

Loyalty of women apparel shoppers towards Department Stores in the city of Mumbai

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Abstract— Purpose – This research paper tries to evaluate the position of different department stores with respect to apparel shopping by women consumers in the city of Mumbai. It also lists the different criteria that women shoppers use while choosing a department store for apparel shopping.

Design/methodology/approach –

Need for the study- Growing number of women in the workforce as well as education sector as students and educators has increased the demand for more varied set of apparel in a woman's wardrobe. There is also intense competition between the retailers to entice a pie of the marketshare. This study tries to find out the different apparels in the Indian woman's wardrobe and what preference they have towards the different retailers operating in the city of Mumbai. It also throws light on the factors that make a retailer more favourable than the other.

Findings –The average Mumbai city women's wardrobe seems to be dominated by casual wear. Though many retailers have a brand recall the actual purchase seems to be happening in three of the major stores – Lifestyle, Pantaloons and Shoppers Stop. Sales offer and the range of brands available are the main reasons as to why shoppers prefer a particular retailer.

Originality/value – Previous studies have identified different loyalty indicators towards stores selling apparel but no specific studies have been carried out for the city. Moreover specific factors like mix and match options, comfort level of clothing available have not been studied by previous researchers

Keywords India women, apparel Retailing, Department stores

Introduction

Today, 1 billion women work worldwide, and more than half of college students are women. Women will drive an incremental \$5 trillion in global spending in the next several years. Women today are economically more active, marry later in life, have fewer children, have more decision-making power and are becoming a lucrative market segment (Bartos, 1994; Bruce & Parkinson-Hill, 1999; Cassill, 1990; Du Plessis & Rousseau, 1999; Erasmus & van Zyl, 1994; Nelson, 1994; Schaninger, Nelson & Danko, 1993). According to Euromonitor 2015 the growth in apparels in India in 2015 reached 15% in current terms and double-digit growth rates are also expected by the year end. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that India has become a key next step in global expansion strategy for major fashion brands. Overall India is expected to contribute over US\$19 billion to the global apparel and footwear market by 2019.

With new policies encouraging foreign investment and increasing the number of foreign retailers in India, local retail chains have responded both offensively and defensively. Having seen the retail opportunity, several Indian retailers have started to establish a strong hold in the market and are aggressively expanding to fortify their positions. Shopper's stop, Pantaloon, Westside, Globus, Big Bazaar, and Lifestyle are some of the examples of local Indian retailers. The new Indian consumer is definitely more materialistic. The Indian consumer base's needs include global, glocal, and local products (Khanna and Palepu, 2006). While there is a growing demand for luxury goods and international brands, these consumers are not only enamored by products from foreign retailers, but also by local goods provided by the Indian retailers (Gopal and Srinivasan, 2006). Also, the growth in the information technology and IT enabled services industry is significantly driving consumerism in urban

India. Along with significant increases in salaries, these changes have increased the consumer spending on apparel significantly. Apparel is now the second largest consumption category in malls ("Apparel retail: labeling the Indian market", 2006).

Today not only more store retailers are competing for the same market, but also online retailers are competing with store retailers for the same consumer dollars. Several consumer-oriented factors have also contributed to challenges in apparel retailing. Some of them include fluctuations in the economy, changes in consumer demographic and lifestyle profiles, and loss of consumer markets. (Moye, 2000). Department stores normally appeal to middle and upper income consumers. These stores are largely soft-goods retailers, but they offer approximately 20% hard-goods. Unlike shopping at discount retailers, consumers often shop department stores because they carry a wide selection of popular brand name, store label, and designer label merchandise at multiple price points (Lewison, 1994).

Literature Review-

Marketing and retail literature points out several store attributes that determine store selection by consumers. Some of these include shopping trip patterns (Kahn and Schmittlein, 1989), merchandise assortment (Pan and Zinkhan, 2006), merchandise quality (Baltas and Papastathopoulou, 2003; Theodoridis and Priporas, 2009), store price, services offered (Pan and Zinkhan, 2006), store atmosphere, convenient location (Arnold et al., 1978; Briesch et al., 2009),

The choice of apparel items will be influenced by variables such as demographics, stage in the family life cycle, income, employment orientation, shopping orientation and lifestyle. Promotional efforts by the retailer should focus on these variables in order to reach the target market. Female apparel consumers differ with regard to their demographic characteristics, store patronage, lifestyle, culture and shopping orientations. Differentiated marketing strategies are therefore necessary, (Preez et al 2003)

Female apparel shopping behaviour in a multicultural consumer society is a complex phenomenon. Sproles and Burns (1994) emphasize that apparel purchases are different from the purchase of home appliances, as most consumers do not formally gather product information prior to the purchase, but rather make most of their decisions in-store. The choice of a store to patronize is therefore of great importance, as apparel consumers will often gather information, evaluate alternatives and make decisions at the point of purchase. For women's apparel, the largest consumers of Western styles are college students, followed by women executives in urban areas. As the number of working women is rising, increasing the demand for western clothing because of women's changing social roles and increased income (Batra and Niehm, 2009).

