A study on customer perception & product quality of organized retail outlets with special reference to pothys in madurai

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study is to identify the customer perception and product quality of apparel consumer in apparel product categories, in the context of the evolving organized retail industry in India. With the help of customer perception of retail outlets increase their sale and provide total customer satisfaction. These Retail Outlets increase the India as well as in all over the world. The term customer perception refers to the perception that customers display in searching for purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products and services that they will expect will satisfy their needs. The paper attempts to correlate the distinct store features as perceived by respondents with the true motivations of various customers in perception and product quality of organized outlets. In the process it provides insight of various attributes influencing the customer of an average Indian customer. The sample size used in the study consists of 100 respondents of apparel retail outlets. The study conducted is analytic in nature aimed at finding out the customer perception and product quality of apparel retail outlets. The conclusion of the study was that the suggestions were the increase after having analysed interpreted the findings. It is concluded that customer perception and product quality of retail outlets play a significant role to enhance the perception with customers and provide total customer satisfaction. It signifies that several factors, then after set hypothesis to accept and reject hypothesis. The study for future study is that is to feel up form with customers sensuously and take interview of customer, who walking in the shop floor of Retail Outlet. And to know in-depth psychology and perception of customers, it will give better result for study.

Key words: Customer perception, product quality, Apparel, Retail outlets.

1.1 INTRODUCTION:

Marketing is a business function entrusted with the creation and satisfaction of customers to achieve the aim of the business itself. From this explanation of marketing itself one can see the predominant shift that has happened in the consumer world; that is selling what the producers produced to producing what the consumers wanted. There is a radical shift from the ‗production- centric' to ‗consumer centric' business. And marketing is all about winning customers. In today's world especially it is not an easy task. Technology has changed the way of life of the world. It has also changed the attitude as well as the expectations of the consumers. Earlier it was said that the Four P's represented the most important aspect of any marketing mix:

1. Product: the actual item for sale, whether it's a physical product, or a service

2. Price: the amount charged for your product—not necessarily monetary

3. Place: where the product or service can be purchased

4. Promotion: how people will find out about the product or service

India, an emerging economy, has witnessed untraced-dented levels of economic expansion, along with countries like China, Russia, Mexico and Brazil. ‒India's rebound from the global crisis is set to accelerate in 2010, with estimated growth of 8.2%, although rising price pressures present a challenge to policy makers as they steer the economy's recovery," ADB said in its report 'The Asian Development Outlook 2010', in the growing economy the organized retailing in India is witnessing a radical transformation.The accessibility of the customers has also been magnified by creating a customer-friendly ambience in the stores. The assurances of similar quality with larger ambit of price differentiation, more variety within the product category have made retail shopping more delightful. As a result, retail brands are outweighing the manufacturer owned brands by providing certain advantages to the customers. A trusted retail name provides comfort of shopping to the consumer. So, it cannot be denied that the organized retail sector is going to play a major role in shaping the competitive scenario of Indian consumer goods and service markets in near future.

1.2 CUSTOMER PERCEPTION AND PRODUCT QUALITY:

The products and services that an industrial company has to offer are generally organized around its customers' needs in addition to the level of expertise and production capabilities of thefirm. Creating a strategy for product development is an important and often multifaceted segment ofrunning a successful enterprise, and it brings together a range of different principles, such as research and development, marketing, engineering, design, materials, and manufacturing. In mostcases, an industrial product development strategy will depend on two main goals: keeping the newproduct or product line within the company's overall objectives and marketing philosophy, anddeveloping a system for assessing the performance of an existing product. For evaluating the success of an existing product, factors such as sales, customer response, profits, competition, andmarket acceptance are usually involved.

