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and

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EXPLORING BRAND PREFERENCE DETERMINANTS AMONG GENERATION Z CONSUMERS IN CHENNAI

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Abstract

In today's competitive world, readymade garment industries must be aware of their consumers' demands, tastes, and preferences, as well as what they expect from the manufacturer. If we want to stay in the market and establish a competitive edge, we need have this knowledge or a consumer study. After conducting this research, we should be able to understand what customers' desire from a brand, why they switch over to another brand, and what circumstances push them to switch to other competitors' branded clothing. By analyzing these, the company can develop strategies based on what the customer wants and satisfy the consumer's desire to purchase the same company's products, which will be beneficial for the company. The goal of this study is to look at the perceptions of Chennai generation Z regarding brand clothing preferences and purchasing habits.

Keywords: Youngsters, Habits, Competitors and Brand

INTRODUCTION

In the modern century, branding has grown to include a manager's usage marketing and communication tactics and tools to help identify a firm or product from competitors, with the goal of leaving a lasting impression in the minds of customers. Identity, personality, product design, brand communication (through logos and trademarks), brand recognition, brand loyalty, and other branding (brand management) tactics are the primary components that comprise a brand's toolkit. Many businesses believe that there is nothing to discriminate between various sorts of products in the twenty-first century, hence branding is one of the few remaining measures of product distinction.

Brand equity is the measurable sum of a brand's quality, which can be evaluated by examining the success of certain branding components. As marketplaces grow more dynamic and volatile, brand equity is generated through the use of marketing strategies to promote customer happiness and loyalty, with side consequences such as lower price sensitivity. A brand is essentially a promise to customers about what they may anticipate from items, which can include both emotional and functional benefits. When a customer is familiar with a brand or prefers it over competitors, a company has achieved a high level of brand equity. To estimate brand equity, special accounting standards have been developed.

A brand, described as an intangible asset in accounting, is frequently the most valuable asset on a corporation's balance sheet. Brand owners diligently manage their brands in order to maximise shareholder value. Brand valuation is a management method that assigns a monetary value to a brand in order to manage marketing investment (e.g., prioritised across a portfolio of brands) to optimise shareholder value. Although only purchased brands appear on a company's balance sheet, the concept of putting a value on a brand requires marketing leaders

to focus on long-term brand stewardship and value management.

A customer like branded dresses because the brand has become a status symbol and is very important in their way of life. As a nonverbal form of communication, the brand also adds value to the customer by providing meaning as well as communicating competence standard and image to the customer. As a result, marketers use brands as a competitive advantage over other competitors, which plays an important role in the company's success.

Fashion, in essence, represents a consumer's attitude, which has a positive impact on their life style and status. Consumer preference is also influenced by aspects such as brand popularity, design, price, range, attractiveness, and so on. There are several fashion designers and prominent brands present, and they have developed to a global level, which has contributed to the growth of the Indian fashion business. Consumer attitudes are also shifting in the current circumstances, as the expense of tailoring is high in comparison to the charges for branded clothes, and they are increasingly drawn to prefabricated dresses. Since the 1980s, there has been an increasing awareness of brands, as well as the convenience given by premade apparel. In charge of the growth of India's branded garment sector. Branded readymade attire of specific companies has become more than just a status symbol; these have become the latest fashion in social circles. As a result, individuals come to the showroom with a specific brand in mind since the quality and comfort of that brand are appropriate for them.

BRAND NAME:

A brand name is a word or phrase that defines a product, service, or company and distinguishes it from other related products in the same category. Words, phrases, signs, symbols, designs, or any combination of these components can be used to create a brand name. A brand name serves as a "memory heuristic" for consumers, providing an easy way to recall

preferred product options. A brand name should not be confused with a trademark, which refers to a legally protected brand name or component of a brand. Coca-Cola, for example, safeguards not only the brand name, Coca-Cola, but also the characteristic Spenserian writing and the contoured shape of the bottle.