Women have always been the leaders in adopting fashion in India. (Biswas, 2006). The increased spending on clothing may be driven by the new comfort level with the use of credit cards. The number of credit card users in India is 17 million has been increasing 30-32 per cent annually. About 45 per cent of the credit card spending is contributed by shopping for clothing, jewelry, and eating out ("Apparel retail: labeling the Indian market", 2006). A survey by A.C. Nielsen showed that 22 per cent Indians shopped once a week and 32 per cent shopped once a month for pleasure. About 20 per cent of Indians preferred shopping for textile and apparel over food.

Research methodology

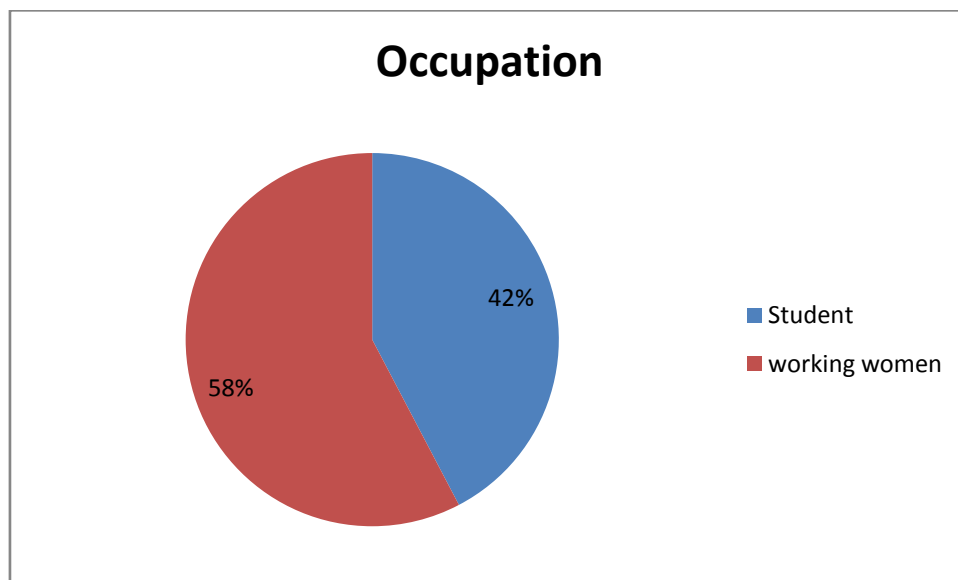
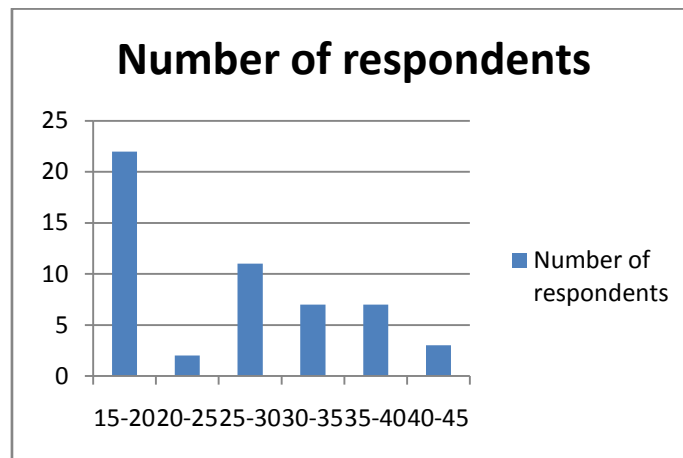
Need for the study – Growing number of women in the workforce and changing profile of the modern Indian women has created a demand of wider portfolio of apparels to meet her personal and professional needs. Moreover the challenges for brick and mortar retailer is not only from the foreign retailers but also from the e retailers. Many of the top retailers like Pantaloon, Shopperstop have been present in the city for quite some time. And there is a need to identify which of them is the choice of women consumers in the city with multicultural values.

Sample size & Type- A total number of 52 respondents consisting of college students and working professionals. Simple random sampling was used.