Consumers can evaluate a product along several levels. Its basic characteristics are inherent to the generic version of the product and are defined as the fundamental advantages it can offer to acustomer. Generic products can be made distinct by adding value through extra features, such asquality or performance enhancements. The final level of consumer perception involves augmentedproperties, which offer less tangible benefits, such as customer assistance, maintenance services,training, or appealing payment options. In terms of competition with other products and companies,consumers greatly value these added benefits when making a purchasing decision, making it important for manufacturers to understand the notion of a ‒total package‖ when marketing to theircustomers. For example, when manufacturing automotive parts, a high-performing product willprovide the customer base with basic benefits, while adding spare parts, technical assistance, andskill training will offer enhanced properties to create a total package with increased appeal toconsumers.

As consumers play the pivotal role to bring the success of any business, there is a need to study the consumers" buying behaviour in organized retail market. In view of the previous discussion it was observed that the importance of predicting the attributes influencing the consumer purchasing behaviour toward the apparel products in organized retail formats.

1.3 REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Markham (1987) A study on customer perception towards readymade garments said that the customer expectation in retailing has been conducted in metros bigger cities but retailers are exploring not only large cities but smaller towns also. People in smaller towns have different kind of needs, dereferences and expectations because of different demographic profile, income and working culture as compared to people in metros and bigger cities. A study was required to be conducted in smaller towns to explore the customer's perception and expectation level towards different kinds of retail formats. Readymade garments retailing is one of the fastest growing segments in smaller towns. Thus this study has been conducted to find the customer's perception and expectation level towards different kinds of retailformats.

Buckley (1988) found that skills relating to fashion merchandising knowledge, including salesmanship, consumer behaviour and commutation were rated above textiles and product knowledge. However, knowledge of ready to wear sizing and knowledge of garment fitting and alteration were also perceived as important.

Eckman, Damhorst and kadolph (1990) proposed a three stage decision making process for apparel consisting of interest phase, trial phase and decision phase. The interest phase in a garment was influenced factors such as colour, styling, fabric, but trial phase was influenced by fit, styling and appearance.

Radha and Shylajan (2007) proposed a conceptual model and considered the influence of various marketing and demographic factors on consumers" habitual buying behaviour towards branded articles. But identification of factors, existence of which indulges consumers to go for organized retail apparel brands are still left unturned. Gupta and Chintagunta (1994) investigated the factors influencing the choice of private label in departmental stores of Hyderabad for two product categories; processed food and toiletries. These literatures make available in depth study on the patterns of consumer behaviour in retail garment market.

A study analysed the significance of demographic profile of consumers affecting the purchase decision of branded garments and to observe from gender perspective the consumer awareness about different apparel brands available in the Indian market and also to find out whether there is a significant difference in total expenditure on branded apparels done by males via- a - via females. The results exhibited no significant differences in the brand awareness, shopping frequency and shopping expenditure between males and females (Rajput, 2012).

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The objectives of the study consist of:

❖ To understand the customer perception towards Apparel retail outlets

❖ To study about the customer preference towards Apparel retail outlets

❖ To measure the expected quality and perceived quality and ascertain the level of customer satisfaction towards Apparel retail outlets.

❖ To know the opinion about the customer regarding the service, price quality.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

This study is very much helpful to know about the customer perception and product quality of apparel retail outlets. In this competitive world retaining the customers has become very important; hence it has become part and parcel of the business. Business which can adapt to quick changes and get access to improvised technology can survive in this tuff market conditions. This study will help us to understand the customers, preferences and their needs expected from the apparel retail outlets.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The present study based on primary as well as secondary data. The collect the primary data, questionnaires are prepared. 100 customers visiting to apparel stores were interviewed. The primary data is collected through questionnaire and personal contact with consumer. The secondary data is collected from journals, text books and through internet. Random sampling method is adopted used to select the customers for collecting data.

