

Impact of Brand on the Consumer Choice: A Case of Indian Textile Sector

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ABSTRACT: *The primary intention of writing the research paper is to show the impact of branding on consumer behaviour. Brand knowledge is a very important factor when it comes to perception of consumer towards a brand. As the consumer is more aware of the brand and he/she has all the knowledge about its price, quality, durability etc., the more he/she will be attracted towards buying products of the brand. The loyalty level increases with the age and experience from the previous products used of the same brand. Family and Friends are the most influential reference groups. The consumers are affected and influenced by social media and its various platforms. The consumers who are more status conscious than those who are not status conscious tend to buy more of the branded items which according to them makes them class apart from the others. The next part is of methodology and analysis. According to the research, all the factors are statistically significant but just gender is the only variable which is not statistically significant. In terms of reliability the research was done with full authenticity and legitimate way. In the end, it is concluded that the branding impacts the consumer behaviour in relation to the different dependent and independent variables.*

KEY WORD: *Brand image, Customer satisfaction, Consumer behaviour, Brand loyalty, Textile, Brand awareness, Choice of buyer, Advertising, Promotion & sales, Word of mouth, Perceived quality, Brand equity.*

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I. INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The ultimate goal of businesses is to earn a profit, and they come up with several strategies to increase their revenue by the years. One of the effective strategies of increasing profits in most companies is customer satisfaction which is done in several ways. Consumers are often attracted to particular-company brands which make them loyal customers, and in turn, they purchase more of the product brands that they prefer. Companies, therefore, resolve to create brand equity for their consumers so as to influence their perception of the brands and hence, improve the company sales and profit (Aaker, 2009). Brand equity occurs when customers have a good perception of a particular brand name of a product and this gives commercial value to the company more than it gets from the product itself. In the retail industry, it is essential to note that the retail brand outlets significantly affect the consumer choices, tastes and preferences. Customers usually have several options to select when they want to purchase any item. Making a choice is difficult for most consumers, and hence, those of them that have a preference for a particular product would go for it. This is only made possible when a company creates brand equity which is a connection between customers and specific brand (Aaker, 2012). Brand equity helps consumers in making choices and thus influences their purchasing behaviour.

In the textile industry, most companies use the brand name for marketing their products and earning more revenues. In the modern world, there are several clothing brands that various companies have created and are widely known by buyers. Some individuals or groups would prefer using specific clothing brands form fame, others for keeping up with the current trends while others for class and other reasons. No matter the reason customers would select a clothing brand, it remains clear that brand name is an important marketing tool in the textile industry.

This study focuses on two major concepts that are consumer behaviour and brand. Consumer behaviour involves the manner in which a group or an individual choose or buy goods and services to meet their wants and needs (Ferreira & Coelho, 2015). On the other hand, the brand of a company implies its symbol, name, design or anything that makes it different from other companies producing or selling the same products (Fayrene& Lee, 2011). Often the term brand is used by many people to mean product. However, the brand of a company is different from its products. The study uses a case of the textile industry and seeks to find the relationship between clothing brands and consumer behaviour in the industry. Customers in the textile industry have several

clothing brand choices that they prefer. Some of the clothing brands are preferred by more people than others, and this depends on so many factors such as the customer's brand satisfaction, branding strategy, brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand awareness and brand association.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section seeks to give the relevance of the research objective and answer some of the research questions listed in the introduction section. Secondary sources have been used in this chapter to give information on previous literature related to brand and consumer behaviour. This section will analyse different brand components concerning consumer buying behaviour, which creates brand equity.

Brand awareness refers to whether consumers have the knowledge of a particular brand and when they acquire the information about the brand (Shahid, Hussain & Zafar, 2017). It can also be said that brand awareness is the measurement of the extent of recall of a brand or brand image by consumers. Brand awareness occurs in the minds of consumers, and that is why its measurement is based on their ability to recall (Fayrene & Lee, 2011). It is not enough for companies to develop brand names and structures without considering how they would make the consumers know of the brand. Brand awareness determines whether a brand would last in the market or would only be short term.

Li and Green (2011) suggest that brand awareness influences the purchasing decision of customers in the retail industry. Customers who can recognize a brand and recall it, are more likely to buy it than customers who do not know of the existence of the brand. The latter implies that brand awareness influences the choice of buyers. Consumers have lots of similar products in the retail market to choose from. As a result, they find it hard to make decisions on what products they should buy. However, they tend to purchase products that have a widely known brand image that would convince them of choosing a brand and not another (Aaker, 2009).