BRAND IDENTITY:

The brand identity is a collection of distinct components that distinguishes the brand from others, such as a name, a design, a collection of images, a slogan, a vision, a design, a writing style, a specific font or a symbol, and so on. To radiate a strong sense of brand identity, a company must first understand its target market, rivals, and the surrounding business environment. The core identity and the extended identity are both components of brand identity. The extended identity involves the minute aspects of the brand that help build a consistent motif, whereas the core identity represents consistent long-term associations with the brand.

BRAND PERSONALITY:

Brand personality is defined as "the set of human personality attributes that apply to and are relevant to brands." Marketers and consumer researchers frequently suggest that brands can be endowed with human-like features that appeal to prospective customers. Such psychological features can help marketers establish distinct brands that stand out from competitors. Aaker defined brand personality as five main dimensions: sincerity (down-to-earth, honest, wholesome, and happy), excitement (daring, lively, imaginative, and current), competence (reliable, intelligent, and successful), sophistication (glamorous, upper class, charming), and ruggedness (outdoorsy and tough). According to subsequent research studies, Aaker's aspects of brand personality are reasonably constant across industries, market groups, and time.

BRAND AWARENESS:

Customers' capacity to recall and/or recognize brands, logos, and branded advertising is referred to as brand awareness. Customers can use brands to determine which brands or items belong to which product or service category. Brands help people comprehend the constellation of benefits provided by particular brands, as well as how a certain brand within a category differs from its competitor brands, and so the brand assists customers and potential customers in determining which brand best meets their needs. As a result, the brand provides the customer with a shortcut to comprehending the various product or service offerings that comprise a specific category.

BRAND RECOGNITION:

Brand recognition is one of the first stages of brand awareness and determines whether or not a buyer recalls being exposed to the brand previously. Consumers' capacity to correctly recognise a brand when they come into touch with it is referred to as brand recognition (also known as aided brand recall). This does not necessitate that the consumers recognise or recall the brand name. Customers are triggered to recognise a brand by either a visual or verbal indication. For example, if a consumer is trying to satisfy a category requirement such as toilet paper, they will be given with numerous brands to pick from. When a customer is exposed to a brand, he or she may recall being introduced to the brand previously. When given a cue, customers who are able to retrieve the specific memory node that related to the brand demonstrate brand recognition. When presented with a low-involvement purchasing decision, this type of brand awareness frequently benefits clients in choosing one brand over another.

BRAND TRUST:

Brand trust is the inherent 'believability' of any entity. The intangible feature of brand trust influences the behaviour and performance of its business stakeholders in a variety of exciting

ways in the commercial environment. It lays the groundwork for a strong brand connection with all stakeholders, transforming basic awareness into strong commitment. This, in turn, transforms ordinary people with an indirect or direct stake in the business into passionate ambassadors, resulting in corollary benefits such as easier tolerance of brand expansions, premium perception, and acceptance of transitory quality shortcomings. Brand trust is frequently employed as a crucial aspect of creating a company's global image.

BRAND MANAGEMENT:

Brand management begins with an analysis of how a brand is now viewed in the market, then moves on to planning how the brand should be regarded if it is to achieve its objectives, and finally ensures that the brand is perceived as intended and achieves its goals. Building positive relationships with target markets is critical for brand management. The product itself, as well as its appearance, pricing, and packaging, are tangible factors of brand management. Intangible factors include the experiences that target markets have with the brand as well as the relationships they have with the brand. A brand manager would be in charge of all aspects of the consumer's brand association as well as relationships with supply chain participants.

BRAND PREFERENCE:

Brand preference, one of the markers of a brand's strength in the hearts and minds of customers, reflects which brands are preferred under the assumption of price and availability equality. Measures of brand preference try to quantify the impact of marketing operations on customers' and potential customers' hearts and minds. More brand preference is typically associated with higher revenues (sales) and profit, making it a measure of a company's financial performance.