Statistical Tools

• Percentage Analysis

• Chi Square Analysis

• CorrelationAnalysis

1.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS:

Table 1 Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristic of Respondents

Particulars	Number of the Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Gender		
Male	43	43%
Female	57	57%
Age		
Less than 20 years	20	20%
21 to 30 years	35	35%
31 to 40 years	40	40%
41 to 50 Years	5	5%
Education		
Up to X std.	14	14%
H.S.C	16	16%
Graduate	40	40%
Post graduate	30	30%
Occupation		
Housewife	29	29%
Employee	32	32%
Business	24	24%
Student	15	15%
Monthly income		
Less than 10,000	18	18%
10,001 to 30,000	50	50%
30,001 to 50,000	20	20%
50,001 & above	12	12%
Marital status		
Married	63	63%
Un Married	37	37%

Above data shows that general profile of the respondents is given in Table No.1. Out of 100 respondents taken for the study,57% of the respondents belongs to the female gender, 60% of the customers visiting pothys stores are form the age group of 31-40 years, ,40% are graduates,32% and 29% are Employee and housewife's. 50% of respondents' monthly income is more than Rs.10001 to Rs.30000. 63% of respondents are married.

Table 2 Respondents familiarity with pothysstores

S.NO	Attributes	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
1	Heard of them and never visited	0	0%
2	Heard and visited but never buy their products	6	6%
3	Buy their products occasionally	40	40%
4	Buy their products regularly	54	54%

The above table shows that 54%of customers are buy their products regularly and 40% of customers are buying their products occasionally and 6% of customers are visited but never buy their products.

Table 3 Respondents awareness about the products and service

S.NO	Attributes	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
1	Newspaper	10	10%
2	Television	60	60%
3	Internet	7	7%
4	From friends or Relatives	23	23%

The above table shows that 60%of customers are know the products and service from television and 23% of customers are know from friends or relatives and 10% of customers are know from newspaper and 7% of customer are know from internet.

Table 4 Respondents opinion about the product availability

S.NO	Attributes	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
1	Men's wear(readymade)	41	12%
2	Men's accessories	25	8%
3	Shirting suiting	33	10%
4	Sarees	57	17%
5	Silks	52	16%
6	Trendy item for ladies	19	6%
7	Chudithar and skirts	35	11%
8	Antique jewellery	21	7%
9	Children's wear	17	5%
10	Toys and baby materials	8	2%
11	Beauty accessories	12	4%
12	others	7	2%

From the above table it is inferred that, out of 100% of respondents, 17% were aware of sarees and 16% were aware of silk and 12% were aware of men's wears and 11% were aware of Chudithar and skirts and 10% of shirting suiting and 8% were aware of men's accessories and 7% were aware of antique jewellery and 6% were aware of trendy items for ladies and 5% were aware of children's wear and 4% were aware of beauty accessories and 2% were aware of toys and baby materials and others.

Table 5 Respondents opinion about the based on products purchased by them

S.NO	Attributes	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
1	Men's wear(readymade)	48	21%
2	Men's accessories	11	5%
3	Shirting suiting	23	10%
4	Sarees	42	19%
5	Silks	33	15%

6	Trendy item for ladies	19	9%
7	Chudithar and skirts	14	6%
8	Antique jewellery	9	4%
9	Children's wear	11	5%
10	Toys and baby materials	7	3%
11	Beauty accessories	5	2%
12	others	3	1%

From the above table it is inferred that, out of 100% of respondents, 21% customers were purchased men's readymade, 19% were purchased sarees, 15% were purchased silks, and 10% were purchased shirting suiting, 9% were purchased Trendy item for ladies, 6% were purchased Chuditharand skirts 5% were purchased children's wear 4% were purchased antique jewellery 3% were purchased toys and baby materials 2% were purchased beauty accessories 1% of customers purchased others products.

Table 6 Respondents opinion about the Brand name

S.NO	Attributes	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
1	Modern	31	31%
2	Powerful	9	9%
3	Popular	40	40%
4	Stylish	20	20%

The above table shows that 40% of customer's opinion about brand name is popular, and31% of customer's opinion was modern, and 20% of customer's opinion was stylish, and 9% of customer's opinion was powerful.

