age group of 26-35 years went for shopping whenever they looked-for a change from their daily routine.

In brief, youngest liked it so shop most when they needed a change. May be because one group being young is free from responsibility and the other has settled as opposed to respondents between 26-35 years of Age who liked it most during weekends, though weekends are in likings of all irrespective of Age.

7. Factors of Store Brands affecting purchase intention of Apparel Store Brands

Table no. 7 interprets about the factors which affected purchase intention of respondents regarding Store Brands.

Table7: Factors of store brands affecting purchase intention of Apparel Store Brands

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Factors of Store Brands	**Price**	**255**	**70.7**
affecting purchase intention	Store Image	41	11.3
	Customer Service	13	3.6
	Personalization	41	11.5
	Product Quality	10	2.9

Source: Primary Survey

On asking about the most important factor which affects the purchase intention of respondents towards Apparel Store Brands, 70.7% respondents gave their response in favor of Price of the Apparel Store Brands. 11.5% respondents' purchase intention got affected by the personalization and 11.3% respondents' got affected by the image of the store. Customer service and Product quality is of least concerned for respondents as only 3.6% and 2.9% respondents respectively, purchase intention for Apparel Store Brands got affected by Customer service and the Product quality. This was mainly because of the reason that respondents once convinced about store image took quality and customer service as given. Moreover respondents preferring Store Brands were largely driven by price. So, price was the most important factor for the respondents of Apparel Store Brands, in comparison to store image, personalization, product quality, and customer service.

8. Type of advertisement influencing purchase of apparel

Table 8: Type of advertisement influencing purchase of apparel

Type of Advertisement influence purchase	Frequency	Percent
TV	**161**	**44.6**
Print	58	15.8
Internet	60	16.8
Store Based	75	20.9
Mails	3	1.0
Celebrity Endorsement	3	1.0

Source: Primary Survey

As per Table8, TV advertisements played the major role in influencing the purchase decisions of the respondents as 44.6% respondents get influenced by the advertisements shown on the television and 20.9% respondents get influenced for shopping by the store base advertisements. From the advertisements on internet 16.8% respondents get influenced to purchase and only 15.8% respondents get influenced from print advertisements.

9. Formation of opinion for Apparel Store Brands shopping

Table 9: Formation of opinion for Apparel Store Brands shopping

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Referrals	90	26.9
Self-assessment	**132**	**39.6**
Peer Discussion	72	21.3
Family Advice	34	10.1
Friends	7	2.2
Any other	25	7.4

Source: Primary Survey

As per Table9, respondents form their opinion to buy Apparel Store Brands from specific outlets having influenced by their friends, family advice, referrals, self-assessment and from peer discussion. Self-assessment came out to be the most important factors that shaped the opinion of the 39.6% of the respondents for shopping at these apparels stores brands outlets, whereas 26.9% respondents form their opinion through referrals of others and 21.3% respondents form their opinion through peer discussions. There were 7.4% respondents who formed their opinion owing to any other reasons like children, spouse etc.

Data Analysis & Results: A total of 360 valid respondent's responses were gathered through self-administered questionnaire. The current study shows that Price is the most important factor which is considered by the apparel store brand consumers followed by customer service and store image. Proximity of shopping destination is the most important factor affecting their shopping destination for the 16-20 and 26-30 age group respondents and friends of the respondents of age group 21-25 affects their destination for shopping. The current study revealed that most of the respondents go for apparel shopping whenever they need a change but respondents of 26-30 age groups go for apparel shopping in weekends.

Respondents of all age group are mostly influenced by TV Advertisements followed by the advertisements available on internet. Most of the consumers form their opinion for shopping at apparel store brand outlets through self-assessment and 16-20 age group consumers form their opinion through referrals.

Managerial Implications: The result of this study explains the consumer's insight that why they buy the private brand and what are the factors that influence them to buy store brands. Therefore this study may provide useful information for both retailers and producers or suppliers in applying this study to improve their own strategy for store brands. Through the results of the study, managers would be able to explain that what policies should they implement and what necessary actions have to be taken to compete with National Brands.

Limitations of the study-The nature of the current study presented certain unavoidable limitations that impacted on the interpretation of the result. The potential limitations for this study are the following:

(1) Willingness of buyers in retail stores to participate in the study.

(2) Inability to gather information on the usage of apparel store brands accurately.

(3) Limited sample of buyers using a convenience sample

(4) Limited sample of stores using a convenience sample.

Future Research Directions- The current study has explored the shopping behaviour of youngsters only and also it has concluded the shopping behaviour of youngsters only in ‘apparels’ category. So, lot of scope is there to do further research of Store Brands in various categories and of different age groups in different sample areas.

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