There are several factors which influence brand awareness, and some of them include the name, advertising, promotion and sales, and the first mover advantage. The name is the first feature of a brand that would attract a customer (Wheeler, 2017). Companies that have attractive brand names are more likely to influence buyers in purchasing the brand products than those that have less attractive names. Advertising profoundly influences brand awareness as an effective advertisement for a brand would make more consumers aware of the existence of the brand. When customers are attracted to a brand through advertising, some of them will advertise the product further by word of mouth. Consequently, using a celebrity in endorsing a brand increases its awareness as customers would be influenced into buying brand products advertised by famous faces (Zipporah & Mberia, 2014). Promotion and sales are another important factor that influences brand awareness. Companies use various strategies of promotion such as giving free gifts as a way of increasing consumer knowledge on their brands. The first mover advantage also promotes brand awareness in that a company would be remembered easily if it produces a product for the first time in the market (Aaker, 2012). Whenever consumers use the product, they would remember the company that produced the first brand in the market.

The secondary source of data that was used for this research was a review of the literature. This was done through the review of past works of various authors based on the relationship between brands and consumer behaviour in the retail industry. Several studies are similar to this research, and they gave rich information needed for this paper. The secondary data was obtained on online libraries, which gave access to books and articles, by other authors. Additionally, the secondary sources only included articles and books which were published within the past ten years. The latter helps in limiting data to current trends as the textile industry is very flexible and changes from time to time.

According to Shahid, Hussain & Zafar (2017), brand awareness refers to whether consumers have the knowledge of a particular brand and when they acquire the information about the brand. Li and Green (2011) suggest that brand awareness influences the purchasing decision of customers in the retail industry. In this study, 59 respondents confirmed that brand awareness was key to them purchasing a brand. They agreed that they would only purchase brands they know. Customers who are able to recognize a brand and recall it, are more likely to buy it than customers who have no knowledge of the existence of the brand (Li & Green, 2011). Consumers tend to purchase products that have a widely known brand image that would convince them of choosing a brand and not another (Aaker, 2009). Also, using a celebrity in endorsing a brand increases its awareness as customers would be influenced into buying brand products advertised by famous faces (Zipporah & Mberia, 2014). The latter was confirmed by 53 respondents who agreed that brands advertised by celebrities had an influence on their purchasing behaviour. Additionally, the first mover advantage also promotes brand awareness in that a company would be remembered easily if it produces a product for the first time in the market (Aaker, 2012). Brand awareness had a rating of 4, and hence, the respondents confirmed that brand awareness influenced their purchasing behaviour. From the results of questionnaire and literature review on brand awareness, we can prove the hypothesis by stating that brand awareness impacts on customer behaviour in the retail industry.

Brand image is the overall customer's or potential buyer's perception of a product brand (Tong & Hawley, 2009). In most enterprises, brand image has highly increased reputation and is one of the most crucial marketing tools for organizations, and this was confirmed by all respondents. Aaker (2009) suggests that brand image is created through consumers' opinion or perception on a brand and this depends on what the customers think about the quality of the brand and how it may serve better than other similar product brands (Lai et al., 2010). 79 respondents confirmed that brand image influenced their purchasing decisions. Once the consumers have a positive brand image, they would consider buying the brand product as they are already convinced that the brand is worth buying (Shah et al., 2012). 69 respondents agreed that they would purchase brands that other people say are good and this relates to people having a positive brand image. Out of the four brand objects, 25 respondents implied that brand awareness was the principal object in influencing their purchase decisions. Additionally, respondents gave brand awareness a rating of 4 out of 5. From these results, we conclude that brand awareness impacts customer behaviour in the retail industry.