Table 7 Respondents expected products from pothys stores

S.NO	Attributes	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
1	Food court	33	33%
2	Slippers	13	13%
3	Mobiles	19	19%
4	Cheapest fancy items	20	20%
5	More variety in salwar	15	15%

The above table shows that 33% of customers are expect the food court, and 20% of customer's are expect cheapest fancy items, and 19% of customer's are expect mobiles, and 15% of customer's are expect more variety in salwar, and 13% of customer's are expect slippers.

Table 8 Respondents based on their choice of sales promotion activity

S.NO	Attributes	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
1	Piggy bank	17	17%
2	Rajakuthugalam	13	13%
3	Pasumaikondattam	60	60%
4	Free gifts	10	10%

From the above table inferred that, out of 100% of respondents , 60% of customer's for Pasumaikondattam, 17% of customer's for piggy bank, 13% of customers for Rajakuthugalam, and 10% of customer's for free gifts.

Table 9 Respondents based onStrategiestoEvaluate the Product Quality

S.NO	Attributes	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
1	Easily availability	29	29%
2	Durability	46	46%
3	High price	25	25%
4	Others	0	0%

From the above table shows that the 46% of customers to evaluate the quality through durability,29% of customers to evaluate the quality through the easily availability and 25% ofcustomers to evaluate the quality through high price.

Table 10 Respondents opinion about the quality development

S.NO	Attributes	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
1	Product availability	23	23%
2	Innovative design	63	63%
3	Good material	41	41%
4	Others	0	0%

From the above table shows that 41% of customer's said that the good material is important to develop the quality and 36% of customer said that the innovative design is important to develop the quality and 23% of customer's said that the product availability is important to develop the quality.

Table 11 Respondents opinion about the damage occurrence in their purchased products

S.NO	Attributes	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
1	Regularly	0	0%
2	Sometimes	0	0%
3	Rarely	23	23%
4	Not yet occurred	77	77%

From the above table shows that 77% of customer's said that the damage not yet occurred intheir purchased product and 23% of customer's said that the damage rarely occurred in their purchased products.

Table 12 Respondents opinion about the quality, price and service rating the product

S.NO	Options	Very high	High	Average	Low
		%. of Respondents			
1	Quality rating ofthe product	54	28	18	0
2	Price rating of the product	23	47	30	0
3	Service rating of the product	56	43	1	0

From the above table shows that 54% of customer's were rate the quality of the product as very high, 28% of customer's rate the quality of the product as high, 18% of customer's rate the quality of the product as average.47% of customer's were rate the price of the product as high, and 30% of customer's were rate the price of the product as average, and 23% ofcustomer's were rate the price of the product as very high.56% of customer's were rate the service as very high, and 43%of customer's were rate the service as high, and 1% of customer's were rate the service as average.

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS

Table:13 Relationship between the occupation and the customer expected products from pothys

Occupation/ Expected products	Business	Housewife	Employee	Student	Total
Food court	1	10	8	1	**20**
Slippers	18	12	15	9	**54**
Mobiles	2	2	1	2	**17**
Cheapest fancy items	2	7	3	3	**15**
More variety in salwar	1	1	1	1	**4**
TOTAL	**24**	**32**	**28**	**16**	**100**

O	E	(O-E)	(O-E)²	(O-E)²/E
1	4.8	-3.8	14.44	3.01
18	12.96	5.04	25.4016	1.96
2	1.68	0.32	0.1024	0.06
2	3.6	-1.6	2.56	0.71
1	0.96	0.04	0.0016	0.00
10	64	-54	2916	45.56
12	17.28	-5.28	27.8784	1.61
2	2.24	-0.24	0.0576	0.03
7	4.8	2.2	4.84	1.01
1	12.8	-11.8	139.24	10.88
8	5.6	2.4	5.76	1.03
15	15.12	-0.12	0.0144	0.00
1	1.96	-0.96	0.9216	0.47
3	4.2	-1.2	1.44	0.34
1	1.12	-0.12	0.0144	0.01
1	3.2	-2.2	4.84	1.51
9	8.64	0.36	0.1296	0.02
2	1.12	0.88	0.7744	0.69
3	2.4	0.6	0.36	0.15
1	0.64	0.36	0.1296	0.20
				69.26

