

Dissertation on Brand Positioning of International Retailers of Male Casual & Formal Wear

SAMPLE

Abstract

With the advent of technology and internet, the entire world has become a much smaller space. People are more aware, take more conscious decisions and have high aspiration levels. These serve as the main growth factors for male fashion industry. For the purpose of this dissertation, international retail brands specializing in male apparel and accessories are identified, and their branding strategies are analyzed. Importance of brand positioning and the reasons for retailers to undertake it are effectively explored through the help of this dissertation. For the purpose of this research, both methods of qualitative as well as quantitative research studies are carried out on the population based in Bangalore, a leading city of Indian subcontinent. For the purpose of the qualitative research, 7 respondents were selected. And for the purpose of quantitative research, two groups of sample of 50 and 300 respectively were chosen. From the findings it was analyzed, that India markets serve as an attractive profitable option for international retailers and this serves as the major reason which propels their entry in India. It was also found that, international retailers effectively conduct an extensive product and brand positioning for generating awareness and profitability. Lastly, a set of recommendations are mentioned for retailers intending to enter the market scene.

This dissertation is crucial for students of marketing and business management to understand the importance of brand positioning and other branding initiatives. A brief idea of the fashion industry, and male fashion sector can also be availed through this paper. This dissertation has been constructed with the help of a number of academic journals, books, articles, newspapers, websites etc.

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1. Introduction

Brand positioning and brand management have been the key forces which determine a firm's success and failures. The brand went through a series of evolutions, starting from a mere product attribute to becoming a very sophisticated and creative process, whose focus is to incorporate the intangible benefits along with the physical attributes of the products delivered to the customers (Verweire & Revollo, 2009). Brand management in fashion industry is of critical importance, and is concerned with managing the perception of the brand in the mindset of the consumers.

1.1. Background

This section provides a brief overview of the different concepts to be discussed in the dissertation. An overall account of the fashion and the fashion retail is provided, along with the industry overview and lastly the leading international fashion retailers.

1.1.1. Fashion

The history of human civilization has been characterized by a number of great inventions which had significant influence in the subsequent times. One such invention was the invention of symbolism, which greatly affected the entire human species and their way of living. The basic ability of using symbols in order to express a statement reflected the ability of processing abstract, and when such symbolic expression is done with an artistic motivation, it shows the basic ability and the intention to create beauty. Archaeologists' have unearthed two artefacts of ancient civilization in the Blombos Caves of South Africa, which had the appearance of an ornament (Manlow, 2009). These apparent ornaments had specific geometric designs on them and are approximately aged 40,000 years older than the cave paintings discovered in the Grotte Chauvet, France. Such symbolic ornaments are definitely the ancient precursors to the present days' complex representations observed by everyone as fashion.

Fashion has evolved considerably from the days of the ornaments. It is a general term which is associated with the popular practice in apparel, accessories, makeup and lastly furniture. And since ages, fashion has dominated the society and the thinking of the mankind. Fashion has an inherent relationship with France. Even in 15th century, the then ruler of France Charles VII was so conscious of fashion that he directed the construction of an entirely separate Ministry on the same (Svenson, 2006). Whether the economy of a nation is improving or deteriorating, people still need to have the best clothes of the market. Hence, as a result, due to the aspiration levels of the masses, the fashion and the apparel industry remains such a dominant force in every nation of the globe.

Fashion in the general sense is comprised of a number of self contradictory views. On one hand, it makes a reference of being distinct at the same time; it leads to the “imitation” or such distinct style by the masses of any society.

Fashion weeks are leading phenomenon which dominates the fashion industry worldwide. It is a distinct fashion event which lets the leading in house brands or designers to display their latest designs in runway shows, and the media can decide the trend of the season from observing such fashion parade. Paris and Milan Fashion Weeks are considered to be some of the highest regarded fashion shows in the global context. Back in 2004, United States was identified as one of the strongest forces of the fashion industry. However, United States though scoring high for the quantity of fashion shows, the quality was still led by the Paris and Milan Fashion. However, from the present day's scenario it has been observed that apart from the first world nations, prevalence of fashion and fashion sense amongst the youth were seen to be spreading high in the emerging nations as well. Countries like, India, Russia, Brazil etc are witnessing an all time high of the popularity of fashion and as a result a growth in the fashion retailers are also seen to be on the rise in these nations (Grail Research, 2009).

1.1.2. Fashion Retailing

Thanks to fashion, now clothing and accessories makes a complete statement and individuals are inspected and judged based on the brands they wear, the hairstyles they sport and the accessories they carry. Fashion is no longer for the crème de la crème of the society and it has successfully permeated to all the strata of any nation. Fashion retailing is the cause which is making fashion available to the masses at affordable prices. Fashion which was once considered to be utilitarian has now shifted its focus towards becoming inspirational and psychological in its approach (Moore & Fairhurst, 2003). In fact the success of the fashion retailers depend on how quickly they can translate the hot couture available to the public. Individuals purchase popular apparel or accessory items which are in vogue for the specific time period, and once the trend passes away and the new one characterizes the industry, they make repeat purchases. As per some, the customers only work hard to maintain the profitability of the fashion retail industry.

1.1.3. Industry Overview

Fashion retailing industry is characterized by the factors present in a consumer goods industry- that is, the industry has very less product life cycle, customer preferences are crucial for the success, plenty competitors and new entrants, switching cost low and bargaining powers high. The entire fashion retail sector can be broadly divided into three sections depending on the product types they sell- firstly, fashion retailing is concerned with couture in the premium category, next is the ready to wear options and thirdly the mass production (Zietzman, 2006). Couture wears are apparels and accessories designed by fashion houses and there in house fashion designers. These are exclusive, premium quality products which are generally presented to the fashion buyers and media through arrangement of fashion weeks. Next, the ready to wear segment caters to moderately wealthy consumers having a

high disposable income, a strict consciousness towards brands and are fashion conscious.

These products are generally commercially sustainable. Lastly mass production, as the name implies caters to the general public of the society. However, certain high fashion street brands namely, Marks and Spencer conduct mass production of the fashion items, which are priced considerably higher than the rest of the retailers. In order to be successful, a mass marketer in the fashion industry must have strong and efficient forecasting ability, a just in time inventory management system and lastly an efficient manufacturing procedure.

The entire fashion retail industry has undergone a number of changes in the last three decades (Gerefii, 2009). The core change is the availability and popularity of high street fashion to the general public. A number of factors are associated in bringing about such changes- firstly, the time taken for the fashion designs to reach the fashion retailers have reduced significantly.

Initially, fashion designs used to be made public only on the fashion shows or events namely, fashion weeks. But the present world of fast fashion, the retailers have started analyzing the required trends and incorporate such changes in their lines of apparel and accessories to suit the youth market. Fast fashion typically enables a retailer to make it possible for a specific product to reach the stores within a month's timeframe, where as earlier, it used to take a year. As a result of which the product life cycles have subsequently shortened with time.

Secondly, since technology is widespread and accessible by all, it has become possible to produce large quantity and high quality within a short time frame which have significantly contributed towards the success of fashion retail (Manlow, 2009). Also, such fast fashion has significantly impacted the retail industry as a whole. In order to maintain the competitive advantage and profitability, it is the imperative for international retailers to continuously keep themselves updated about the latest trends. Fast fashion has reinstated the fact, and the international fashion retailers are always opting for newer innovative means for expansion.

Presently, brands namely, Marks and Spencer, GAP, H&M, Esprit, Macy etc are considered to be leading fashion retailers having presence in vast number of countries.

1.2. Problem Statement

A problem statement is a very critical section of the research. The entire focus and the process of the research are based on exploring for answers of the problem statement. In the absence of a well defined and structured problem statement, the entire focus of the research may get deviated leading to inaccurate un-utilizable research findings. The problem statement for this specific research is in identifying and analyzing the various brand positioning and brand identity tools to improve the productivity and overall customer preference and the related issues associated with such tools. The problems faced by a new entrant into the market of fashion retailing are analyzed and identified, and what are the decisions they can take to attain fast popularity and revenue growth are assessed through this research.

1.3. Purpose

The core purpose of this research paper can be divided into three sub-parts. Firstly, the purpose of the research is to analyze the entire market of international fashion retailers. Their brand management strategies, brand positioning methods, promotional tools, marketing mix would be identified through this research.

Secondly, the specific factors which prompt a fashion retailer to enter the international market segment will be spoken about. The specific challenges, threats, barriers of entry etc would be critically discussed through the help of this paper.

Thirdly, the different strategies which retailers adopt in order to effectively manage and promote their brand would be discussed upon. Brand positioning is crucial for sectors namely fashion, which is driven by customers perceptions. Hence, such core issues of marketing promotion would be discussed upon. Through the help of this research paper, a questionnaire

would be constructed which would help in identifying the different factors which guide the buying pattern of a typical consumer.