According to Keller (2009), brand loyalty occurs when buyers are dedicated to purchasing products of a specific brand from time to time regardless of the similar products in the market of other brands. 70 respondents implied that they would consider purchasing their preferred brand products even when other brands had similar products at low prices. Loyal customers tend to promote a brand by advocating for it and effectively recommending more buyers to purchase the brand (Bughin, DooganVetvik, 2010). 59 respondents implied that they would buy the same clothing brands they had if they were to make purchases again and this can be termed as brand loyalty. Loyal buyers are a critical asset to any business as they not only purchase more of the brand's products, but they also market the brand at no fee (Aaker, 2012). All the respondents suggested that they would recommend people to buy the clothing brands that they preferred. Brand loyalty largely impacts the purchasing behaviour of customers. Customers get attracted and become loyal to specific brands such that in some cases they would buy a preferred brand and leave brands with low-priced products (Zakaria et al., 2014). For loyal customers, a brand highly influences their purchasing behaviour (Khraim, 2011). Out of the four brand objects, 21 respondents implied that brand loyalty was the principal object in influencing their purchase decisions. Additionally, respondents gave brand awareness a rating of 3 out of 5. From these results, we conclude that brand loyalty impacts customer behaviour in the retail industry.

Perceived quality refers to the general opinion of customers on the quality of a brand product and the purposes it is intended (Chi, Yeh & Yang, 2009). 81 respondents implied that the customers perceive the quality of a brand. The perceived quality of a brand greatly influences customer behaviour as all respondents agreed to this. When consumers think that a product's quality is good, and would satisfy their need, they would buy the product. 80 respondents suggested that they would buy high-quality brand products regardless of the prices. Likewise, customers would not buy a brand product that they already have a negative perception of (Poolthong & Mandhachitara, 2009). Perceived quality also helps buyers in making their purchase decisions (Doh & Hwang, 2009). Also, consumers them in making a choice of a brand product they think is of the best quality (Aaker, 2012). Out of the four brand objects, 26 respondents implied that perceived quality was the principal object in influencing their purchase decisions. Additionally, respondents gave brand awareness a rating of 3 out of 5. From these results, we conclude that perceived quality impacts on customer behaviour in the retail industry.

DOES BRAND AWARENESS AFFECT CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY?

Kahle and Kim (2006) suggest that in the current business world, consumers have to choose what to buy from a variety of similar products that are not easily differentiated. Products are similar, and most of them differ very little in terms of price and function. In such situations, therefore, consumers' choice would rely on the brand image they have on certain product brands. Brand image is the overall customer's or potential buyer's perception of a product brand (Tong & Hawley, 2009). In most enterprises, brand image has highly increased the reputation and is one of the most crucial marketing tools for organizations.

Aaker (2009) suggests that brand image is created through consumers' opinion or perception on a brand and this depends on what the customers think about the quality of the brand and how it may serve better than other similar product brands. Since the brand image is greatly connected to what the customers think, organizations tend to influence the buyers' perception on their brand especially when first launching the product and maintaining quality in subsequent sales (Aaker, 2012). Once the consumers have a positive brand image, they would consider buying the brand product as they are already convinced that the brand is worth buying. A positive brand image leads to brand equity, loyalty as well as purchase behaviour (Shah et al., 2012). For instance, brand image enables the consumers to appreciate that a preferred brand satisfies their product needs. A positive brand image increases the chances that buyers will purchase products as long as they have a good perception of its brand. Consequently, Chang (2011) adds that a positive brand image enables a company to increase its market share and obtain a sustainable competitive advantage. Once a company gains a competitive

advantage because of its brands, more customers will be attracted to the brand, and hence, the brand loyalty and purchasing behaviour of the buyers will be improved, and these, in turn, lead to brand equity (lai et al., 2010).

DOES PERCEIVED QUALITY IMPACT THE PURCHASING BEHAVIOR OF CONSUMERS IN THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY?

According to Keller (2009), brand loyalty occurs when buyers are dedicated to purchasing products of a specific brand from time to time regardless of the similar products in the market of other brands. Brand loyalty of customers is highly influenced by their positive perception of a particular brand that they believe offers quality products and services and meet their needs (KASSIM ABDULLA, 2010). Achieving brand loyalty in as many customers as possible is an essential activity to most businesses. It is possible to make more sales due to loyal customers who make repeat purchases than to make sales with new customers. Loyal customers tend to promote a brand by advocating for it and effectively recommending more buyers to purchase the brand (BUGHIN, DOOGAN VETVIK, 2010). Loyal buyers are a critical asset to any business as they not only purchase more of the brand's products, but they also market the brand at no fee (Aaker, 2012).