SOCIAL MEDIA IN BRANDING:

Even if social media has altered company marketing strategies, the core goal remains the same: to attract and keep customers. However, the development of social media has presented businesses with a new dilemma. This shift is about striking the correct balance between empowering customers to spread the word about the business via viral channels while also maintaining control over the company's key strategic marketing goals. Word-of-mouth marketing via social media falls under the umbrella of viral marketing, which broadly defines any method that encourages users to spread a message, so increasing the message's visibility and effect exponentially. Simple examples include when a customer makes a statement about a product or company or endorses a brand.

This marketing strategy allows customers to spread the word about the brand, increasing exposure for the company. As a result, brands have been interested in researching or utilizing social media for commercial gain. There are three methods for directly measuring brand preference: Questionnaires (self-report, unaided preference), Constant sum measurements (scheduled purchases from a competitive set of brands) and Brand choice measures (option of preferred brand from a competitive set of brands)

SCOPE OF STUDY

The study is being conducted to determine the brand preference of branded attires among college students because most of the students prefer readymade branded attire in which they choose specific brand as the brand image was not created it is formed automatically as the specific brand has its own identity and also there is a difference in shopping frequency between the male and female is seen. The survey is being conducted among young people in Chennai.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

According to the survey, in modern times, teenagers choose branded prepared apparel since it is associated with social class and distinction. People's preferences vary per brand based on quality, price, taste, and advertisement. The consumer chooses a certain brand and then numerous variables cause them to switch to another brand; thus, the researcher wants to investigate brand preference among young people in Chennai.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To investigate the knowledge of branded clothing among generation Z customers in Chennai.
2. To examine the primary elements that influence generation Z customers to purchase branded clothing.

SAMPLE SIZE

The act of deciding how many observations or replicates to include in a statistical sample is known as sample size determination. The sample size is an important aspect of any empirical study whose purpose is to draw conclusions about a population from a sample. In practise, the sample size for a study is usually determined by the cost, time, or convenience of collecting the data, as well as the necessity for statistical power. In complex investigations, sample sizes may vary: for example, in a stratified survey, different sizes may be used for each strata. A total of 150 respondents were chosen for the survey to learn about their brand preferences.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE STUDY

Table 01:
GENDER WISE CLASSIFICATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

SI. No	Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Male	86	57.33
2	Female	64	42.67
TOTAL		**150**	**100**

Source of data: Primary Data

The above table 01 shows the gender wise classification of the respondents. It is clearly observed from the table, 57.33 % of the respondents are male and 47.67 % of the respondents are female. It is concluded that majority (57.33 %) of the respondents are male.

Table 02

AGE GROUP OF THE RESPONDENTS

SI. No	Age(in years)	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Up to 14 years	37	24.67
2	14 to 20 years	33	22
3	20 to 26 years	46	30.67
4	29 years	34	22.66
Total		**150**	**100**

Source of data: Primary Data

The above table 02 shows that the age wise classification of the respondents. It is clearly observed from the table, 30.67 % of the respondents are in the age group of 35 to 45 years, 24.67 % of the respondents are in the age group of up to 25 years, 22.66 % of the respondents are in the age group of 45 years and above and 22 % of the respondents are in the age group of 25 to 35 years. It is concluded that the majority of the respondents (30.67 %) are in the age group of 35 to 45 years.

Table No. 03

OCCUPATIONAL OF THE RESPONDENTS

SI. No	Occupation	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Student	61	40.67
2	Private workers	44	29.33

3	Businessman	36	24
4	Others	9	6
Total		**150**	**100**

Source of data: Primary Data

In the above mentioned table 03, it has been observed that Occupation wise classification of the respondents. From the above table, it is inferred that 40.67 % of the respondents occupation is students, 29.33 % of the respondents occupation is private workers, 24 % of the respondents occupation is businessman and 6 % of the respondents occupation is others. It has been observed from the table that majority of the respondents occupation (40.67 %) is student.

