

Factors influencing Consumer Buying Behaviour towards Traditional and Online Shopping of Readymade Garments

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ABSTRACT

Consumers play a vital role in the economic system of the nation enjoying both the traditional and online modes of shopping. Consumer behaviour is the study of how individuals select and use products/services and takes into account psychology, motivation and behaviour traits. The sole purpose of the study is to identify the different factors and their influence on the purchase pattern of a consumer with respect to readymade garments both in the traditional and online modes of shopping. The study is qualitative in nature and based on secondary sources. The study reveals that the principal factors namely economic, psychological, personal, social and cultural factors affect the buying pattern of readymade garments. Both offline and online modes of garment shopping have merits and demerits. The study is theoretical in nature and uses only one theory of motivation. The results would help traditional marketers of readymade garments and e-commerce shopping sites to consider all the factors when designing marketing strategies in order to give satisfaction to their customers and achieve marketing goals. It is also concluded that in the case of garments the buying pattern changes with the life cycle of an individual. Family, peer groups and references also affect purchasing behaviour.

Keywords: consumer behaviour, principal factors, traditional marketing, online shopping

A. Introduction

India is an emerging and developing country and its textile sector is probably one of the most established ones adding to the economy of the nation. Readymade garments (RMG) are the largest segment of the Indian Textile Industry accounting for approximately 50% of the total industry. This growth is due to globalization and increased usage of the internet; the buying behaviour of Indian consumers has changed drastically thereby increasing the demand for readymade garments. However, with the sudden outbreak of the coronavirus worldwide, all industries have taken a back foot both in production and marketing. The prevailing coronavirus has forced humans to find alternate means of living and survival. Likewise, consumer buying patterns have also changed. This holds true for readymade garments also. Physically going to the market/ shopping mall, examining the products, sometimes bargaining and finally buying is still

happening but at the same time, consumers nowadays have an inclination towards online shopping. Online shopping doesn't require travelling from home to shopping mall, offers more variety, remains functional 24x7, every day, offers huge discounts and extends the facility of customer reviews. Though online shopping is new to Indian consumers, it is growing steadily due to increasing penetration of the internet, an increase in smartphone users, many companies offering eCommerce facilities and above all, covid restrictions still prevailing. Since consumers drive the market, knowledge about consumer behaviour is necessary for success in any business. Understanding consumer perception of a specific product/brand; marketers aim to create the maximum impact. The purchasing behaviour in the case of RMG depends on a number of factors, usually classified into economic and non-economic factors. The study aims to analyse factors affecting consumer behaviour with regard to readymade garments in both offline and online modes of shopping.

B. Objective of the Study

The current study aims to identify factors affecting the buying behaviour of consumers in online and offline modes and tries to explore to what extent the factors influence the minds of the consumer as regards buying readymade garments.

C. Literature Review

According to Yoo & Donthu (2001), “the quality of internet shopping depends on the search patterns, site patronage and affects buying decisions of the consumers.” They developed a scale composed of four factors – ease of use, aesthetic design, processing speed and security, all affecting consumer behaviour in online shopping.

Chaubey (2009) states that purchasing pattern of readymade garments depends on anthropology, psychology, sociology and economics. Traditional marketers use any suitable approach for segmenting, targeting and positioning which forms the core of their marketing strategy. The study indicates the high association of purchase patterns of readymade garments with age and income of the respondents.

Again, Bhatt and Bhatt (2012) have identified factors like the attractiveness of the website, service quality of the website and website security as the dominant ones influencing consumer perceptions regarding their online purchasing experiences.

According to Gajjar (2013), the customer behaviour study is based on the buying behaviour of the customer where he/she plays three distinct roles of buyer, payer and user. Research on consumer behaviour shows that it is difficult to predict the exact buying behaviour. Marketers must understand how consumers behave, each having different purchasing and thinking characteristics which influence their buying decisions.

According to Ramya & Ali (2016), many factors influence the individual in what he is and the consumer in his decision-making process, shopping habits, purchasing behaviour, the brands he buys or the retailers he goes. A purchase decision is the result of each and every one of these factors. Exploring the sociological factors influencing readymade garment purchase, Eze & Bello (2016), revealed that age, quality, income and fund shapes the consumer buying behaviour.

Kalpana. R (2017) studied different factors like sales promotion proneness, prestige sensitivity, price and value consciousness and their effect on the buying behaviour of consumers. Based on the findings of confirmatory factor analysis, prestige sensitivity, price consciousness, value consciousness, local retailer shop loyalty, coupon and sales proneness highly influence consumer buying behaviour.

Pandey & Parmar (2019) have identified seven factors that affect consumer's online shopping buying behaviour. These factors are ease of use, perceived risk and usefulness, the effect of website design, economic factor and availability of products.

The above literature review shows that though there have been studies regarding readymade garments, only a few have taken into account all the factors that affect consumer buying behaviour. Not many authors have studied the demographic factors of market segmentation. Apart from factors like quality, style and price, there are many other factors which affect consumer buying behaviour regarding readymade garments.