1.4. Research Objectives

Based on the purpose of the research purpose, the research objectives can be accurately identified. The specific objectives are as follows;

- In the world of cut throat competition, a number of strategies are taken by leading fashion retailers to retain their customer base, maintain their competitive advantage and undertake measures which protect and attempt to increase their revenue generation and profitability. Through this research, such strategies are attempted to be identified and analyzed upon.
- In the era of globalization, it is the imperative for every organization to opt for foreign market entry. However, such entry is never smooth and is risky and expensive for every company. But still there are reasons which propel them towards such risk taking. It is our objective to identify the reasons which underlie behind a firms own decision to opt for foreign market entry.
- As already mentioned, a number of factors act as barriers and risk for a company entering a foreign market. It is also our imperative to identify and analyze such factors.
- Market dynamics and strategies have a direct impact on the firm's decision and mode of brand management and brand positioning. Through this research, our objective is to understand and list down the different effects of the international marketing strategies on such brand positioning and identity creation and maintenance.
- For the purpose of the research method, males fashion and accessories have been focused upon.

1.5. Dissertation Structure

In this specific section, a brief overview of the entire dissertation structure is presented to help the readers understand the sequencing of sections and the research methodology. At the very onset, the title page, executive summary and the table of contents is given. The executive summary gives a brief overview of the purpose and the core findings and recommendations of the dissertation paper. After the table of contents, the introduction chapter is presented. This specific chapter is again subdivided into a number of sections, giving a brief overview of the background of fashion, the concept of fashion retail, the purpose and the research objectives, and lastly a conceptual overview which delves into the topics of brand management and brand positioning for fashion retailers. The Literature Review is given next, identifying and analyzing the rise, core trends, and the brand positioning of fashion retailers. This is followed by the research methodology which gives the detailed research plan, and its specifications. The questionnaire is devised and attached at the end of the research paper in the section of Appendix. Following the research methodology, the findings of the research are listed and a detailed analysis is provided. Based on the research criterion, a set of recommendations are also provided to fashion retailers on their entry into the market. Conclusion is present at the very last, which attempts to summarize the findings and the recommendations made.

1.6. Conceptual Framework

The dissertation will fall under the broad concept of brand management. However, to promote better understanding of the concepts, this specific section is further subdivided to brand identity, brand positioning and lastly brand management.

1.6.1. Brand Identity

A brand is any symbol, design, term or any specific characteristic that helps in identification of the specific product or service and separates them from its competitors. The concept of

branding started from the days of agriculture, when in order to differentiate the cattle of individuals, hot iron stamping was undertaken. The brand identity is the exclusive characteristics associated with a specific brand and is the sum total of all the aggregation of one's entire operations (Madhavaram, Badrinarayanan, & McDonald, Integrated Marketing Communication and Brand Identity as Critical Components of Brand Equity Strategy: A conceptual framework and research propositions, 2005). Brand identity is important as it is crucial for the strategic vision of the brand, and is a core driver of the phenomenon of brand equity. Brand identity helps in arming the brand with a direction, the purpose and the basic meaning. Hence, it can be summarized as that brand identity is the total of functional and the mental associations with the brand. Maintaining a unique brand identity is associated with a number of benefits. Brand identity assists in improved brand awareness, high sense of motivation, retention of existing customers and attraction of large market vases, high sense of credibility etc. Alongside, the company enjoys enhanced brand preference, loyalty and lastly significant financial returns. For fashion retailing, brand identity maintenance is crucial as the entire sector is driven by consumer perception and image maintenance. For a fashion retail company to operate successfully in the market of foreign retailers, it is crucial that the former maintains its strong brand identity. Brand identity for fashion retail companies would signify how the owner wants his brand to be perceived by the consumers.

1.6.2. Brand Positioning

Brand positioning is actually how the brand is perceived by the consumers in comparison to the other competitors and alternatives. Hence, in order to design the ideal position of any brand, one should accurately take into account the brand essence, the promise it intends to delivery, the archetype, brand personality and the most important of these all, the target customers. Brand positioning is focused on the brand promise or the unique value proposition. These two concepts focus on the very critical one or two points, which

differentiate the brand from the rest of the competitors'. These differentiation factors, are the benefits associated with the brand, and are unique, believable, useful and relevant. Brands should ideally opt for linking one or maximum two benefits along with their products, as research suggests that customers link a less number of benefits with each brand, and these benefits serve as the core reason which propels their purchase (Pham & Muthukrishnan, 2002).

Hence, brand positioning takes into consideration three basic steps – one, to identify the brands unique offerings and point of differentiation and next, communicating such to the target market and thirdly delivering the brand benefits to the target market. For the purpose of fashion retailing, brand positioning is of crucial importance. Through apparently, the points of differentiation are very less due to the nature of the products – apparel, but however companies in order to maintain uniqueness should opt for niche target markets and effectively conduct their brand positioning. Leading international giants, when on entering a new foreign market, effectively strategizes their brand positioning to cover the maximum customer base and still maintain their uniqueness. When the UK giant, Marks and Spencer entered India, they positioned their brand as a mid market aspirational brand (Burt, Mellahi, Jackson, & Sparks, 2002). They provide high quality, apparel and accessories to the Indian market, and for reaching the greatest section of the market, M & S, has concentrated on the mid market segment.

1.6.3. Brand Management

Earlier, the core success factors for the fashion organizations were the quality of the items arising from highly efficient manufacturing technologies and the product technologies, but in the present day's scenario, a number of intangible benefits or factors are inherently incorporated within the sense of fashion. These are the brand and the retail management.

Brand management is the core focus of any organizations marketing action, and all strategies are centred on the brand management. Customers of today were never this aware before, and their purchasing decisions are majorly affected by their own personality and thinking style and the perception they associate with each brand. Organizations in the fashion industry have a high potential of successful strategies in societies with high disposable incomes. As fashion retail is driven by the consumers perceptions attached to the brand, hence fashion retailers should opt for building long term stable strategic alliances with that of consumers. The brand entirely serves as a tool which can be successfully utilized to stabilize and strengthen the relationship further.

As the core focus of our dissertation is analyzing the brand positioning of the male fashion apparel and accessories, one needs to highlight the specific characteristics of the brand management of casual apparel. The retailers competing and operating in this specific segment, has seen success due to two major reasons- one, the transfer of the designers ideas and innovation into the shop floor and possession of highly skilled manufacturing resources to be able to translate the designs into high quality ready to wear stylish garments. The entire approach is based on the brand management. Such brand management is done as per the following stages- firstly, in strengthening the supply system by procuring the best suppliers and skills; secondly, these retailers should focus on innovation and creativity, and thus effectively manage the creative resources of the organization namely, designers, advertising agencies, architects etc to production of high quality and wearable designs and lastly, striving to make a presence in the market of the international retailers.

1.7. Assumptions & Limitations

Aspects which are considered as the truth for the purpose of the research but are not based on any fact are known as assumptions. The assumptions for the purpose of the research are as follows;

- The respondents chosen for the qualitative research were considered to have a clear idea about the male fashion industry and the need of brand positioning
- The responses provided by the interviewees are accurate and true
- The interviewees for both the types of research methodologies have a diverse knowledge and thinking which help the researchers gain an overall picture of the situation.
- Every research procedure, are plagued by a number of uncontrollable aspects which challenge the success and the effectiveness of the research. The limitations for this specific research are mentioned as follows;
- Restraints of cost and time were present, and they limited the purview of the research to a great extent
- The number of respondents for the qualitative interview was limited, and to get an even wholesome idea of the situation, the number of respondents should be increased.
- Interviewees for qualitative research methodology in order to maintain their company image have a tendency to manipulate the answers to be diplomatic.
- Respondents who are unwilling to provide the actual data have the chance of fabricating their replies.

2. Literature Review

Literature Review forms a critical section of any dissertation. This section consists of text which is used to explore the critical factors of existing knowledge in the specific topic of the dissertation (Levy & Ellis, 2006). Findings of significant studies are presented in this section which helps in enhancement of the understanding of the researcher. Existing work of notable importance are mentioned, and critical analysis of such are done, to identify the key factors which would help in the achievement of the dissertation's core objectives. Literature Review

is conducted on the basis of secondary data, and is a secondary mode of research (Kumar, 2005). The core aim of such a literature review is presenting the research with the notable knowledge and studies. Generally, in a dissertation the literature review is placed before the Research Proposal or methodology, however, alterations in the structure can be done as per the benefit of the researcher.

The Literature Review for this specific research is divided critically into systematic sections to promote clear understanding of the concepts and knowledge thus presented. It is broadly divided into three sections. These are the Conceptual Review, Empirical Review and lastly the Contextual Review.