Table No. 04

BUDGET FOR SHOPPING

SI. No	Budget (Monthly)	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Up to Rs.1000	56	37.33
2	1000-2,000	48	32
3	2,000-3000	32	21.33
4	More than 3,000	14	9.34
Total		**150**	**100**

Source of data: Primary Data

The above table 04 shows that monthly shopping budget of the respondents. It is clearly shows that 37.33 % of the respondents spent monthly up to Rs. 1,000, 32 % of the respondents spent monthly Rs. 1,000 to 2,000, 21.33 % of the respondents spent monthly Rs. 2,000 to 3,000 and 9.34 % of the respondents spent monthly more than Rs. 3,000. It has been observed from the table that majority of the respondents (37.33 %) are spent monthly up to Rs. 1,000.

Table No. 05

ROLE OF BRAND IMAGE IN BUYING DECISION

SI. No	Buying Decision	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Always	28	18.67
2	Often	42	28
3	Sometimes	63	42
4	Rarely	17	11.33
Total		**150**	**100**

Source of data: Primary Data

In the above mentioned table 05, it has been observed that role of brand image in buying decision of the respondents. From the above table, it is inferred that 42 % of the respondents buying decisions are sometimes, 28 % of the respondents buying decisions are often, 18.67 % of the respondents buying decisions are Always and 11.33 % of the respondents buying decisions are rarely. It has been observed from the table that majority of the respondents (42 %) buying decisions are Sometimes.

Table 06

KNOWN ABOUT THE BRAND TRUST

SI. No	Brand trust	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Word of mouth	68	45.33
2	Advertisement	43	28.67
3	Websites	26	17.33
4	Friends & Family Members	13	8.67
Total		**150**	**100**

Source of data: Primary Data

The above table 06 shows that known about the brand trust of the respondents. It is clearly shows that 45.33 % of the respondents are brand trust with word of mouth, 28.67 % of the respondents are brand trust with advertisement, 17.33 % of the respondents are brand trust with websites and 8.67 % of the respondents are brand trust with friends and family members. It has been observed from the table that majority of the respondents (45.33 %) are brand trust with word of mouth.

Table No. 07

DURATION OF SHOPPING

SI. No	Duration	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Every month	16	10.67
2	Alternative months	29	19.33
3	2 to 3 months	58	38.67
4	3 months and above	47	31.33
Total		**150**	**100**

Source of data: Primary Data

In the above mentioned table 07, it has been observed that duration of shopping of the respondents. From the above table, it is inferred that 38.67 % of the respondents duration of shopping is 2 to 3 months, 31.33 % of the respondents duration of shopping is 3 months and above, 19.33 % of the respondents duration of shopping is alternative months and 10.67 % of the respondents duration of shopping is every month. It has been observed from the table that majority of the respondents (38.67 %) duration of shopping is 2 to 3 months.

Table No. 08

FIRST CHOICE OF BRANDED (SHIRTS)

SI. No	Brand Name	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	*Diverse Men*	49	32.67
2	*Parx Men'*	31	20.66
3	*Style Ministry*	57	38
4	*Ben Martin Men's*	13	8.67
Total		**150**	**100**

Source of data: Primary Data

The above table 08 shows that known about the first choice of brand shirts of the respondents. It is clearly shows that 38 % of the respondents are first choice of brand shirts of style ministry, 32.67 % of the respondents are first choice of brand shirts of diverse men, 20.66 % of the respondents are first choice of brand shirts of pax man and 8.67 % of the respondents are first choice of brand shirts of ben martin men`s. It has been observed from the table that majority of the respondents (38 %) are first choice of brand shirts of style ministry.

Table No. 09

BRAND PREFERRED (FEMALE)

SI. No	Brand Name	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Louis Vuitton	16	10.67
2	Gucci	41	27.33
3	Blueberry	67	44.67
4	Prada	26	17.33
Total		**150**	**100**

Source of data: Primary Data

The above table 09 shows that known about the brand preferred of female respondents. It is clearly shows that 44.67 % of the respondents are preferred the brand blueberry, 27.33 % of the respondents are preferred the brand gucci, 17.33 % of the respondents preferred the brand prada and 10.67 % of the respondents are preferred the brand louis vuitton. It has been observed from the table that majority of the respondents (44.67 %) are preferred the brand blueberry.