D. Methodology

The study is based on a theoretical approach involving secondary data. Secondary data sources include books and articles published in peer-reviewed journals.

E. Findings

In the case of readymade garments consumer buying motives are strongly influenced by the following factors:

a) Economic Factor

Every human being needs garments and therefore every consumer has to purchase them for usage. The economic condition of a consumer greatly influences the brand of garments purchased. The choice of a product, its specific brand and the ultimate purchase decision of a consumer is greatly influenced by the economic condition of the consumer. Economic factor includes personal and family income, savings, retail credit, etc all collectively affect the consumer buying decision. Consumers belonging to the economically higher strata of the society generally prefer expensive readymade garments, international brands like Gucci, Armani, Chanel, Tommy Hilfiger, Prada, etc. to name a few. Consumers with low-income levels usually prefer Indian brands like Peter England, Allen Solly, Van Heusen, etc. The disposable income of

a consumer becomes the decisive factor in whether a consumer will purchase an international or an Indian product. However, the mode of shopping also has a role to play. Consumers can now avail discounts if they shop online. Online shopping entails payment either by debit/credit card or fund transfers. Nowadays consumers can buy expensive branded garments at a discounted price during online purchases. These purchases can be made from numerous online e-commerce sites available to the Indian consumer.

b) Psychological Factor

The Psychological Factor plays an important role in decision-making regarding the purchasing behaviour of an individual (Ramya & Ali 2016). Motivation, perception, learning, memory and beliefs and attitudes are the principal elements (Kotler & Keller, 2016). This holds true for readymade garments also.

(i) Motivation

Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs model of human motivation (Robbins and Judge, 2012), provides an explanation as to why people are driven by a particular need at a particular time. In the model, different needs of human beings are arranged in a hierarchy according to their significance and five different types of needs are identified: 1) Physiological needs: basic needs for human survival 2) Safety needs: security and protection to one and one's family; 3) Social needs: friendship, family, love & acceptance; 4) Esteem needs: to achieve something and belong to a status; 5) Self-actualization needs: realization of a person's potential, self-fulfillment and seeking personal growth. Each person initially tries to satisfy the basic needs. Clothing is one of them. Whether a consumer goes for offline shopping or online, clothes are a must for any human being to socialize in the family and the society.

(ii) Perception

Perception is selecting and understanding sensory information to produce a meaningful explanation. It usually follows motivation. For readymade garments, an individual's thinking about a specific product/brand determines his/her perception of the product/brand. A healthy response from a motivated person favouring a specific product/brand, builds a positive perception. On the other hand, an adverse response to any other brand develops a negative perception of it. The perceptual process follows a series of sequential steps: the presence of objects, observation, selection, organization, interpretation, and response. For readymade garments, individuals observe and collect information about a product/brand which is of use to them; they tend to perceive the information in a way that suits their line of thought and belief. Online shopping mode offers more flexibility, wider product line, more outreach, smoother transaction and customization of products Chong, H. T. (2014). Consumers show their responses, which might be either positive or negative.

(iii) Learning and Memory

Learning is a relatively permanent change in behaviour brought about by practice or experience (Lachman, S. J. (1997). Human beings, animals, and some machines possess the ability to learn. Some learning is immediate but much knowledge and skill accumulate from repeated experiences. Usually, it is seen that from childhood a boy/girl learns to be in proper attire, choosing a different dress for different occasions, which depends on the right choice of garments. Learning shapes the behaviour of an individual. It is produced by the interplay of stimuli, cues, drives, responses and reinforcements. (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Memory plays an important role in the decision-making of consumers and also helps to determine whether the information is important or disposable. In the case of online shopping, customers have a mindset about the known e-commerce sites, being accustomed to choosing products from a wide range at a discounted price. Subconscious decisions of the consumers, influenced by one's memory, become vital in case of purchase of readymade garments.

(iv) Beliefs and attitudes

Beliefs and attitudes play a vital role for consumers; each individual being different chooses a different product/brand. Readymade garment marketers are interested in these since beliefs and attitudes shape the image of a specific product which affect consumer purchasing pattern both in traditional as well as online shopping. Marketers usually try to manifold these beliefs and attitudes by bringing new sales promotion schemes and advertisements in order to sell a specific product/brand.

c) Personal Factor

Personal factor also affects the purchase behaviour of consumers in the case of readymade garments. The important elements of the personal factor are occupation, age, lifestyle and personality. All these factors affect the buying behaviour in the case of readymade garments in both offline and online shopping. Marketers of readymade garments should take into account these factors in order to get an idea about consumer behaviour.

(i) Occupation

Occupation is an individual's principal work or business, in order to earn a living. A part of personal factor it affects the consumer buying pattern of an individual. The clothing pattern of an individual is affected by his/her occupation. Usually, professors, doctors or office goers are clothed in formals while field engineers prefer jeans. So occupation of an individual directly affects the type of clothing one wears.

