

Influence of Brands on the Buying Behavior of Young Girls towards Apparel

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ABSTRACT

To find out the influence of brands on the buying behaviour of young girls towards selection of clothing, 150 girls in the age group 13-15 years, 16-18 years, 19-21 years the city of Kolkata were interviewed by the questionnaire method. The study covered the influence of parents and peers on young girls, their buying behaviour and the level of brand awareness, consciousness and loyalty girls have. The results showed that the parents have higher influence on the girls when they are younger but as they grow older peers influence becomes stronger and parents influence tends to decline. Girls preferred buying clothing items once in a month and their major concern was to look good as well as being practical. Shopping for younger girls was more impulsive but as they matured, it became planned rather than being impulsive. While purchasing garments, fit and comfort were more important to girls rather than fashion. They were highly influenced by brands and possessed more of foreign brands than Indian brands. Brand consciousness and awareness was higher but they were not loyal to their brands and kept switching brands. In the study, it was proven with the help of statistical analysis that brand played an important role in life of all the girls irrespective of their age and family income.

KEYWORDS: Young girls clothing preference, buying behavior, brand consciousness, brand loyalty

INTRODUCTION

With changing lifestyles, consumers are becoming increasingly sensitive towards the brands they use. This is because brands express and reinforce certain values and opinions that the consumer has. The current generation of teenagers has been raised in a

time of pervasive commercialism. And, with more independence available, cash or credits Along with more plentiful shopping venues, than prior generations, today's teenager girls is perhaps the busiest, most market-savvy consumer group.

The American Marketing Association defines a brand as a 'name, term, sign, symbol, or any other features that identifies

one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers'. A brand is thus a product or service that adds dimensions that differentiate it in some way from other products or services designed to satisfy the same need. These differences may be functional, rational or tangible-related to product performance of the brand; they may also be more symbolic, emotional or intangible-related to what the brand represents.

Brands play a very important role in consumers' life. Consumers may evaluate the identical product differently depending on how it is branded. Consumers learn about brands through experiences with the product and its marketing program. As consumers' lives become more complicated, rushed, and time-starved, the ability of a brand to simplify decision-making and reduce risk is invaluable. Brand loyalty, brand awareness and brand knowledge helps the consumer in making choice and greatly influence their purchase decision.

The term consumer behaviour can be defined as the behaviour that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products, services and ideas that they expect will satisfy their needs. The study of how

individuals make decisions to spend their available resources (money, time, energy) on consumption related items. It includes the study of what they buy, why they buy, how they buy it, when they buy it, where they buy it and how often they buy it.

Cultural, Social, Personal and Psychological factors influence consumer buying behaviour. Consumer decision making varies with the type of buying decision. Based on the degree of buyer involvement and the degree of differences among brands there are four types of consumer buying behavior -Complex buying behaviour, Dissonance - reducing buyer behavior, Habitual-buying behavior and Variety-seeking buying behavior.

Clothing can assist in defining ones role or place in society, in identifying sex, locality and nationality and in reflecting social stratification and economic status. Adolescents express the need for conformity or belonging to their peer group by choosing clothing that is being worn by most of the clothes in the group, adults express this need by selecting current fashion trend. As one becomes more mature, less need is felt to conform, to greater emphasis possibly placed on individuality. Adolescents use clothing to identify themselves with their

peers, symbolize their socio-economic status, sex appropriateness, individuality, maturity and independence.

Buying pattern for clothing changes continuously. Customers are attracted to a particular garment or accessory by its styling features i.e. colour and style. Apart from these, there are also practical considerations including quality, fit, brand name, price etc that the consumers usually evaluate before making a purchase.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sample Selection: A group of 150 females from different places in Kolkata was chosen irrespective of their caste, creed, income group, educational qualification or religion. This population was then sub divided into 3 different sub groups, based on their ages 13-15 years, 16-18 years, 19-21 years. The purposive samples were chosen in accordance with the design of the experiment.

Construction of a Questionnaire: A structured Questionnaire was prepared to collect information. Structured questionnaire are those, which consists of questions that are definite, concrete and predetermined. The form of questions may be either closed type (yes or no) or open (inviting free space). The various factors

that contribute valuable information regarding the influence of brands towards selection of clothing by young girls of various age groups were first selected. Based on these selected factors, a structured questionnaire was thus prepared consisting of closed type questions and one open-ended question. The questionnaires were sub-divided into parts so that analysis could be systematically done.