Degree of freedom = (5-1) (4-1) = 12

Null Hypothesis – There is no significant relationship betweenoccupation of the respondent and their opinion about the customer expected products from pothys

Alternative Hypothesis – There is significant relationship between occupationof the respondent and their opinion about the customer expected products from pothys

Table value = 21.026

Calculated Value = 69.26

Since the calculated value **(69.26)** is more than table value **(21.026)**,Alternative hypothesis is accepted.(i.e.) A significant relationship exists between theoccupation of the respondent and their opinion about the customer expected products from pothys.

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CORRELATION ANALYSIS

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Table: 14 Respondents opinion about brand name and conscious in product purchasing

Brand name	31	9	40	20	100
Conscious in product purchasing	24	49	16	11	100

CALCULATION:

X	Y	XY	X^2	Y^2
31	24	744	961	576
9	49	441	81	2401
40	16	640	1600	256
20	11	220	400	121
∑X=100	∑Y=100	∑XY=2045	∑X^2=3042	∑Y^2=3354

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N=4

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Correlation, r= ∑XY-∑X∑Y

$$\frac{N}{(\sqrt{\sum X^2-(\sum X)^2 \text{ x } \sum Y^2-(\sum Y)^2}}$$

N   N

= $\frac{2045-2500}{(\sqrt{3042-2500) \text{ X } (3354-2500)}}$

= $\frac{-455}{(\sqrt{462868}}$

= $\frac{-455}{680.34}$

= **-0.668**

The range of the correlation coefficient is -0.668 then there is anegative linear relationshipbrand name and conscious in product purchasing.

1.8 RECOMMENDATION ANDCONCLUSION:

The customer profile must be taken into consideration while formulating strategies to improve customer service and quality.Additional floor for refreshment (i.e. food court) can be added to avoid overcrowd in waiting place. This will also help the company in doing more business.Need more varieties in chudithar materials and more brands can be added to line-up of men's section.Arrange required seating facilities for customers and also arrange kids playing zone to attract the customers.Hence the firm should try to collect a brief feedback from each and every customer either at billing counters or at the exit gate and try to implement their feedback.The store should enhance their replenishment power, increase range of products and brand of products made available at the store. The reasons usually given by the respondents to purchase in a particular retail store they visited were good quality, discounts, product availability, arrangement of products, wide range of products, reasonable prices, easy accessibility and convenience in shopping, proximity of the store,reliability, store

maintenance and location, presence of live bakery, timely service, surplus stock and customer friendly.The study shows that consumers" education, income, occupation, marital status is the major determinants for type of apparel retail format. The psychographic segments are differed in terms of consumers" activities, interests and opinions and values for the purchase of apparel products.

It is an uphill task to serve today's pragmatic and enigmatic consumers because consumers are looking for huge variety of quality products, offering special services, pleasant ambience and store services. The apparel retail outlets must be meticulous in creating a sense of high level of trust to maintain quality relationship and loyalty with customers. Hence it is imperative to bear in mind that apparel consumer's behaviour and shopping habits with regard to shopping attributes that influence the choice of apparel retail format.This empirical study investigated the influence of demo-graphic and store dynamics of consumers on choice of organized apparel retail formats. Consumers are now into apparel shopping in a more involved manner than ever before. The perception and opinion of consumers vary while buying apparels in different types of retail outlets. Considering the weight age, the apparel segment in global and in Indian organized retail market.Hence, it is concluded and suggested that organise retailers should exercise caution in serving the utmost needs, wants and preferences of potential and existing consumers in order to acquire and retain.

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