2.1. Conceptual Review

2.1.1. Brand & Brand Identity

A brand is a mark, a name, a design, a symbol or a specific feature which helps in identification with the organizations specific products and goods and also helps in differentiating them from that of the competitors (Healey, 2008). The concept of branding originated from that of the practice of marking one's cattle with that of a hot iron rod. The key word of brand in fact originated from the word "brandr" of the Old Norse language which meant to burn. The oldest brand being known till date, is Chyawanprash, and is in use since the Vedic period of 9000 to 1000 years ago. It is a type of herbal paste which is made from different herbs and was invented by a Rishi named as Chywan. In Italy, branding was done through the use of watermarks which started from the 1200s (Clifton, 2009).

Brand identity has originated from the concept of brand, whose sole purpose is on providing identification to the specific organizations goods or services. The concept of brand identity originates from an organization, that is, an organization strives hard to create products or services with unique set of characteristics which help in differentiating it from the rest of the counterparts. Through this the organization aims at creating a separate identity. The brand

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identity depicts how an organization wants to create its perception in the market and in the minds of the consumers. The organization communicates its identity to the consumers through initiatives of branding and marketing. Brand is unique and so is its identity (Arvidsson, 2006). Ideally brand identity consists of the following aspects – the brand vision, the brand culture, the positioning, personality, relationships and lastly presentations.

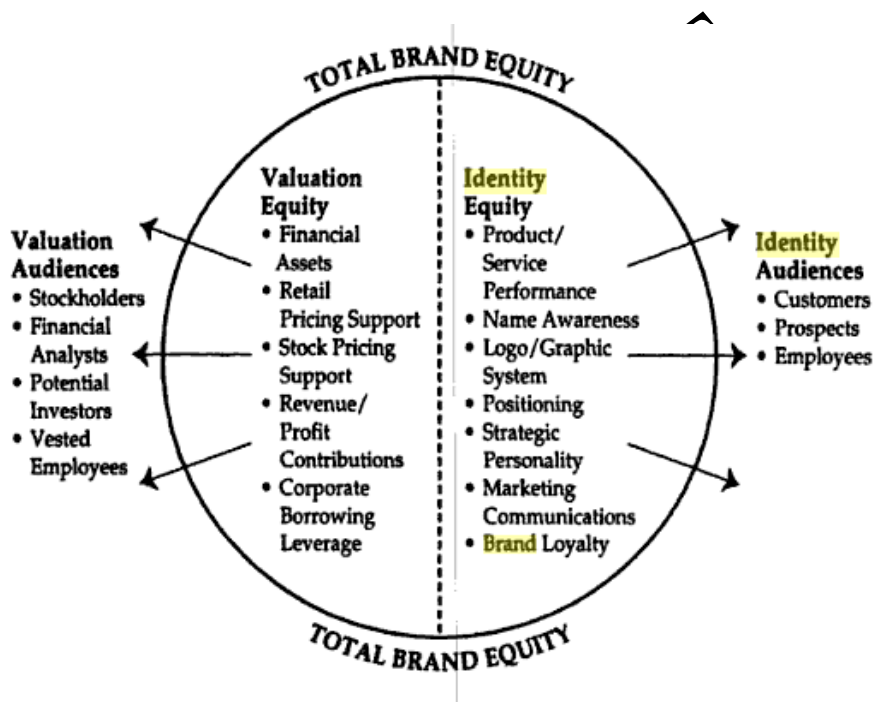
As per scholars, brand identity comprises of a number of associations both functional and mental with the brand of the organization (Nandan, 2005). Associations depict not only the reasons to purchase, but also help in provision of the differentiation as well as familiarity with the brand of the organization. Such associations need not only be pictorial, it can be of a signature tune, colours, logo, the tagline etc (Nandan, 2005).

Brand identity helps in providing a sense of direction to the organization, and helps in the achievement of its strategic objectives (Aggarwal, 2008). Such identity also helps in the provision of a purpose as well as the meaning of the brand. As per marketing experts, brand identity serves as one of the key drivers of brand equity. Brand identity can be successfully utilized to maximize the full brand strength. This can be achieved by a number of strategies- firstly, the scope of such brand identity should be made broad instead of narrow to maximize the strength of the brand; secondly, the brand push must be done in a strategic fashion, and should not be focused only on the tactical aspects; and thirdly, in order to maximize on the brand strength, the focus should be on that of the brand value creation in both internal as well as external context (Burmam, Jost-Benz, & Riley, 2009).

A number of brand identity traps are present which should be avoided at any cost, for the successful promotion of brand identity. Such traps are limiting in its approach and leads to ineffective brand strategies. The four brand identity traps are as follows- the trap of the brand

image, brand position, external perspective and also of product attribute (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000).

Concepts of brand identity are inherently associated with that of the brand equity. Brand equity is actually the total value of the brand and comprises of both the tangible as well as intangible assets of the brand. Brand identity is in fact a portion of the brand equity, and comprises of the perception of the brand in the minds of the market and consumers (Kapferer, 2008). The brand personality on the other hand is the external face of the specific brand. The brand essence is the core aspect of the brand of the organization and lastly the brand character deals with the constitution of the brand. Brand image depicts the personality of the specific brand (Arvidsson, 2006).



Source: (Arvidsson, 2006)

The graph above depicts the relationship between the brand equity and that of brand identity. For fashion industry, the concept of brand identity is even more important, as the core drivers of the fashion sector is done through brand association and brand perceptions (Floor, 2006).

Human elements play a core role in determining the success and the efficiency of fashion houses. Hence brand identity for the same is of crucial importance. For fashion retail organizations, similarly, creation of a strong brand identity is of equal importance. For organizations aiming to create a successful brand identity, they should carefully incorporate the essence of the products in their identity which would help in attracting the right consumers, and differentiating them from the rest of its counterparts (Kotler & Pfoertsch, 2010).

As fashion industry is driven by tough competition, the fashion retailers have understood the importance of creating an effective and relevant brand image in gaining a significant large market share. Understanding of the brand identity can help the organization in developing an efficient marketing program (Madhavaram, Badrinarayanan, & McDonald, 2005). There lacks a unanimity in the definition of brand image and identity.

2.1.2. Brand Positioning

As per scholars, there is no such service or product of any company which can exist by itself in the market irrespective of the perception of the consumers (Sengupta, 2005). In order for a specific product to function and exist, it needs to occupy a specific perceptive space in the minds of the consumers. This perception of the consumers is relatively subjective and is impacted by the personal values, beliefs, aspirations, experience, needs and lastly the environment. Every consumer builds a cognitive map of the world and environment surrounding him and such map is not an exact representation of the actual world around, it is a mere representative of the world as viewed and perceived by the individual (Zaltman, 2003). This however, serves as the basic thought behind the phenomenon of brand positioning. Brand positioning is concerned with the concept that each and every brand occupies a very specific point or rank in the mind of the individual consumer. This specific

point is determined and influenced by the consumer's image and perception of the brand, and also in relation to all the other operating in the market (Sengupta, 2005).

The distance of space between two specific brands in the mind of a consumer reflects the individual's perceptions of the similarity or the dissimilarity of the brand. As per Philip Kotler, marketing giant, the time when a key product concept is selected, it seems to give definition of the product space in which the product has to be positioned (Kotler & Keller, 2011). Hence, a drink meant for having at breakfast would automatically compete with the other breakfast items namely, the bacon and eggs, cereals, coffee etc. Hence positioning is completely concerned with mapping of an individual consumers total and specific product related perceptions (Grewal & Levy, 2011).

For an organization aiming to position its products in the market and in the minds of the consumers, it is crucial to create a specific niche in the market segment, and the niche segment must be carefully analyzed and a differential advantage would have to be created as according to their minds (Kotler & Pfoertsch, 2010). Brand positioning is the process through which, the organization can influence its customers on what it wants to obtain for them, and what exactly it wants to make a meaning to them.

Efforts of successful brand positioning are concerned in specifying and identifying the similarities and the dissimilarities with its counterparts, to ensure the correct brand identity and to create the appropriate brand image. In order for a marketing strategy to be successful, it is critical that first accurate brand positioning be done (McDonald, Chenatony, & Harris, 2001). However, a number of branding errors are present which must be undertaken with great care, to avoid marketing blunders. Such errors are as follows;

Under Positioning: Here in this scenario, the consumers do not have a clear picture of the brand and as a result builds fuzzy and unclear perceptual maps.

Over Positioning: In this type of situation, the organization provides too detail of the brand position, and as a result the brand becomes too limited as per the consumers perception.

Confused positioning: As per this scenario, the brand positioning is not undertaken accurately giving rise to confused positioning, where consumers cannot associate a single characteristic to the brand (Temporal, 2011).

Double Positioning- this is the situation, which fails to deliver its messages to the consumers and the latter do not accept the claims of such s brand.

2.1.3. Brand Management

Brand management starts with the very idea generation and knowledge collection of the term brand. It comprises of a number of stages, which are first conceptualizing the promise associated with the brand, then developing such a promise, making and actually constructing such a promise and lastly, maintaining the promise thus formed (Graham, 2008). These procedures make up the definition of the brand, the positioning aspect of the brand, and finally delivering and implementing the promise (Temporal, 2011).