Collection of Data: The foremost step of the study was the collection of data from different sources. For the collection of data, the time and convenience of the subject was taken into consideration. Since the data had to be collected from a sample of 150 girls within a limited period, the questionnaire was judged as the best technique. The questionnaire was typed, photocopied and distributed to 150 girls. The purpose of study was explained and their doubts clarified. The duly collected questionnaires were then retrieved after a day or two.

Analysis of Data: The data for each questionnaire was tabulated and percentages were calculated from the information. The results were tabulated and conclusions were drawn accordingly. Bar charts and pie diagrams were used to depict the results and

finally chi-square and z-test were used for some of the statistical analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

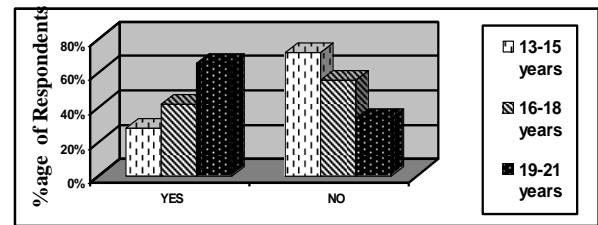
Parental Influence:

From the study, it was seen that both the parents together have more influence on girls towards selection of clothing. It is also observed that as girls grow older influence of both the parents tend to decline and mothers have more role to play. On the other hand, few girls have inclination towards taking their own decisions.

Parents have an effect on adolescents clothing choices but that generally tends to decline with age, as the peer's influence seems to increase. Father seems to be more possessive and give a lot more advice when the girls are younger whereas mothers' advice increases with their daughters increase in age as girls are getting closer to marriageable age and hence mothers express concern about their daughters' mode of dressing.

Peer Influence:

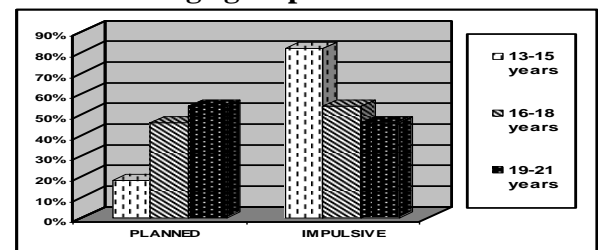
Figure 1: Bar diagram showing the influence of friend's choice on girls of different age groups while selecting clothes



From the figure it is seen that 66% of girls in the age group 19-21 years have highest influence of friends choice whereas 28% of girls the age group 13-15 years have least influence of friends choice. On the other hand, 44% of girls in the age group 16-18 years have average influence of friend's choice on them while selecting clothes. Among the total number of girls 72% and 56% in the age group 13-15 years and 16-18 years do not have much influence in contrast to 34% of girls in the age group 19-21 years. Thus, it is seen that as they grow older friends choice has more influence on their selection of clothing.

Buying Behavior:

Figure 2: Bar diagram showing the nature of shopping for garments by girls of different age group.

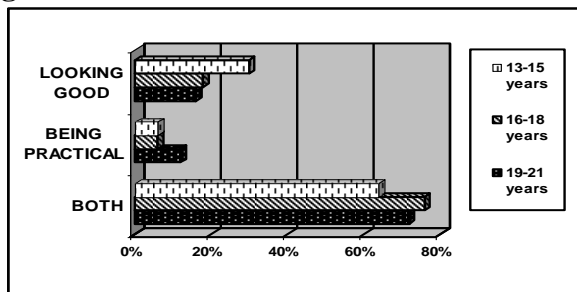


It is clear from above figure that 82% of the girls in the age group 13-15 years and

54% of girls in the age group 16-18 years are impulsive while shopping garments relatively higher than the girls in the age group 19-21 years being 46%. 54% of the girls in 19-21 years of age group have planned shopping rather than being impulsive i.e. 54% than other two age groups.

As adolescents grow older their shopping for garments becomes more planned rather than impulsive. They are likely to control their feelings and are not influenced by emotions. They buy whenever it is required and plan keeping various considerations in mind before they go for buying. Impulsive buying is more among young girls as their purchase is unintended and not need based.