Brand loyalty largely impacts the purchasing behaviour of customers. In the retail industry, it is essential for businesses to develop brands that can fairly compete in the market. Customers get attracted and become loyal to specific brands such that in some cases they would buy a preferred brand and leave brands with low-priced products (Zakaria et al., 2014). Loyal customers to a brand believe that the brands offer good quality products and services and even if other companies come with similar and better products, the loyal customers would still maintain their preferred brands. Research shows that even customers who are price-conscious when buying products tend to make repeat purchases on brands, they are loyal to regardless of the prices (Ferreira & Coelho, 2015).

In the retail industry, companies have to choose the brands they sell wisely as not all customers would be attracted to any brand. Brand loyalty first begins with attraction to a brand, buying it and making repeat purchases (Lin, 2010). For consumers to make and maintain repeat purchases of preferred brands, the brands have to be interesting and attractive to them (Sharp, 2016). It is difficult for companies to know whether customers are loyal to a brand by only considering repeat purchases. However, for loyal customers, a brand highly influences their purchasing behaviour (Khraim, 2011).

HOW DOES BRAND IMAGE INFLUENCE CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR IN THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY?

Perceived quality refers to the general opinion of customers on the quality of a brand product and the purposes it is intended (Chi, Yeh& Yang, 2009). The perceived quality of a brand greatly influences customer behavior. For instance, when consumers think that a product's quality is good, and would satisfy their need, they would buy the product. Likewise, customers would not buy a brand product that they already have a negative perception of (Poolthong&Mandhachitara, 2009).

Perceived quality is also a tool that is used by companies to attract more buyers. Companies strive to make positive first-time experiences of customers with their brands. Once consumers buy a brand for the first time and are convinced that they are of good quality, they would make more return purchases. These return purchases would be influenced by their perception that the subsequent products are of the exact quality as the original brand product. Perceived quality also helps buyers in making their purchase decisions (Doh& Hwang, 2009). In some situations, customers find it hard to make a choice on the product they want to buy from a variety of similar products. Perceived quality, therefore, guides them in making a choice of a brand product they think is of the best quality (Aaker, 2012).

1.2 Objective

The objectives of the study are

- To Determine how brand impacts on consumers in the Textile industry.
- To understand the impact of brand quality
- To understand the perceived quality

1.3 Hypothesis

The research incorporates various analysis techniques that provide necessary information in answering the research questions of the study. This study shows how brand plays an important role in customer choice in the textile industry. The study also shows that brand image and brand loyalty have an direct positive impact on the purchasing behaviour of the consumer.

H1: brand image and quality have an impact on the consumer buying process and also brand awareness has a direct positive relationship towards consumer behaviour.

H0: understanding that there is no brand awareness important to affect consumer behaviour and there is no relationship between brand image and consumer buying behaviour.

Hence continuing the study in order to prove the H1 and to reject H0, we carry out our further study

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Does brand awareness affect consumer behaviour in the textile industry?
2. Does perceived quality impact the purchasing behaviour of consumers in the textile industry?
3. How does brand image influence consumer buy behaviour in the textile industry?

2.2 RESEARCH PLAN

This section of the research paper describes all the methods that were used to collect data on the study of how brand impacts on consumers in the retail industry. Two types of data were collected for the study, and they include primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected in order to use first-hand information from respondents while secondary data was collected for use in review of previous literature on the topic under study. Both the primary and the secondary data for this research will be analyzed by excel and used to prove the hypotheses in the conclusion section and The primary source of data used for this study was the use of questionnaires. Questionnaires were administered online through Google forms utility which enabled the collection of data from individuals from different origins and backgrounds. This was essential for the study since the textile industry has clothing brands that are used internationally and hence, obtaining data from different countries would be more accurate. The questionnaires contained 30 questions whereby some of them were open-ended questions while others were closed-ended. 100 people responded to the questionnaires effectively, and all the 100 responses were used for this research. Out of the 100 questionnaire respondents, 62 of them were female while 38 were male. All of them had used clothing brands, and therefore, all the 100 questionnaires were valid for the study. The data collected from the questionnaires will be presented in the findings section of this paper whereby the findings will be summed up according to the brand object they represent. The primary data collected will then be analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively by use of excel and linking the results of the primary data to the previously reviewed literature and making conclusions on the hypotheses.

III. SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS

The first five questions were based on general information which aimed at establishing whether the responses provided in the rest of the questionnaire would effectively be used to make deductions for the study. The first question was on the gender of the respondents. 55 respondents were female while 45 of them were male. The second question was based on the ages of the respondents. All respondents indicated that they were above 18 years and thus could make purchasing decisions as adults. 36 respondents were aged between 18-29 years, 44 were aged between 30-39 years, 16 were aged 40-49 years, and 4 were aged between 50-59 years. Question 3 and 4 asked respondents whether they were active retail customers in the textile industry and whether they have a specific brand preference. All respondents were active customers in the textile industry, and they all had brands they preferred to others. The results of question 5 show that all responses agreed that their brand preferences influence their purchasing decisions.

Figure 1

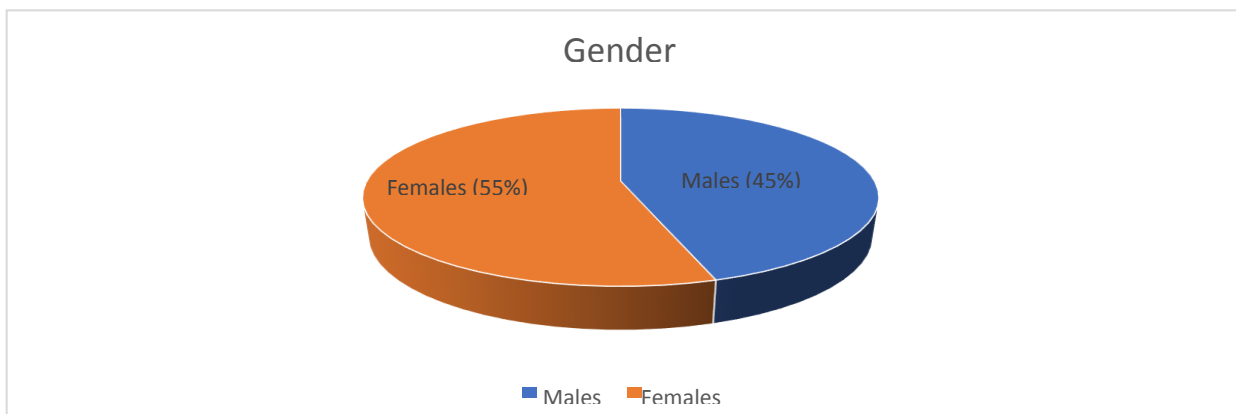
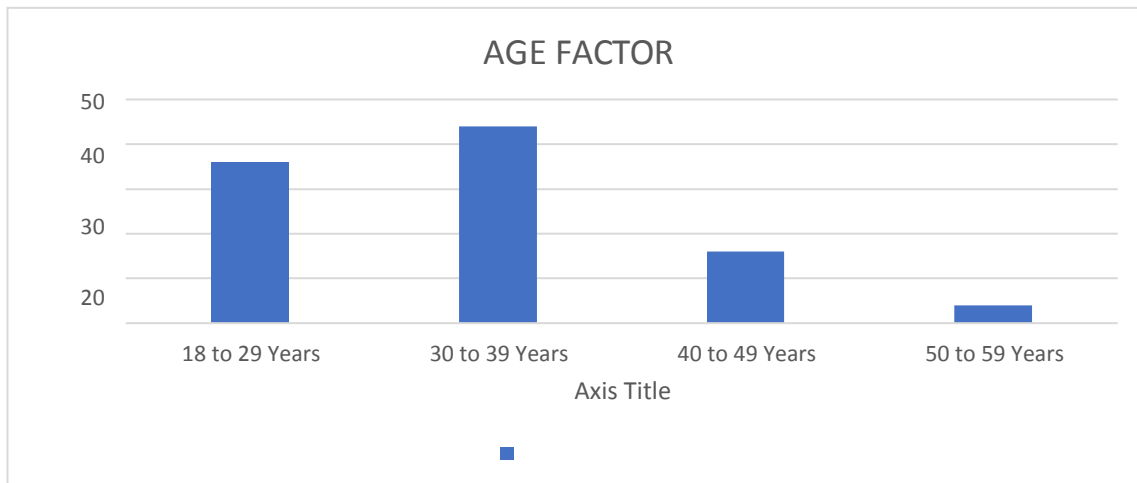