Brand management includes overseeing the tangible and intangible features of brand. In case of product brands, the tangibles include the product itself and its associated aspects of price, packaging, etc. While in the case of many service brands, the tangibles comprise the customers' familiarity. The intangibles include emotional links with the product / service.

Branding is the process of assembling the different marketing mix standard into a whole so as to give one an identity. It is nothing but capturing your customers mind with your brand name. It gives an image of a knowledgeable, vast and steadfast business (Franzen & Moriarty, 2008).

It is all about capturing the niche market for the organizations product or service and about creating a core confidence in the current and prospective customers' minds that you are the unique solution to their problem (Franzen & Moriarty, 2008).

The aim of branding is to convey brand message vividly, create customer loyalty, persuade the buyer for the product, and establish an emotional connectivity with the customers.

Branding forms customer perceptions about the product. It should raise customer expectations about the product. The primary aim of branding is to create differentiation (Temporal, 2011).

Strong brands reduce customers' supposed financial, social and safety risks in buying goods/services. The customers can better imagine the intangible goods with the help of brand name. Strong brand organizations have a high market share. The brand should be given good support so that it can sustain itself in long run. It is essential to manage all brands and build brand equity over a period of time (McGhee, 2012).

All companies operating in the market have brand, but some of these companies do not consciously adopt measures to effectively manage them. As per scholars, the Integrated Brand Model gives the companies a complete knowledge or the tools for identifying and building strong brands which successfully increases and optimizes the revenue generation potential of these companies (Clifton, 2009). The tools as per the model are the organization and brand drivers. These tools allow a specific company to build strong customer relationships and an effective and loyal customer base. These tools successfully bring consciousness to the brands and then propel their growth towards development in the future. These tools apply to what the company and their employees believe in, till what they choose to focus on, their mode of acting etc, the products and services which will be determined to develop and lastly the modes of communication externally (Clifton, 2009). Organization

drivers consist of the mission and vision, the values of the organization, and the stories which successfully build the base for any brand which is created by a specific organization and includes the entire host of brands from the corporate brands to forming specific individual product brands. The brand drivers consist of the aspects namely, the principles, the personality and lastly the associations. These are however, specific and differ from the corporate to the product brands, and also within other product brands in a specific organization (Floor, 2006).

Organization Drivers: Vision and Mission, Organization Values and Stories

Brand Drivers: These are Principles, Personality and Associations.

A number of factors are present which are absolutely crucial for the process of successful brand management of any organization. These are as follows;

- If an organization intends to make its brand work for a longer period of time, it must consist of all the action drivers as well as communications should be driven successfully by the brands (Floor, 2006).
- The organization must value its customers the most, and it should believe in the fact that the only key aspect of maintaining long term revenue generation is that it must be able to retain its existing customers over a long run (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2012).
- The organization management plays a key role in driving brand management, and when an organization moves from the traditional model to the brand management model, it should ideally be managed by the top management and the leaders, and the latter play a central role, in the process of revealing such brands, and they work proactively rather than being handed to them by the consultant or the brand management team (Graham, 2008).

- Ideally the organization in order to successfully conduct the brand management should develop and train a core group of individuals who spearhead the entire project, and has individuals in well defined roles in the brand management team. Such a team would be completely dedicated in building up a brand and successfully managing the brand, and on times of crises can react to such problematic situations in a short time. The team should ideally consist of subject matter experts, managerial staff, creative personnel etc (Aggarwal, 2008).
- Lastly, for an organization intending to be profitable and successful for a longer time period, their brand management initiatives require both the organization drivers and the brand drivers to work in tandem, and such aspects should be easier for the employees too use.

Often it is observed that companies assume that since they are profitable in the present period, they will maintain their profitability in the coming future too. However, this is a gross mistake from the point of the organizations. Today's business world is extremely dynamic and is continuously changing (Aggarwal, 2008). As per experts, the only stable factor which is characterizing the business of today is the constant change. Hence, the organizations which are profitable in the present days, is very unlikely to maintain their profitability if they do not change their mode of operations. The organization in order to maintain their profitability must be flexible and adaptable to the external changes which are dominating the market. For organizations operating in the fields of technology and other changing markets, the scenario is of, that the initial entrants have been successful once they offered a product which was functional and was reasonably priced. Reliability was another factor which worked for these companies. However, it was soon analyzed that with the growth of the market, a number of companies followed suit with the similar products and at lower prices. This disturbed the revenue generation and profitability of the organizations (Svenson, 2006).

At this juncture of decision making, most companies make fatal mistakes. When the market becomes highly competitive, the company faces two choices, one either to strengthen their brands and assume the position of the market leader or compete with other organizations on pricing strategies and become a commodity in the market. Companies, who anticipate this situation, create a very strong brand image from beforehand so that they do not have to undergo the risk of turning their brand into the commodity. These organizations can successfully maintain their market share and even a price premium in a market where all the products are almost equal. Hence the brand is the only differentiation point, which is getting the company its desired profitability (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000).

There is a thought process where only exciting and interesting products need attention and their brands need to be developed (Moore & Fairhurst, 2003), and the products which are commonplace and basic commodity type need no brand differentiation and brand hooks. Things like, electricity, salt, voltage meters etc are products which do not need any major vast brand differentiation. However, a number of research studies have shown that, any and every product benefits vastly through the efforts of branding. In the present electronic age, focusing on the brand and its differentiation serves as an important tool. A number of organizations have conducted the brand work, as an adjunct to the corporate identity and advertising campaign. If one's company has conducted a number of branding work in the past, they will be in the right position to come up with factors which can serve as a guideline for organizations intending to opt for organization wide branding practices (Dhar, 2007);

- All the functions and aspects of the organization must be working under a common strategy which also works for the specific brand management.
- The organization must maintain a consistent tone and business style to the general external communications
- The organization must have a strong corporate culture

- The employees of the organization must be aware of the brand principle, the company mission, the organization values and the association of the house of brands under the organization.
- The company actions must be in alignment with that of the company messages.
- All the organizations external messages and communication aspects must be in tandem and in consistency with that of the brand.
- The marketing strategies and initiatives should be all strung together, and distinctive, so that a customer can recognize the brand by observing any other detached marketing communication piece. Logo development must be structured in a relevant fashion.
- The product names should be consistent and should be well understood by the market (Aggarwal, 2008).

2.2. Empirical Review

This specific section of the Literature Review is concerned with a number of empirical studies conducted by scholars over time (Salkind, 2010) on the different concepts of brand loyalty, brand consciousness, brand positioning, that is in other words several initiatives of branding. The studies have been mentioned taking reference from leading academic journals, newspapers, books, articles etc. This section is of crucial importance for students of business management and marketing function as a clear idea on the history and literature of the very concept of branding can be understood through this (Salkind, 2010).

A number of leading studies have been conducted by scholars of all time. Brands and its very role have been explored by researchers for ages. As per Kotler, in 1997, one of the most crucial aspects of brand is its impact on the brand choice of the consumers and how it determines the purchasing consideration of the consumers (Kotler & Keller, 2011). This specific role is further explored by the researchers Erdem & Swait. They conducted their

empirical study to test the very specific mechanism through which brands impact the choice of consumers and the consideration, through the mechanism of brand credibility (Erdem & Swait, 2004). As per the study, brand credibility functions through two specific elements; namely, the expertise as well as the trustworthiness associated with the brand. This brand credibility function directly has an impact on the choice of brands and the consideration all across a number of product categories which vary in the potential uncertainty as well as the cost and perceived risk of consumption. As per the scholars it was found that brand credibility plays a direct role in enhancing the very probability of brand inclusion in the consideration (Erdem & Swait, 2004). After the study was conducted, from the findings it was also concluded that, the trustworthiness quotient of the product have a more impact on the consumer choice rather than the expertise quotient of brand credibility (Erdem & Swait, 2004).

Brand credibility is an important factor which impacts consumer buying (Aggarwal, 2008). In a typical market, where a large number of brands are present and a large number of categories of products are presented to the consumers, it is bound to happen that a typical consumer would react differently to the different categories of brands. This specific attribute of branding is studied by two eminent scholars Ghosh & Lowengart in their research on the perceptual positioning of the different categories of brands in a typical target market (Ghosh & Lowengart, 2001). The research was held on the Israeli market, where a large number of international, private and national brands are in existence simultaneously. In such a typical situation it is crucial for the marketers of leading organizations to clearly understand the consumers' perceptions of these different brands. Such an understanding will enable them to understand and gauge the consumer needs and wants, and would thus ensure them in proper positioning of their own brand in the backdrop of the large number of brands already operating in the market (Ghosh & Lowengart, 2001). Correct positioning of their own brand

would help in the differentiating aspect in terms of price, quality, prestige, perceived benefits etc (Bridson & Evans, 2004). The concept of such positioning becomes very critical when a large number of choices is present to the consumers and international brands also play in the picture. Data was obtained from the Israel market on the perceptions of the consumer brands on the category of non durable products. The data were empirically analyzed through both the dis-aggregate and aggregate modes of the market. Segmentation schemes were also applied to the brand positioning initiatives. As per the findings, it was understood that brand positioning is of crucial importance and is a necessary task for the marketing division of any company, as with such brand positioning, the sales of the product and revenue generation are directly associated (Ghosh & Lowengart, 2001).