Figure 3: Bar diagram showing the major concern of girls while purchasing a garment



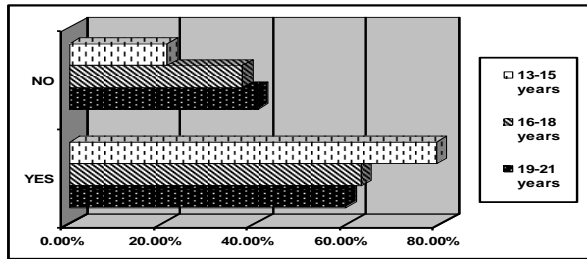
From the bar chart, it can be said that major concern while purchasing a garment by most of the girls in all the age groups is to look good as well as to be practical. Thus, it is observed that 76% of girls in the age group

16-18 years being highest followed by 72% of girls in the age group 19-21 years being and 64% of girls in the age group prefer both i.e. looking good and being practical. When comparing the two aspects of looks and practicality, it is seen that girls belonging to the age group of 13-15 years give importance to look than practicality while purchasing garments, followed by those belonging to the age group 16-18 years and 19-21 years. 12% of girls in the age group 19-21 years are practical while purchasing garments in contrary to 16-18 years and 19-21 years being 6 % each. Thus, it is seen that as girls attain maturity and tend to understand that apart from looking good being practical is equally important. The study also revealed that the three most important factors that always influence the purchase of garments among girls are comfort, fit and design/style. Apart from these other factors like fashion, color, brand name, packaging, price, discounts, advertisement, and availability at nearby market during the time required also influences purchasing. Z test was done to check the equality of proportions of girls looking for fit, comfort, design and brand name in the age group 13-15 years with that of 16-18 years and 16-18 years with that of

19-21 years. It was found that the factors fit, comfort and design have same amount of influence on girls irrespective of their age except brand name being important for girls in the age group 13-15 years and 16-18 years whereas age group 16-18 years give more importance to brand name than 19-21 years.

Brand Consciousness and Brand Loyalty

Figure 4: Bar diagram showing influence of brands on purchase decision of girls



Brands play a major role on the purchase decision of garments. Younger girls have more influence of brands while purchasing clothes and it tends to decline as they become more mature. It is observed from the above diagram that as the respondents grow older influence of brands tends to decline. X^2 test was done to check the association between ‘possession of branded garments by girls’ and their ‘age groups’. It was found that in the sample the two of them are unassociated at 5 % level of significance implying that possession of branded garments is not dependent on girls

of different age groups

Figure 5: Bar diagram showing possession of branded garments by girls of different age groups

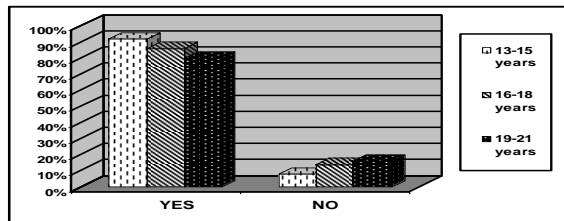


The respondents in the age group 13-15 years and 19-21 years possess equal number of branded garments. Wearing clothes with prestigious brand names seems to be very important for adolescents. Brand assures them of the quality, price and status that they are looking for. The study revealed that brand consciousness and brand awareness is high among girls and it determines their buying behavior. X^2 test was done to check the association of ‘Brand awareness among girls’ and their ‘age group’. It was found that in the sample the two of them are unassociated at 5 % level of significance implying that age groups do not affect brand awareness.

Possession of foreign brands is more among girls than Indian brands with Levis being the most popular brand among girls. X^2 test was done to check the association between ‘preference for type of brand’ by girls and their ‘age groups’. It was found that in the sample the two of them are unassociated at 5 % level of

significance implying that type of brand preferred is not dependent on girls of different age groups. Young girls buy branded clothes that because of size consistent and not so due to their status.

Figure 6: Bar diagram showing the percentage of girls who keep trying new Brands



Girls at this stage are fashion driven and have desire of trying new things most of them keep trying different brands. They keep switching brands and are not loyal to their brands. It was observed that new style often evokes them to try new brands.

In the study, it was observed that majority of girls possess T-shirts in comparison with other garments such as jeans, skirts, frocks etc. T-shirt is more commonly found garment in girls' wardrobe. Apart from garments, girls of 16-18 years and 19-21 years also prefer branded cosmetics. Sometimes girls use branded accessories also.

CONCLUSION

Brands play a very important role in the life of the young girls and greatly influence

their purchase decision. During this phase of life where they in process of becoming independent and developing their own style on one hand they are greatly influenced by peers and parents on the other hand. As adolescents grow older their shopping for garments becomes more planned rather than impulsive. Since they being concerned more about their looks and are fashion driven, majority of them use branded garments. They have immense knowledge and awareness of various brands that are available in market. With more of foreign brands entering in Indian market majority of girls prefer going for foreign brands. Fit and comfort being the most important factors while purchasing they are even influenced by fashion. As girls at this age are more brand freak and are always in search of something trendier, they keep trying new brands and in a way keep switching brands.

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