Brand Awareness: A Salient Element in Purchase Decisions

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Abstract

In today’s world, the biggest distinction between two products is the brands that represent them. Brands create a perception in the mind of the customer leading to brand consciousness which acts as a prerequisite of consumers’ buying decision. The study was undertaken to comparatively analyse the apparel brand awareness among women working in government and private sector. A market survey was conducted and information from different branded outlets regarding the availability of the female brands under selected garment categories was collected. For the sample selection, Chandigarh was divided into four zones i.e. North, South, East and West. From each zone, a total of 50 respondents were selected consisting of 25 respondents of different category belonging to the age group 25-35 years and earning Rs 37000 to 57000 per month from various professions like banking, teaching, administrative/I.T. and medical. Convenient random sampling technique was used to select the sample from each zone on the basis of co-operative attitude and availability of the respondents. A questionnaire cum interview schedule was framed to collect data from working women regarding their brand awareness and purchase. The research revealed that working women from private sector were more brand conscious than the government sector employees residing in Chandigarh. Increasing brand awareness among working women ultimately resulted in more brands purchase and was found to be the most differentiating factor in their purchase decisions. Due to the increased awareness and consciousness, they were ready to spend higher price for the branded garments. On empirically testing, a significant correlation (0.035<0.05) was found between brand awareness and brand purchase decisions of the working women of Chandigarh.

Key words- Brand awareness, factors influencing brand awareness, Brand purchase correlation.

Introduction

“Great companies pay attention to every point of interaction with the customers. That’s how great companies become great brands.”

- Claude Singer, ‘Branding Worlds Collide’

A brand promises to deliver value upon which consumers and prospective purchasers can rely to be consistent over long periods of time. Brand awareness is the likelihood with which consumers recognize the existence and availability of company’s product or service. It is a like a communication process as it precedes all other steps in process. For a consumer to buy a brand, they must first be made aware of it. Brand attitude cannot be formed and intention to buy cannot occur unless brand awareness has occurred (Rossitier & Percy, 1987). Various research findings suggest that the human brain can remember up to seven numbers without some serious head scratching. If the brand achieves a place in the top seven it has crossed the Mind Space Salience threshold. And as all the marketing men know the battle is for the share of the consumer’s mind, the rest follows (Chanda,2010).
With more and more Indian women turning professional, they have more control over their life choices and path than ever before. They are no longer a simple home maker but had turned into a determined person who knows what they want. Despite their purposefulness and high ambitions, they have an open and non-prestigious attitude towards life. They have become champions and representatives of a new model of management leadership that is more suited to the complexities and subtleties of today’s global world. With access to more choices, they are delaying marriage to increase their educational and career opportunities. They are considered the trend-setters of the future. So manufacturing companies are now focusing on female apparel brands and have started redirecting their design and messaging at women.

This study was taken up to determine the awareness of apparel brands among working women with the following aims and objectives:-
1. To comparatively analyse the apparel brand awareness among working women of government and private sector.
2. To identify the factors influencing awareness regarding brands among working women.
3. To study the relation between brand awareness and brand purchase decisions of working women.

Methodology

To carry out the study, short listing of the brands under various garment categories was done and a consumer survey was conducted to study the brand awareness and its association with the apparel purchase of working women in Chandigarh. Chandigarh was divided into four zones. Map-1 shows the division of Chandigarh into four zones.

Sample size consisted of 200 respondents of Chandigarh comprising of 50 respondents from each zone belonging to the age group 25-35 years and earning Rs 37000 to 57000 per month. Convenient random sampling technique was used to select the sample from each zone on the basis of co-operative attitude and availability of the respondents. A questionnaire cum interview schedule was framed to collect data from working women regarding their brand awareness and purchase. Ten percent of the selected sample i.e. total 20, comprising 10 of government sector and 10 of private sector working women were taken up for the pretesting to check the validity of the questionnaire.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The investigation was conducted in two phases as follows-

a) **Phase I:** Market survey
b) **Phase II:** Consumer survey

**Phase I: Market survey**

The main aim of conducting market survey was to shortlist the brands available in Chandigarh under different garment categories. Different garment categories selected were denim jeans, shorts, caperries, trousers (formal / casual), formal shirts, casual tops, T – shirts, summer jackets, dresses, skirts, suits, salwar, chuddidars and sarees. Minimum 12 brands were listed. The number varied depending on the availability of brands under different garment categories.

**Phase II: Consumer survey**

Interview cum Questionnaire Schedule was used to collect information from the 200 respondents. Demographic profile revealed that majority of the respondents were post graduates whereas only few were doctorates. Most of the respondents belonged to the personal monthly income
group of Rs 52000-57000 and very few respondents belonged to that of Rs 37000-42000. Maximum numbers of the respondents were married.