As globalization and internationalization are key concepts in almost every organizations mind, the number of foreign brands' presence and operation in any specific market are on a every increasing rise (Savall, 2003). As a result of which, competition between such foreign, the national and domestic brands have become very dynamic and complicated. Foreign brands are in direct competition with that of the domestic brands in global markets of the world. As per the scholars, Kim & Chung, two separate elements were identified as the major variables which directly impact the success and operation of the organization and their brands in global markets namely, United States etc. These two elements are – the brand popularity as well as the country image of the brands (Kim & Chung, 1997). Kim and Chung in their research have identified these two variables and conducted the study based on how such brand popularity as well as the country image of the origin of the brands, have a direct impact on the market share of such brands. As per the findings, it could be identified that, a number of country specific tangible and intangible benefits are associated with each brand and from which country they are hailing from. It was found that without the country facts, a competitive analysis of such brands were misleading. Namely, they conducted the study in

the automobile sector of United States. It was found that the country specific assets which were associated with the brands from Japan and United States had a direct influence on the consumer buying pattern and the perceived value of such products (Kim & Chung, 1997). The country specific intangible assets perform in a different fashion for Japan than United States, as the perceived image of the country are specifically different in the consumers' minds. Advertising and the brand popularity were identified as factors which impacted both the Japanese and US brands in the similar fashion. However, brand popularity was determined as the single strongest factor for influencing the market share in the time frame of both short term as well as long term. The foreign direct investments of the Japanese organizations in the target country of United States had also a significant impact on the market share, however, for a very short period of time (Kim & Chung, 1997).

Numerous studies have been carried out on the brand positioning and the perceptions of the brands in the consumers mind. A critical study was carried out in 1989 by scholars Sujan & Bettman, on the effects of the brand positioning and how it impacts the consumer perceptions of the brands. The scholars divided the entire research in four specific sub studies, and conducted each study separately (Sujan & Bettman, 1989). The results from all the four studies depict that, the consumers perception of the brand, is directed influenced by how much the brand is differentiated from the rest of the brands present in the specific product category. Consumer perceptions that a brand is unique and absolutely different from that of the other brands present in the similar segment, results in creation of a niche position for the former brand, whereas at the same time, where a brand is only moderately differentiated from the rest of the brands present in the category, resulted in creation of a differentiated position of the brand in the consumers mind (Sujan & Bettman, 1989). Such perceptions of differentiation and discrepancy is determined by two factors- they are, the extent of discrepancy or differentiation from the rest of the brands and how information of such

differentiation are provided to the consumers whether in a single advertisement or divided across a number of advertisement for the specific product. The effects associated with the niche position than that of the differentiated position have been witnesses to be further strong with time. The niche compared to the differentiated position of a brand, is validated by the sorting aspect (Sujan & Bettman, 1989). Hence, as per the study, it is understandable that marketers would want to differentiate its product by a very specific brand positioning to maintain its competitive edge and the uniqueness over time (Sujan & Bettman, 1989).

From the studies mentioned earlier, the concept of brand image is given importance as it was known to have a direct impact on the market share of the specific brand (Shocker, Seivastava, & Ruekert, 1994). Studies have been carried out on the concepts of developing an effective brand image and how such is helpful for the generation of revenue and popularity for the brand (Kinra, 2006). As per the study by Chen Jie, brand image is important as it successfully influences the consumers' perception associated with the brand (Jie, 2003). Brand image from the research was known to be the primary driver for the brand equity. Brand image is given importance by the scholar, as from the study conducted; it was found that the success of the marketing efforts depended critically on the brand image of the product. It is important that organizations have a mode of measurement of such brand image, and it is possible for such measurement to take place with the help of the brand identity mode of reference. Chen Jie conducted the study on the brand image of the two leading toothpaste brands, and by thorough comparison, it was understood, that measuring efforts of brand image armed the organizations' marketing division with the strategic tool to improve their marketing efforts and also by analyzing the present marketing status (Jie, 2003).

Brand equity denotes the value associated with a specific brand. Such value is the perceived value associated in the minds of the consumer (Gordon, Calantone, & Benedetto, 1993).

Brand equity is crucial for the success of any brand in the consumer market. Gordon et al had

conducted a thorough study on the brand equity of products, through an extensive exploratory study. As per the scholars, the entire concept of brand equity was studied starting from the very initial stages to the conclusion (Gordon, Calantone, & Benedetto, 1993). As per the exploratory study conducted by the scholars, the first stage of building brand equity is the conception of the brand in the minds of the companies and the simultaneous birth of the brand; next, the second stage is in the creation of such brand awareness in the target market and amongst the potential customer base as well as creating the brand associations; on the third stage, the perceptions of the consumer associated with the brand are build which comprises of both the value as well as the quality perceptions; with the completion of the third stage, efforts are now taken to initiate brand loyalty and develop a strong base of customers who would be loyal to the specific brand; lastly, with the development of the brand loyalty, the brand extensions can be launched which will significantly reinstate the brand loyalty. This is the process by which brand equity is development of a specific product (Gordon, Calantone, & Benedetto, 1993). The authors had included an empirical study with the same and successfully explored, identified and analyzed the birth, evolution, the existence and the importance of the concept of brand equity for specific business-to-business or B2B markets. This specific study was given importance, as it was extremely helpful for the business managers to understand the extensibility of the brand equity and why it is crucial for the success of any product (Gordon, Calantone, & Benedetto, 1993).

Another leading study on the brand equity and how it impacts the consumer behaviour was conducted by scholars Pappu, Quester and Cooksey. The main purpose of the research was to understand the concepts of brand equity and on improving the instrument of measurement of brand equity from the consumer's point of view (Pappu, Quester, & Cooksey, 2005).

Consumer based brand equity measurement techniques are plagued by a number of limitations, and hence it was the aim of the researchers to device a method which will

significantly eliminate the core limitations of such consumer based brand equity measurement namely, the lacking of distinctions between the various aspects of brand awareness and that of associations of brands, the use of discriminate as well as non-discriminate modes of indicators in the scales designed for brand equity measurement etc (Pappu, Quester, & Cooksey, 2005). The researchers adopted an extant research design, and constructed the tool to effectively conduct the measurement of brand equity from the consumers view point and included the different measures of brand personality. A number of different items were utilized to measure the brand associations. The sample population was adopted from a state capital city of Australia. Factor analysis was performed to effectively measure consumer brand equity of a number of product categories of six specific brands. A model consisting of specific four dimensions were constructed and based on the findings the two specific aspects of brand equity were found to be the brand awareness and brand associations (Pappu, Quester, & Cooksey, 2005). It was found that the model successfully can be measure the consumer based brand equity by taking in consideration all the variables (Pappu, Quester, & Cooksey, 2005). As per the scholars, it was identified that measuring such consumer based brand equity resulted in accurate depiction of the perceived value of the brands and resulted in an efficient revenue generation for the specific product.

As per the scholars Madhavaram, Badrinarayanan and McDonald, a number of factors are important for determining the success of the strategy of brand equity for a specific organization. They are the brand identity and the integrated marketing communications that is the IMC initiatives. As per the researchers, IMC plays a crucial role in creation of and maintenance of the brand equity and the perceived value in the minds of the consumers and the brand identity helps in the entire process of informing, monitoring and assisting to structure, formulate and implement the organizations core IMC strategy (Madhavaram, Badrinarayanan, & McDonald, 2005).

Brand personality is a crucial element for the success of a fashion retail organization (Svenson, 2006). Studies have been carried out on different aspects of brand personality. A notable research was conducted by Freling & Forbes on the effect of brand personality. The core purpose of the research was conducting a thorough exploratory research on the concept of the brand personality effect and providing empirical support for the same (Freling & Forbes, 2005). Brand personality support is actually the direct impact which the brand personality experience on the different consumer driven results (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). The researchers adopted a number of hypotheses testing and implemented an experimental research design. The number of subjects was kept 192. As per the findings, it could be understood that, all the hypotheses which were constructed could be proved successfully based on the empirical support. As per the researchers, it was understood that the brand personality has a directly proportional influence on that of the evaluations of the product. The number of subjects, who are subjected to the personality of a specific brand, will experience a significantly higher number of brand associations. Also these subjects would experience a greater proportion of the brand associations and also a large section of the brand associations of the congruent brands (Freling & Forbes, 2005). Lastly, subjects exposed to that of the brands personality will also experience a higher amount of the strong brand associations. Hence, this specific research has a number of practical implications. The concepts of brand personality and how it impacts that of the consumer buying pattern can be well established. Effective brand personality results in more sales and revenue generation for the organization (Freling & Forbes, 2005). The finding of this research was in tandem with that of the literature present on the brand personality. As per the researchers, to effectively impact the consumer behaviour and consumer buying, brand personality should be effectively studied by the marketing team of any company (Freling & Forbes, 2005).