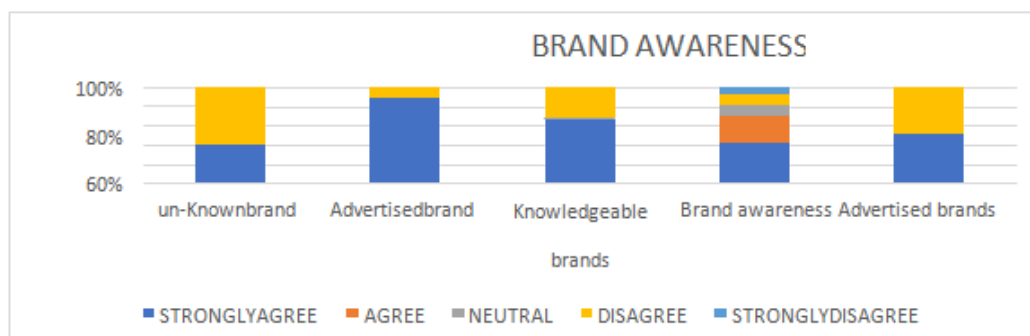
Figure 2



3.1 BRAND AWARENESS

Questions 6-11 were based on brand awareness. On question 6 and 7, 41 respondents agreed that they would purchase clothing brands they never know while 59 respondents implied that they would only buy clothing brands they know. On question 8, 90 respondents agreed that they would purchase clothing brands they learn about through advertisements while 10 of them implied that they would not. On question 9, 67 respondents strongly agreed that customers preferred clothing brands that they have knowledge about, 32 respondents agreed, and 1 respondent was neutral. On question 10, 42 respondents strongly agreed that customers made clothing purchases based on their brand awareness, 28 agreed, 12 were neutral, 11 disagreed, and 7 strongly disagreed. Lastly, on question 11, 53 respondents preferred to buy brands that were advertised by celebrities while 47 of them disagreed.

Figure 3



Questions 12 to 18 were based on the perceived brand quality in the retail textile industry. 81 respondents implied that the customers perceive the quality of a brand while 19 respondents had other ways of knowing the brand quality other than the three listed. All respondents agreed that the perceived brand quality influences their buying decisions and every brand was of a different quality from another. 40 respondents implied that they perceive the quality of brands on first time purchase while 60 respondents perceived the brand quality on repeat purchases. 80 respondents suggested that they would buy high-quality brand products regardless of the prices while 20 respondents would consider the prices. All respondents implied that they would prefer clothing brands they are aware that is of perceived good quality to those that they do not have any idea on their qualities. 74 of the respondents implied that a well-known brand is likely to be of better-quality a less known brand, 20 respondents implied otherwise while 6 respondents were neutral