(ii) Age

Different stages of the life cycle and age of an individual have a profound impact on buying behaviour. As individuals grow old, their tastes and preferences change and hence their buying behaviour changes, which can be seen in the case of readymade garments also. Every individual passes through some definite stages in the life cycle, viz. childhood, bachelorhood, married life,

parenthood, etc. From infant to childhood, an individual clothes himself/herself as told. As he/she grows up, bachelors are mostly fascinated by trendy looking and smart readymade garments. Once an individual gets married, the choice of garments changes. The job of the marketer is to create different marketing strategies so as to capture the attention of individuals as they pass through the different stages of the life cycle. Companies create its products on the basis of different stages of the life cycle and/or different ages of the consumer (Kotler et al, 2017).

(iii) Lifestyle

Lifestyle is the way one lives which includes his/her style, attitudes and possessions. Stated differently, it is the way of living, how an individual lives in the society. There are various indicators to gauge the lifestyle of an individual, clothing is one of them. It forms an integral part of the lifestyle and therefore buying behaviour of garments is also influenced by the lifestyle of a consumer. Joseph T. Plummer (1974), a prominent lifestyle researcher summarizes the concept as; lifestyle is a different pattern combination of demographics mixed with the richness and dimensionality of psychological characteristics. Consumers choose dresses which enhance their body shape and describe their lifestyle. Lifestyle is determined by customer opinions, activities and interests and therefore shapes his/her buying behaviour.

(iv) Personality

Personality is a characteristic way of thinking, feeling, and behaving. It embraces moods, attitudes, and opinions and is most clearly expressed in interactions with other people. Two separate individuals can be distinguished on the basis of their personality traits. The personality of an individual is revealed by the brands of apparel/accessories he/she prefers. Clothing affects the behaviour, mood, attitude and personality of an individual. Thus, clothing is a formidable part of how a person is perceived in society and forms an extension of one's personality. Usually, marketers of readymade garments tend to focus on the personality of an individual and devise unique marketing strategies to influence the same.

d) Cultural and Social Factor

Culture is the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group; usually passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next. Culture is a word for the 'way of life' of groups of people. Clothing is an important component of one's daily life. Clothes are a signifier of one's identity and culture. Since time immemorial, communities have used clothing as a means to communicate status and show unity. The influence of culture on the buying pattern of individuals/groups varies worldwide. Marketers of readymade garments try to use these groups to segment the market. Both online and offline marketers usually design garments specific to the need of a particular group/sub-group. Social factor refers to the society, which includes the family and the social group one is associated with. The important social factors affecting the consumer buying behaviour are the reference groups. Individuals use these groups to learn attitudes, beliefs and behaviour and adapt them. The status of an individual greatly influences the buying behaviour. The buying behaviour of an individual,

in the case of garments, is influenced by family members and usually by a person's better half. This is reflected by the type of garments an individual buys, jeans and t-shirts during bachelorhood and formal/ethnic dresses after marriage. In the Indian context, usually, the wife makes the decision regarding shopping for apparel. With this knowledge, marketers usually target the wife for selling products. Presently, people are much more open to online shopping. E-commerce sites such as Amazon, Flipkart, Azio, Myntra, Meesho etc. present a huge product line for their consumers, offering attractive discounts and other sales promotion schemes during the festivities.

F. Managerial Implications

To survive in today's competitive market, a marketer must have the knowledge of his customers. A marketer of readymade garments should have knowledge of different buying habits and varied preferences. A logical analysis backed by knowledge of consumer preferences is required on the part of the marketer to capture the market share. The study of the above-mentioned factors will definitely help the marketer to predict an individual's preference for readymade garments. In the case of online shopping, marketers need to take care of the website design, ease of viewing, easily placing the order and smooth transaction. Products should be available in various sizes in order to cater to different individuals.

G. Limitations of the Study

The current study takes into account different factors affecting consumer behaviour with respect to readymade garments in both traditional and online shopping. The study has some limitations; it is theoretical in nature. Only one theory of motivation is considered. No primary data have been used during the course of the study.

H. Scope of Future Work

Further studies can be done by taking a practical example from the market in the readymade garment sector. Further modification of the study can be done to suit any other specific industry. Further research can be done by taking into account other theories of motivation such as McClelland's Need Theory, etc.

I. Conclusion

The readymade garment sector is driven by decisions taken by the marketers based on consumer buying patterns. In traditional shopping, consumers can physically examine the goods, take trials and finally buy the product. Female consumers also enjoy the joy of bargaining. Consumers can take possession of the goods immediately after the purchase. In contrast, online shopping offers a

wide product line, huge discounts, product review facilities; everything that an individual can enjoy from the comfort of his/her residence. However, physical trial or chances of bargaining is not available online. Taking all these things into consideration, marketers need to understand the factors affecting the buying behaviour of various types of consumers. The above study shows that for the readymade garment sector there are four principal factors affecting the consumer behaviour such as Economic factor, Psychological factor, Personal factor and Social & Cultural factor. Clothing style and garment choice are dependent on motivation, perception, lifestyle, and personality of an individual. Family, peer groups and reference groups also affect the choice of readymade garments. An understanding of the consumer behaviour and the factors affecting it helps marketers of readymade garments, in both offline and online shopping devise strategies to satisfy the consumer and achieve customer satisfaction in the long run.

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