2.3. Contextual Review

This specific section of the Literature Review deals with the number of surveys and researches which have been conducted on the impact of brand positioning and brand differentiation strategies (Kamp, Leidelmeijer, Marsman, & de Hollander, 2003). The efforts of different fashion retailers and houses have been explored through the different researches carried on by scholars and the impact on their customer generation, maintenance of customer base and revenue earning potential is analyzed. As is done for the rest of the literature review, this specific section is also conducted after undertaking thorough referencing from different academic journals, newspapers, articles, reports and books. A number of leading researches in the specific field have been mentioned as follows;

The industry of fashion retail for long had been criticized for its severe lacking of differentiation between the products offered by the retailers (Svenson, 2006). As per scholars Birtwistle and Freathy, this can be attributed to the reasons of standardization of the fashion retail as well as the degree of concentration of the market across the different regions and stores (Birtwistle & Freathy, 1998). Apart from this, the latest technological inventions in the field of fashion retailers have enabled the same to copy the competitor advantage and their offer with very less difficulty as per Fernie et al (Fernie, Moore, Lawrie, & Hallsworth, 1997). Hence, the core challenge for a fashion retailer is to effectively differentiate its product and create a unique brand image for the same.

As per Davies, in 1992, he established a number of factors which should be conducted by a fashion retailer to experience profitability – these are the ability of differentiation, the commanding a specific price premium, having a specific existence which is different from the existence of the company and lastly, having the ability to provide a value to the consumers (Davies, 1992). These four factors have been named as the most important criteria as per the scholar to maintain a profitability and a large consumer base.

As per the study conducted by Wigley, Moore & Britwistle, the success factors which are crucial have been identified for the success of the internationalization efforts of any fashion retailer (Wigley, Moore, & Birtwistle, 2005). The core purpose of this research paper was to explore the different factors which are fundamental to the success of the international retailer of fashion and identification of methods by which such an internationalization effort can be effectively controlled by the retailer. For the purpose of the study, the scholars had selected, qualitative mode of research and did their entire study on two leading international retail house of fashion (Wigley, Moore, & Birtwistle, 2005). The researchers used interview technique as well as secondary research through media reports and company data. As per the findings, it was identified that, the brand management, product development and brand and product differentiation strategies are the most critical for the success of international fashion retailers (Wigley, Moore, & Birtwistle, 2005). However, as per the experts, the core limitation of this research was the lack of use of quantitative methods. The utility of this research lies in the fact that it helps in identification of the elements which can be controlled effectively by the fashion retailers to improve its revenue generation and profitability in a number of international markets (Wigley, Moore, & Birtwistle, 2005).

Studies on brand positioning and the efforts of the marketers of fashion retails have been conducted for the last few decades. Understanding the nuances of marketing dynamics and how simple efforts taken by the fashion houses create a vast difference in the consumer perception has been widely studied. As per experts Porter & Claycomb, the brand recognition efforts and strategies have been thoroughly analyzed in order to establish their direct influence on the image of the retail stores (Porter & Claycomb, 1997). Such image is of crucial importance in case of fashion industry and fashion retail, and often the image becomes the sole deciding factor for a consumer in making his purchases. The specific relationships between the different brand characteristics of a fashion house with that of the

awareness level of the consumers and the brand image were explored in the study. As per the experts, it was concluded that, for a fashion retail company to create a favourable image in the minds of the consumers, need to house a large number of specific brands. The store image of the retailers directly depends on the mix of the merchandise thus kept. Such high variety merchandising mix results in a favourable brand awareness, and in creating a strong brand image (Porter & Claycomb, 1997).

As per expert Lea-Greenwood, visual merchandizing in case of fashion retail is of significant importance. In the study conducted by the scholar, visual merchandizing have been studied and critically analyzed for the UK fashion retail segment (Lea-Greenwood, 1998). From the study it was understood, that the efforts of visual merchandizing, and centralisation of the creative process has a number of benefits- firstly, it helps in communicating a strong brand image to the consumers. Next it helps the brand differentiate significantly from the rest of the counterparts; thirdly, the brand helps in the integration of the efforts of promotion all across the brand and lastly, helps in facilitating the entire process by the utilization of technology (Lea-Greenwood, 1998).

A number of studies have been conducted on the impact of different marketing concepts on the fashion retail industry (Martinez & Pina, 2003). One such example is a leading study was conducted by scholars Sheridan, Moore and Nobbs, where the main purpose of the paper was to explore the concepts of category management and then reviewing of the contributions of the category management concept in the fashion sector of the United Kingdom (Sheridan, Moore, & Nobbs, 2006). In the same paper, an evaluation was conducted on the application and utilization of the category management initiatives in the UK fashion industry. Qualitative research was adopted for the purpose and the research instrument selected was that of the exploratory case study mode. As per the findings it was established that category management as a concept is quite limited in its entire application and approach and hence its

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usage for the purpose of the fashion industry is quite restricted. As per the scholars, leading fashion retailers successfully adopted a number of collaborative structures with the aim of implementing the CM initiative as the latter is significantly associated with the development of the orientation of fast fashion (Sheridan, Moore, & Nobbs, 2006). The core limitation of the research was that the use of exploratory studies does not allow the findings to be generalized and implemented to the fashion industry of other nations.

A distinctive study had been carried out by researchers Bridson and Evans to develop a model effectively evaluating the concept of brand orientation and how any retailer's efforts of brand orientation fashion, assist in offering a higher degree of service over its competitors (Bridson & Evans, 2004). The researchers carried out the research on the basis of construct formation. Through this research, the concepts of entire brand orientation including its conceptualization stage and the operational stages have been well analyzed. A number of specific characteristics of such brand orientation had been utilized by the researchers – these are, the distinctiveness, the value adding capability, the symbolic capability and lastly the functionality (Bridson & Evans, 2004). As per the results obtained it was understood that a direct relationship exists between that of the brand orientation and that of competitive advantage of a specific fashion retailer. More, a fashion retailer is brand oriented and does branding initiatives based on the above mentioned four specific criteria more advantage he is likely to experience over his competitors (Bridson & Evans, 2004). It was also understood that such brand orientation efforts also resulted in a higher degree of brand differentiation and customer recollection.

With the advent of internet, retailing the apparel and accessories online became an attractive business option, and an attractive way of reaching a bigger section of the customer by the existing retail giants. As per experts, in the initial days of online retail fashion, a number of doubts were associated with the e-retailers (Ailawadi, 2004). As apparel and accessories are

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elements which customers need to touch and try on, apart from the very social experience associated with the concept of shopping, it was felt that the e-retailing initiatives would not be successful. However, this was not experienced in reality. The volume of the apparel and accessories like shoes which were sold through internet gradually grew in volume and since 2000, the volume of the fashion goods have been experienced a consistent rise in sales. Pure online retailers namely, GreatUniversal.com, Littlewoodsdirect.com started facing competition from the e-presence of the brick and mortar stores (Rowley, 2009). In the present day, a large number of studies have been conducted on the brand positioning through ecommerce of lead retailers. A significant study in the similar field is conducted by Jennifer Rowley. As per the scholar, the main purpose of the study was to conduct an exploratory research on the concept of online branding, and how the online media is used by these retail giants to promote their brands, and maintain their competitive advantage (Rowley, 2009). The research was conducted on a number of top UK fashion retailers. The scholar took resort to content analysis, and performed a thorough evaluation of the websites of the leading fashion houses and the large retailers having a prominent presence in the fashion retail of apparel. Along with the lead retail houses, a number of super market chains having an important presence in apparel industry were also analyzed. Further an evaluation was conducted to measure the extent to which these retailers were utilizing the website in order to provide a host of online services and information. Each of their branding strategies was identified, along with the brand identity efforts, brand presence and specific methods of brand relationships. The study concluded that, most of these non value retailers of fashion, offer a wide range of services as well as brand engagement and experience services through their websites. All the retailers of fashion have successfully achieved consistency in the visual identity between all the channels as well as their online channel of product offering etc. They have successfully utilized the online channel to effectively communicate the brand values.

However, an important finding was that such online channels have failed to build a strong brand relationship. A number of well developed initiatives have been identified by the scholar, but overall, a large untapped potential exists in the specific segment. It was clearly understood, that for a fashion retailer to occupy a specific niche in the minds of the consumers, and to attract the consumer and convert in to a purchase, strong brand positioning and brand image is needed. In a brick and mortar store, the consumer has the chance of visiting a number of brands, making an association with them, trying them on and finally making the purchase. In an online channel, a typical consumer spends a few seconds on every clothing item. Therefore, the only differentiating factor which successfully converts the few seconds in a purchase is the brand of the apparel and the associated benefits considered by the consumer to possess once he or she makes the purchase. There for an e-retailer of apparel and accessories, branding initiatives are of even more importance.