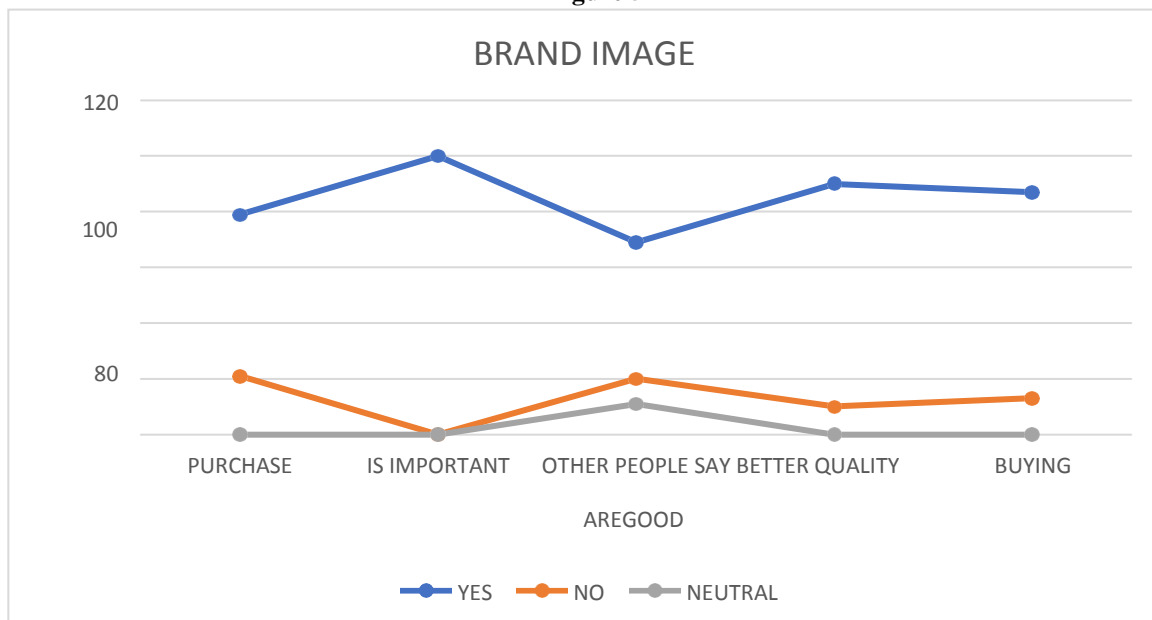
Figure 4



3.2 BRAND IMAGE

Questions 19-22 were based on brand image. On question 19, 79 respondents suggested that brand image influence their purchasing behaviour as customers in the textile industry while 21 respondents suggested that brand image had no influence on their buying behaviour. On question 20, all respondents implied that brand image is vital in the textile industry. On question 21, 69 respondents agreed that they would purchase brands that other people say are good, 20 respondents said they would not while 11 respondents were neutral. On question 22, 90 respondents implied that branded clothing was of better quality and had better features than non-branded clothing. On question 23, 87 respondents suggested that brand image influenced they buying behavior while 13 suggested that it did not.