Table No. 10

REASON FOR CHOOSE BRAND PREFERENCE

SI. No	Brand Name	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Popularity	54	36
2	Quality	38	25.33
3	Pride	41	27.33
4	Ease of Purchase	17	11.34
Total		**150**	**100**

Source of data: Primary Data

The above table 10 shows that known about the reason for choose brand preference of the respondents. It is clearly shows that 36 % of the respondents are reason for choose brand preference of popularity, 27.33 % of the respondents are reason for choose brand preference of pride, 25.33 % of the respondents are reason for choose brand preference of quality and 11.34 % of the respondents are reason for choose brand preference of ease of purchase. It has been observed from the table that majority of the respondents (36 %) are reason for choose brand preference of popularity.

Table No. 11

BRAND IS NOT AVAILABLE IN THE REGULAR SHOP

SI. No	Decision	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Change product	27	18
2	Change brand	41	27.33
3	Go to other store	63	42
4	Wait for availability	19	12.67
Total		**150**	**100**

Source of data: Primary Data

The above table 11 shows that known about the brand not available in the regular shop of the respondents. It is clearly shows that 42 % of the respondents are go to the other store in case brand not available in the regular shop, 27.33 % of the respondents are change the brand in case brand not available in the regular shop, 18 % of the respondents are change product in case brand not available in the regular shop and 12.67 % of the respondents are wait for availability in case brand not available in the regular shop. It has been observed from the table that majority of the respondents (42 %) are go to the other store in case brand not available in the regular shop.

FINDINGS

- 57.33 % of the respondents are male and 42.67 % of the respondents are female.
- 30.67% of the respondent age group is 35 to 45 years and 22% of the respondents age group is 25 to 35 years.
- 40.67% of the respondent occupation is students and 6% of the respondent occupation is others.
- 37.33% of the respondent monthly shopping budget is Rs. Up to Rs. 1,000 and 9.34% of the respondent monthly shopping budget is more than Rs. 3,000.

- 42% of the respondent role of brand image in buying decision is sometimes and 11.33% of the respondent role of brand image in buying decision is rarely.
- 45.33% of the respondent known about the brand trust is word of mouth and 8.67% of the respondent known about the brand trust is friends and family members.
- 38.67% of the respondent duration of shopping is 2 to 3 months and 10.67 % of the respondent duration of shopping is every month.
- 38% of the respondent first choice of branded shirts is style ministry and 8.67% of the respondent first choice of branded shirts is ben martin men.
- 44.67% of the female respondent brand preferred is blueberry and 10.67% of the female respondent is Louis vuitton.
- 36% of the respondent reasons for choose brand preference is popularity and 11.34% of the respondent reason for choose branded preference is ease of purchase.
- 27.33% of the respondent branded cloth not available in the regular shop they can move to another shops and 12.67% of the respondent branded cloth not available in the regular shop they can wait for availability.

SUGGESTIONS

The brand image must be well maintained because it is vital in purchasing decisions; if it deteriorates, sales will suffer. The opinion of the reference group is significant since it improves the product's goodwill. Because young people tend to pay less and acquire higher-quality products, they prefer branded clothing with discounts, coupons, and other perks, which producers may provide. A market survey may be conducted prior to pricing determination, and prices may be set accordingly, as high prices may result in low sales. Because the latest fashion and trends are most important to young people, designs must be updated as soon as possible.

CONCLUSION

According to the findings of the study, various factors such as advertisement, brand image, current fashion and trends, comfort, and so on, cause generation Z customers to switch to another brand. As a result, marketers must keep all of these factors in mind when planning production, pricing, and sales activities. A person's personality is enhanced by a brand since branded products bring satisfaction, value for money, social status, and so on. The product's brand image has been maintained for many years, and with the support of that brand image, most generation Z customers choose branded clothing, because they are more aware of current fashion and trends.

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