2.3.1. Internationalization of Fashion Retailers

For decades, research has been carried out on the internationalization factors of fashion retailers. Such internationalization studies have been based on the motives of internationalization, specific company experience, the content and the direction of the globalization initiatives etc. However, a specific section of the internationalization literature lacked in the ideal entry modes for a fashion retailer in a global market. Doherty, addressed the very specific lag of literature, and based her research on the various factors which effect an international retail house's market entry strategy and mode (Doherty, 2000). As per the scholar it was understood that the specific entry mode strategy for any retailer must be constructed on the basis of the following elements – historical, financial, experiential, opportunistic, organization specific and lastly strategic factors. No specific mode of foreign market entry should be considered as the benchmark and adopted by all the fashion retailers who intend to enter a specific region (Doherty, 2000).

However, researches are present in the academic literature by scholars who have worked on specific entry modes of fashion retailers and how such modes are advantageous and more beneficial over its counterparts. Namely, the study conducted by Moore, Doherty & Doyle, was based on exploring and investigating the effectiveness of flagship stores as an instrument of market entry for a fashion retailer operating in the luxury fashion segment (Moore, Doherty, & Doyle, 2010). The researchers employed a qualitative research methodology in the form of an interpretive research mode. They conducted semi structured interviews, with the experts of high fashion. In total, a number of 12 luxury fashion retailers were interviewed for the purpose of the study. As per the findings, a number of characteristics were mentioned for a fashion retailer's flagship store. As per the scholars it was understood that such flagship stores dealing with the luxury fashion goods represent a very strategic approach to the market entry (Moore, Doherty, & Doyle, 2010). Such a market entry helps in developing the distribution network, enhancing the customer base and in creating brand distinctiveness in the foreign market. The pros and cons of the flagship as well as the wholesalers of fashion goods have been highlighted in this study. It has been understood that such flagship stores, help in reinforcing and informing about the retailer's luxury status to the foreign market and helps in creating a strong relationship not only with the consumers but also with the fashion media as well as the distribution partners (Jackson & Shaw, 2000).

As already mentioned a number of studies have been carried out on the different facets of globalization initiatives adopted by fashion retail industry. A number of problems and challenges are associated with that of the internationalization initiatives adopted by a fashion retailer. As per scholars, with any internationalization initiative, problems namely, the poor infrastructure of the target market, the non conducive environmental conditions, the regulatory challenges etc have been carried out (Utting, 2002). A specific study explores however, the conflicts which can arise from the different partnerships which are formed for

the internationalization approach of any fashion retailer. As per Moore et al, a number of problems arise from the different partnerships and relationships which a fashion retailer has to undertake in order for it to conduct a successful internationalization (Moore, Birtwistle, & Burt, Channel Power, Conflict and Conflict Resolution in International Fashion Retailing, 2004). The specific study was based on ten fashion retail giants in the global context, and consist of their in depth analyses. It was understood that the relationships face significant stress due to the dis-alignment of strategies and objectives, the different perceptual altercations, the empowerment and decision making criteria etc (Moore, Birtwistle, & Burt, 2004).

A groundbreaking study on internationalization of fashion retail has been carried out by the scholars Moore, Fernie & Burt. Their entire research paper was based on three different elements of internationalization, each of which is clearly analyzed by them. These different elements are – the structure and the composition of the international market of fashion retailers; the growth strategies associated with the internationalization of the fashion retailers and lastly, the specifications of marketing of the brand, in terms of the product promotions, flagship stores or other market entry modes, product ranges etc. the research was conducted on the basis of three stages, each stage dedicated to analyzing a specific aspect of the research (Moore, Fernie, & Burt, 2000).

In the very first stage of understanding the structure of the international fashion retail, the scholars gave a number of characteristics to it – firstly, retailers must be working for over two years in the fashion design business, they must have an international profile and conduct fashion shows, they must market their own merchandize with their own labels and lastly, they should be marketing such merchandise either through the designers outlets or with other outlets in more than two countries. As per the study conducted in 2000, maximum of such international fashion retailers hail from France, closely being followed by United Kingdom

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and then Italy. In the second stage of the research, it was found out that the two elements are associated with a fashion retailer's business expansion strategies. The first is that these international fashion retailers, involvement in foreign markets is extensive in case of wholesale distribution as well as retail outlets. Namely, a number of four leading international brands have been mentioned, and along with it their number of wholesale markets as well as operating markets has been identified. For Gucci, the number of wholesale markets is as high as 87 and the number of operating markets is a mere 34. The second element which was identified through the help of this research was the fact that, the expansion and the target markets of these retailers were mainly based on the nations of South East Asia, United States and Northern Europe. However, such markets are popular due to their cultural similarity and geographical proximity. The market conditions of these developed nations are high, and there is a strong demand for the fashion items. However, presently, these international fashion retailers are aiming at developing and fast growing nations namely, India and China, which have a very wide population base and a significant amount of disposable income in its economy.

The third section of the research dealt with the ideal market entry strategies of such internationalization attempts made by a fashion retailer. It was identified by the scholars, that for a fashion retailer to enter a target market in a foreign country, they need to first segment the target market in a number of modes. A number of methods can be undertaken for a foreign entry – first, a wholesaling can be adopted which will successfully serve as a preliminary mode of foreign entry (Moore, Fernie, & Burt, 2000). The products can be the ready to wear items and the couture collections. In the next stage, the fashion retailer can open the flagship stores in the major locations of the target market or the target cities of the foreign country. Couture and Ready to wear items can be sold through such flagship stores which will help in generating a brand awareness and distinctiveness at the same time. In the

third stage, these retailers can open diffusion brand flagship stores in the main city of the target country and lastly opening of diffusion stores in the leading locations of the target country. Through this process of market development, the risk can be averted and a gradual customer base can be formed (Moore, Fernie, & Burt, 2000).

3. Research Methodology

Research can be defined as the logical as well as systematic search of knowledge and it is the process which consists of a systematic search of accurate and relevant information of any specific topic (Vakkari, Pennanen, & Serola, 2003). Research can also be defined as being an academic activity and is typically concerned with stages of problem identification, formulation of the hypothesis and the alternate hypothesis; deciding on the sample population of the dissertation; undertaking a very systematic logical and accurate collection of data, recording and evaluating the same; analyzing the findings and inferring the whole procedure and deducing a set of recommendations. Lastly, the research methodology tests the conclusions of the dissertation to see whether they effectively fit the hypothesis constructed at the very start of the research methodology (Kothari, 2008).

3.1. Research Hypothesis

This is perhaps the most critical section of the research paper, and is solely responsible for outcome of the research methodology. Hypothesis construction is done with great accuracy and clear understanding of the topic. Hypothesis provides a general outline of the entire research by adopting two contradictory statements both being relevant to the research and the specific topic. Generally, hypothesis is the proposed explanation or the solution for the occurrence of a specific phenomenon. It ideally consists of two contradictory statements which are relevant to the topic of the research paper. These statements are known as the Null Hypothesis and Alternate Hypothesis.

The null hypothesis is the statement, which is undertaken as the fact of the entire research paper. It is also the assumed solution of the problem statement mentioned at the very start of this dissertation (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorensen, 2009). Alternate hypothesis denotes the exact opposite sentiment to that of hypothesis. The alternate hypothesis is proposed to be proven or rejected in the research paper (Babbie, 2009). The core purpose and aim of the research paper is to identify and analyze the present brand positioning and management tactics of leading fashion retailers, and finally analyzing the brand positioning of international retailers providing products of casual and formal wear of men.

For a firm entering a foreign market and operating in the fashion retail segment, it is crucial for it to undergo efficient brand management and position their products of male fashion in the right segment of the customer base. The challenges of such foreign entry, maintenance of competitive advantage, conducting and maintaining their brand identity, would all be covered by this specific dissertation.

The null and the alternate hypothesis are as follows;

Null Hypothesis (Ho) – International retailers do not conduct extensive brand positioning for products in Male Casual and Formal Wear.

Alternative Hypothesis (Ha) - International fashion retailers do conduct extensive brand positioning for its male casual and formal wear.

The hypothesis mentioned as above would be proven by deploying the relevant research methodology, as mentioned in the following sections. For the purpose of this specific dissertation, the research characteristics and the specifications namely, the nature of the study, the sampling procedure, designing the research instruments, the data collection mode and finally analysis all are mentioned in detail in the following sections. The testing of

hypothesis would be conducted by deployment of the research methodology as per the mentioned specifications, and on the basis of the data and information generated, analysis and interpretation of the data would be done. Both sources of data, primary as well as secondary would help in reaching the hypothesis and on successfully meeting the objectives of the research (Rubin, 2008).