Figure 5

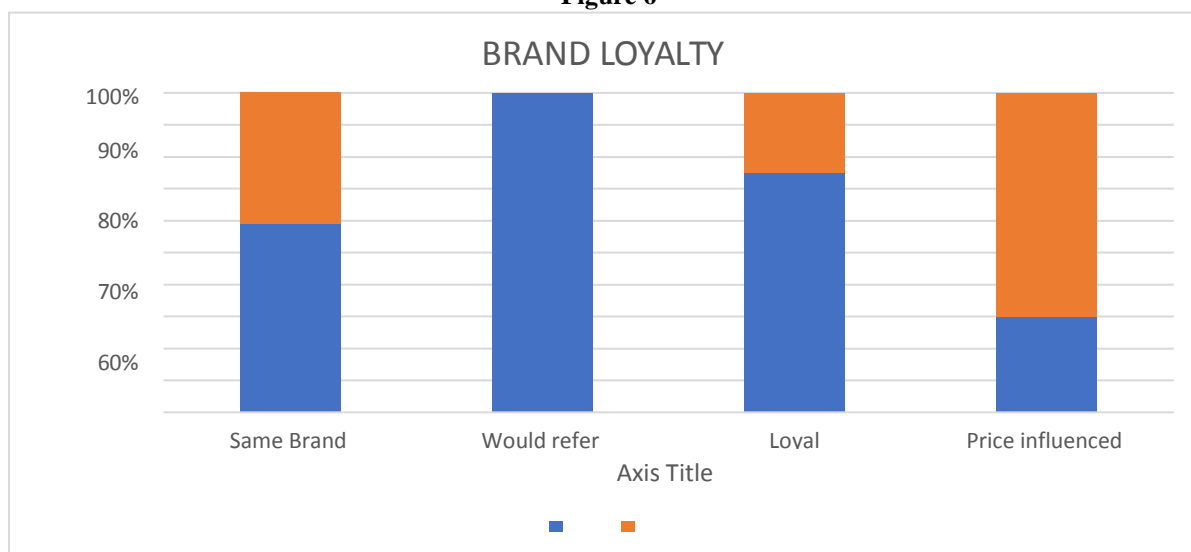


3.3 BRAND LOYALTY

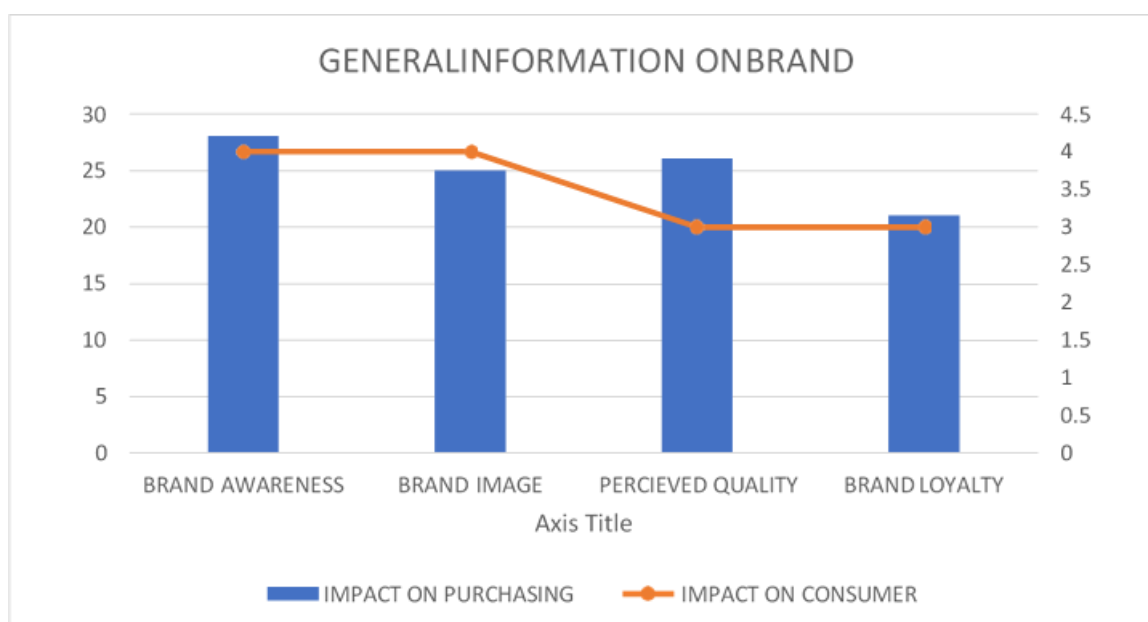
Questions 24-27 were based on brand loyalty. On question 24, 59 respondents implied that they would buy the same clothing brands they had if they were to make purchases again while 41 respondents implied that they would not. On question 25, all the respondents suggested that they would recommend people to buy the clothing brands that they preferred. On question 26, 75 respondents implied that they were loyal customers to the clothing brands they preferred while 25 respondents implied that they were not. On question 27, 70 respondents implied that they would consider purchasing their preferred brand products even when other brands

had similar products at low prices. 30 respondents indicated that they would consider the products that are of low prices

Figure 6



Questions 28 -30 were based on all four brand objects. On question 28, 76 respondents suggested that well-known clothing brands were trustable, 10 respondents suggested that they were not trustable while 14 respondents were neutral. On question 29, respondents were asked to select, among the four brand objects, the one that impacted their purchasing decision most. 28 respondents selected brand awareness, 25 selected brand image, 26 selected perceived quality while 21 selected brand loyalty. The last question asked the respondents to rate how the four brand objects impacted consumers. Brand awareness had a rating of 4, brand image had a rating of 4, perceived quality had a rating of 3, and the brand loyalty had a rating of 3.



IV. CONCLUSIN

The study used employed the use of excel in presenting the primary data collected through a questionnaire. The questionnaire was structured in such a way that the questions could directly be used to answer the research questions and determine whether the formulated hypotheses in the literature review were correct or not. A few questions also aimed at comparing the four brand objects to show whether all of them

affected customer behaviour and at what rate. In this section, the findings of the questionnaire will be linked to the secondary data discussed in the literature review to make prove the hypotheses.

This study helps to understand how brand awareness impacts the minds of customers in decision making. Brand awareness is the key factor that comes in the minds of customer while purchasing the brand. Consumers are most likely to purchase the brand that they are aware about. Brand recognition and recall about the brand in the minds of consumers has an impact on the purchasing behaviour.

Secondly, positive brand image and brand loyalty are the two important aspects for a brand to continue its success rate. In the complexity of the growing textile industry, brand has very significance role in impacting the minds of consumers. Just like any other study, this study on how brand impacts on customer behaviour in the textile industry has limitations. The first limitation was that the research was done on limited time. Secondly, the findings were analysed by excel. There are several other methods of analysis that would suit this research better. The last limitation of this study is that the primary data was collected through online questionnaires. Administering questionnaires online denies the researcher the chance of giving the questionnaires to respondents in person. Online questionnaire answers could be wrong as the researcher would not verify the validity of the respondent's answers.

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