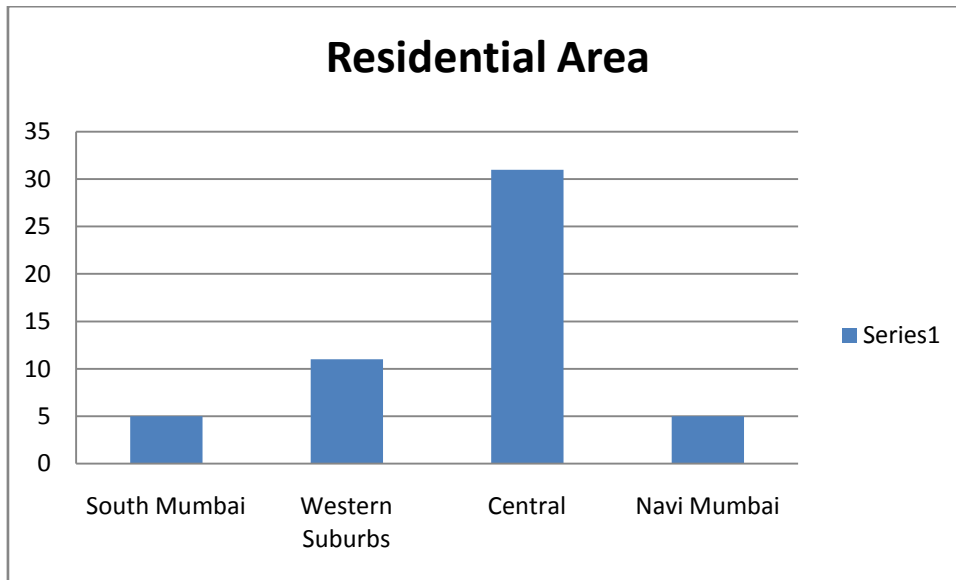
Research Instrument- A questionnaire with multiple options for each question was administered on the respondents.

Analysis-

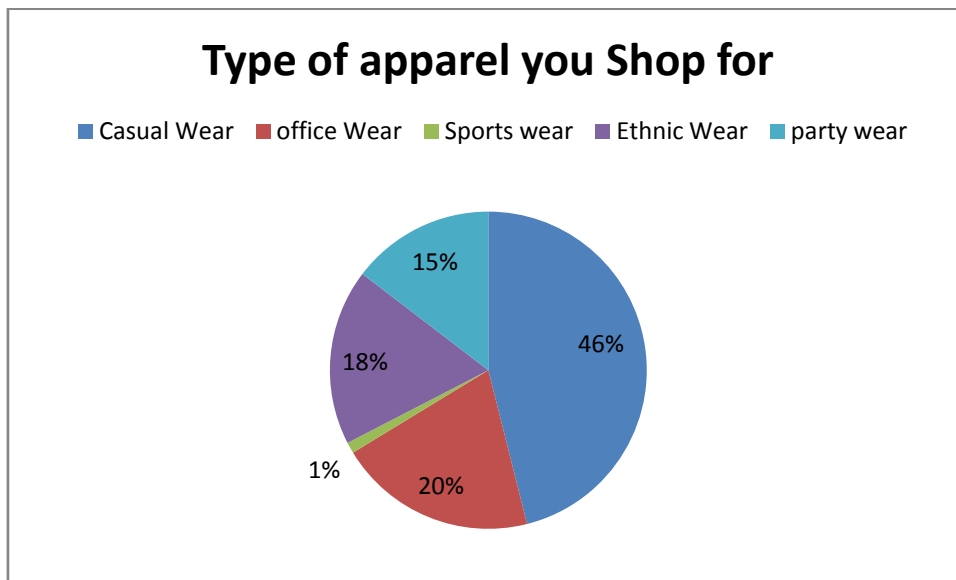
Descriptive analysis- The respondents were women in the age group of 15 to 45 years.58% of the respondents were working women while 42% were students.