Majority of the working women i.e. 53% felt that branded clothes plays a significant role in their wardrobe. Table-1 & Fig-1 shows the distribution of the respondents on the basis of significance of the branded clothes in their wardrobe.

Majority of them i.e. 90% of the respondents felt that branded clothes provides high status as respondents regarded spending and the buying of expensive branded apparels as way of raising and maintaining their social status. Comfort (29%) was the least significant factor. Table -2 & Fig.-2 shows the distribution of respondents on the basis of factors making the brands significant.

Respondents were asked to recognize & recall different brands under various garment categories. Selected brands with their logos were shown and were asked whether they recognize these brands and were aware of them. Plate -1 gives a snapshot of Brand awareness questionnaire.

Respondents were also asked to recall some other brands under different garment categories.

- It was found that the majority of the respondents of both the sectors i.e. 65% and 68% of government and private respectively were aware of 5 to 10 brands of Denim Jeans/ Shorts/ Caperies followed by 29% and 30% of government and private sector respectively were aware of 10 to 15 brands where as only 6% and 2% of government and private sector respectively were aware of less than five brands.
- It was found that the majority of the respondents of both the sectors i.e. 77% and 85% of government and private sector respectively were aware of 5 to 10 brands of trousers (Formal/ Casual) followed by 11% and 14% of government and private sector respectively were aware of 10 to 15 brands where as only 12% and 1% of government and private sector respectively were aware of less than five brands.
- It was found that the majority of the respondents of both the sectors i.e. 70% and 74% of government and private sector respectively were aware of 5 to 10 brands of formal shirts followed by 1% and 6% of government and private sector respectively were aware of less than five brands where as 29% and 20% of government and private sector respectively were aware of 10 to 15 brands.
- It was found that the majority of the respondents of both the sectors i.e. 59% and 69% of government and private sector respectively were aware of 10 to 15 brands of casual tops and t-shirts followed by 21% and 17% of government and private sector respectively were aware of less than five brands where as 20% and 14% of government and private sector respectively were aware of 5 to 10 brands.
- It was found that the majority of the respondents of both the sectors i.e. 79% and 88% of government and private sector respectively were aware of 5 to 10 brands of summer jackets followed by 13% and 11% of government and private sector respectively were aware of 10 to 15 brands where as only 8% and 1% of government and private sector respectively were aware of less than five brands.
- It was found that the majority of the respondents of both the sectors i.e. 83% and 82% of government and private sector respectively were aware of 5 to 10 brands of dresses and skirts where as 17% and 18% of government and private sector respectively were aware of less than five brands.
- It was found that the majority of the respondents of both the sectors i.e. 82% and 96% of government and private sector respectively were aware of 5 to 10 brands of suits (Salwar/chudidars) and sarees followed by 13% and 3% of government and private sector respectively were aware of 10 to 15 brands where as only 5% and 1% of government and private sector respectively were aware of less than five brands. Table -3 shows distribution of respondents on the basis of brand awareness in various garment categories.

Table -4 gives a detail of brand awareness in all garment categories of the respondents of It was revealed by the above scores that the awareness of the garment brands among private sector
respondents (scored 844.12) was more than the government sector respondents (scored 764.37) as they were more aware of the latest fashion trends.

All the working women in Chandigarh believed that there were factors which influenced them in getting aware of the brands. Majority of them agreed that TV advertisements (85%), magazines and newspapers (83%) were the main sources of spreading brand awareness because of the easy availability of them in their daily schedule and its high specific add recall. Leaflets (7%), trade shows (5%) and product exhibition (4%) were the least in influencing brand awareness. While private working women were more influenced by family relatives, friends & peers and internet as they usually discussed and shared their brand experiences or some recent advertisements seen, with their peers and were more tech-savvy as compared to government sector respondents. Table -5 & Fig-3 shows a distribution of respondents on the basis of factors influencing brand awareness.

Respondents were asked about the various brands purchased under different garment categories and correlation with awareness was established. Table -6 revealed that there is a correlation between brand awareness and brand purchase decisions of the working women in Chandigarh. The correlation comes to be (.531) which was moderately high correlation, showing that the brand purchase decisions of working women of Chandigarh were correlated with brand awareness. By applying 2-tailed test, the value comes significant at 5% level (p value = 0.035<0.05) showing that the brand awareness has a significant impact on purchase decisions of the working women of Chandigarh.

**Conclusion**

The current scenario in the apparel sector is seeing sea change wherein brands have become the tag of aristocracy, royalty, ostentation and statement’s for lavish lifestyle. Increasing fashion consciousness and disposable income among middle income families have resulted in Indian working women being particular about brands and willing to pay the price for high-end and quality branded products which matches with their own personality. Interestingly and eye-grabbing brand advertisements on television, internet and other such mediums like celebrity endorsement play a key role in creating a fascination towards brands. This fascination and awareness of various national and international brands ultimately leads to their purchase.

**Bibliography**