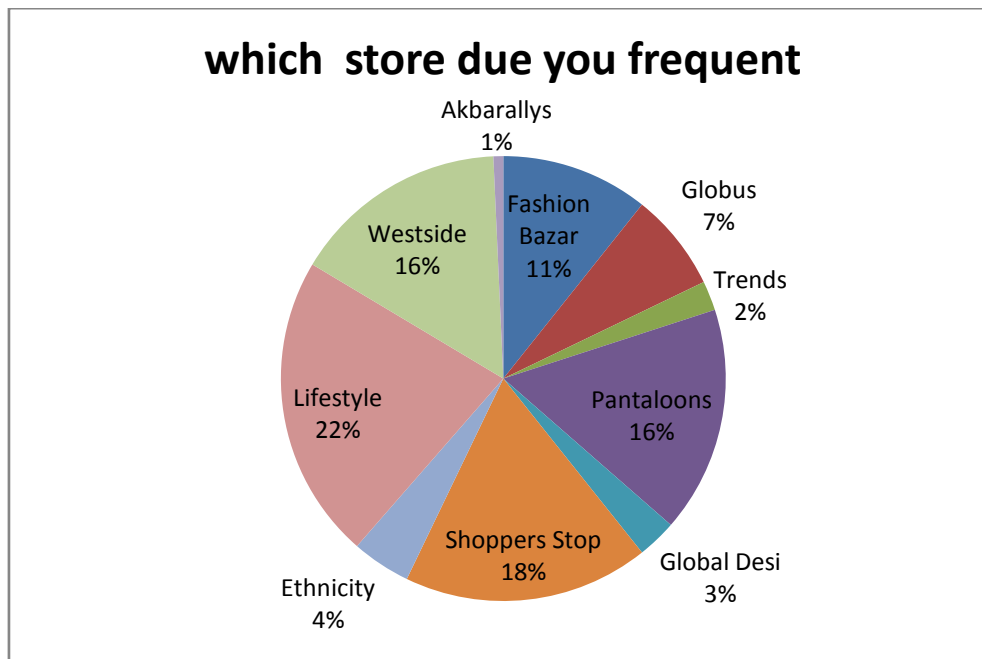
As depicted in the graph below the maximum number of respondents resided in the central region followed by the western suburbs. The presence of the department stores in these areas had a profound impact on their choice of a store.



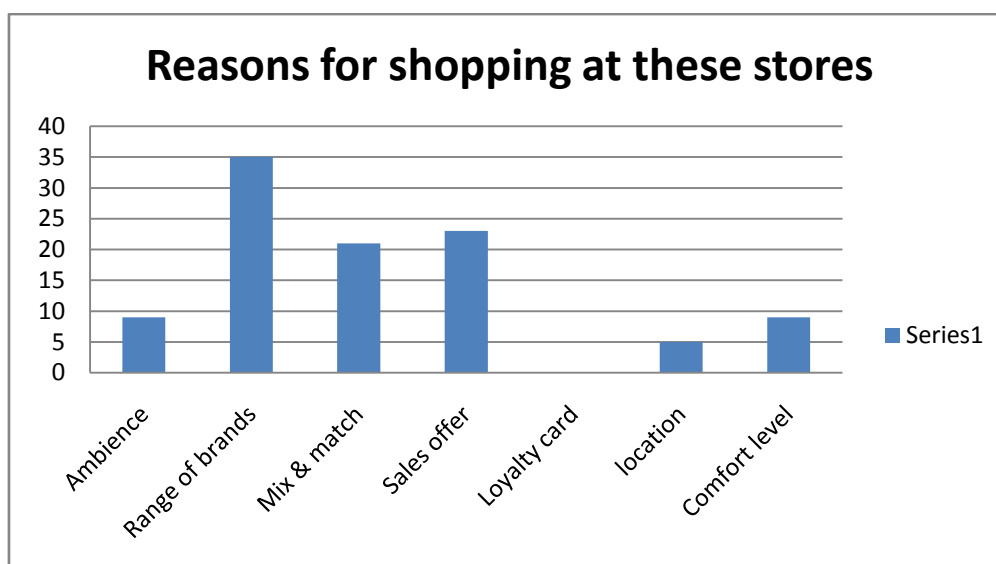
Casual wear was the most shopped for apparel by the women. The reason for this could be it doubles as a college wear or as an office wear. Average city women has not woken up to the concept of strictly dividing her wardrobe.



Lifestyle stores topped the list of stores frequented by the respondents while Shoppers stop came a close second. West side and pantaloons were locked for the third position



Most of the respondents said that the range of brands available was the most important deciding factor while choosing a store for apparel while sales offer as well the availability of mix and match option was also a crucial deciding factor.



Implications for the retailers-

- 1.The average city women doubles up the casual wear for office wear also. Hence the stores should concentrate on allotting more space in their stores for casual wear.
2. The range of national and international brands available in the store is important to the women consumer.
- 3.The availability of mix and match option is very important for the women shoppers. At present the store layout does not have a fixed allotment for this sub category, which needs to be done.

3.Loyalty card seems to be not at all figuring in the reasons for choosing a store. The company's need to work aggressively to achieve success in this front .

4.Most of the stores of the top three retailers identified in the study are located on the central line which might have a bearing on the preference for the stores . The number of stores in the city of a retailers also is important.

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