3.2. Nature & Methodology of Study

The nature and the methodology of the study are completely dependent on the research design choices. This is perhaps one of the most crucial sections of a research procedure and is absolutely critical for the entire success of the research. Research design depicts the basic framework denoting the varied aspects of the core approach to be adopted by the researchers. Namely, the sample population, the questions, the data collection procedure, the tool for analysis etc are all determined by the research design. In other words, the research design serves as the basic blueprint for the entire research (Kothari, 2008).

For the purpose of the research paper, a flexible approach and a flexible research design is adopted which is a type of mixed research methodology. Mixed research methodology is selected as it successfully helps the researchers derive the maximum information in an effective and efficient manner. The mixed method methodology consists of the use of both quantitative research methodology as well as qualitative research methodology. The quantitative research methodology helps the researcher to obtain raw facts and data from the sample solution, and also in trying to gauge the general thinking and perception level of the target market of consumers. Qualitative research methodology helps in facilitating the researcher to unearth the various cognitive and information from the sample population. The qualitative research methodology adds to the flexibility of a research study enabling data collection from the subjects without any boundaries as is created in the quantitative methods. Quantitative methodology adds to the preciseness of data gathered in a study. (Amaratunga,

Baldry, Sarshar, & Newton, 2002) Hence, for the purpose of the case, both the types of research are utilized.

In the qualitative research, aspects of brand positioning of the retailers, the major attractiveness points, the perceived advantages as per to the retailer etc are all analyzed and information of such are obtained. Through the quantitative research, customer perceptions as well as perceptions of the retailers are made available, and accurate quantifiable information is gathered. The key success points of a retailer, the modes of attracting a consumer all are understood through this quantitative research methodology.

Qualitative research methodology is absolutely necessary and ideal when cognitive aspects and behavioural patterns of the respondents are to be analyzed. In order to determine the process of brand positioning and interest in the minds of the target consumers, it is ideal to utilize the qualitative research methodology. The ideal research instrument for the same would be Personal in Depth Interviews. Baldry, Trujillo & Taylor have identified a number of benefits associated with the qualitative research methodology (Trujillo & Taylor, 2001).

These are as follows;

- Qualitative mode of research effectively utilizes subjective information and therefore facilitates the researchers to explore depth and the importance of every aspect.
- Qualitative mode of research also facilitates the researchers with the development and structuring of newer theories and helps in lessening the aspect of viewing any phenomenon in a narrow perspective.
- Qualitative research methodology is in fact the ideal research methodology to identify and derive complex and latent answers from the respondents and help in providing a newer approach to the research procedure.

Quantitative research methodology has its share of advantages too. It is very specific and helps in providing to the researchers exact quantifiable data and very specific findings of research. This specific research methodology is intrinsically attached to figures and facts, to statistics and tabular data etc (DeVaus, 2002). Under the quantitative research methodology, the research instrument used is questionnaires. The benefits associated with quantitative research methodology are as follows (Ouyang, 2001);

- Quantitative research methodology helps in obtaining accurate and specific information and through such findings the increasing and the decreasing aspect can be clearly understood
- Individualism is promoted through this research methodology and no need of generalization persists.
- By deploying quantitative research methodology specific and accurate results are obtained in a shorter period of time and lesser expense is associated with such a method of research
- The data collected through this methodology is from a number of reliable sources.

Utilizing and implementing one specific mode of research methodology would not be sufficient for obtaining and gathering of specific and relevant data for the research. The dissertation focuses on the two aspects of the brand positioning factor- one from the retailers' point of view and one from the customer's point of view. Qualitative research methodology is deployed to unearth the financial aspect of the brand positioning and the present status of the male casual and formal wear. Quantitative research instrument aims to again unearth specific responses of the retailers and is more concentrated towards identifying the responses and preference of the customers. Deploying only one type of research methodology hence, would not have been able to obtain complete understanding of the strategic objective which is steering the entire phenomenon (Ashworth & Hogg, 2007).

3.3. Research Instrument

Research instruments can be defined as the specific and simple tools which are utilized to gather information relevant for the purpose of the research project (Wilkinson, 2003).

Research instruments are varied in number, and no single type of research instrument can be used for all types of researches. Hence selection of the research instrument directly depends on the type of research being conducted – whether it is quantitative research or qualitative research.

For the purpose of the research paper, it has been decided to deploy two significant research instruments in this research study concerned with the mixed research methodology undertaken in this context. Qualitative research methodology is conducted by the use of In Depth Personal Interviews. On the other hand, the research instrument of questionnaire survey is deemed to be applicable with regards to the quantitative research methodology. Personal in depth interview is a research instrument which provides a full essence of qualitative research methodology by enabling the researcher in unveiling the behavioural and cognitive patterns of the sample under study without limiting their responses in the close-ended questions. (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009) Moreover, personal interviews enable the researcher to gauge the reliability of responses provided by the respondents by taking into consideration the gestures and postures of the respondents. The facial expressions, eye movement, body language can be interpreted which can also contain significant amount of information. Leading executives and management staff of International Retail Giants are interviewed for the purpose of the research paper.

Questionnaire surveys are utilized for the quantitative research methodology, and for the same, questionnaires are the perfect research instrument which successfully leads to obtaining a vast section of the data from a limited time. The questionnaire survey is easy to be administered as well as analyzed to reach the findings. The precise numerical metrics enables

the researcher to gain accurate knowledge about the aspect in question. The questions for the qualitative research methodology and the questionnaire for the quantitative research methodology are attached at the Appendix section of this dissertation.

3.4. Population & Sampling Procedure

Population can be defined as the total people who match the criteria of being subjected to a specific research study. (Cohen, 2003)

As we adopted a mixed method of research deploying both qualitative and quantitative research methodology, sampling must be taken in different techniques for separate researches. As per the scholar, it is always beneficial to adopt different sampling procedures for different research methodologies (Rubin, 2008). Qualitative research methodology is related to generalization of the responses of the sample; hence, it is always advisable to maintain a smaller sample size for the same. In order to understand the dynamics of brand positioning, and the core benefits associated with such a phenomenon, the qualitative research methodology was conducted on the leading top level executives and decision makers of the International Retailers operating in the specific market. For the purpose of this project, snowball sampling procedure falling in the non probability sampling procedure was adopted (Brown, 2010) Number of sample selected was 7 for qualitative research mode.

For the purpose of the quantitative research methodology, questionnaire is used as a research instrument. The questionnaire is further divided into two segments- one dedicated to the retailers and the other one dedicated to the customers. Questionnaires for the retailers were administered on employees and store managers of international retail brands operating in the target market. The sample size was kept at 50. The second part of the questionnaire was administered on a large sample group of 300 customers. As the research is based on the casual and formal wear of men, the sampling is done majorly on the men population.

However, a section of the sample also belongs to women population. For the purpose of the

dissertation, the research is conducted on the markets of Bangalore, a leading mega city of India.

The sample must be decided in such a way so that it represents the population effectively. Hence, consumers based in the Bangalore society were chosen. Questionnaires were administered when researchers were present in the various malls and retail outlets and interviewed the retailer staff members and the buyers, after taking due permission from the store owners. In order to select the sample appropriately certain sampling techniques are deployed by the researcher. With regards to the qualitative research methodology, the non-probability sampling technique is adopted, more specifically the snow-balling technique.

3.5. Data Collection

The data collection procedure would comprise of administering both interview sessions as well as questionnaire survey separately. In order to conduct the in depth personal interviews, the researcher needs to make prior appointments with the retail giants and 30-45 minutes are dedicated in conducting each interview. On the other hand, the questionnaire survey to be undertaken by the researcher would generally follow a structured questionnaire comprising of relevant close-ended questions which are easy to answer. In order to not consume much of the time of the respondents nor in the research, the questionnaire is made such a manner that it can be answered within 7-9 minutes with ease. A number of open ended questions are also kept in the questionnaire to understand the perspective from the point of view of the retail employees and managers.

The researcher needs to undertake ethical pre conditions prior to conducting the research procedure. The ethical preconditions which the researcher proposes to consider in the data collection procedure comprises of collecting consent from the participants prior to administering the research. The clauses of confidentiality, privacy and anonymity are also to

be included. In order to generate accurate data, it is critical that such clauses are followed, and the respondents can provide genuine answers.

3.6. Reliability and validity of research instruments

Reliability and validity are two specific criteria of the chosen research instruments which are crucial for the success, accuracy and effectiveness of the research work. (Springer, Abell, & Hudson, 2002) Since in order to conduct the research, instruments used were that of questionnaire survey and personal in depth interviews, it is even more important to test the reliability and the validity of them to establish the accuracy of the findings and data available to establish them as substantial findings. Ideally, a stability of responses should be achieved if the research is conducted on a repeated trial basis.

The Reliability factor is judged and evaluated when the results obtained by the research instrument has a sense of consistency on repeated trials (Dennis & Wal, 2010). Stability of the responses were also checked when the questions in the questionnaires were used in a repeat stance and paraphrased and then asked. For the qualitative research methodology, the reliability of the answers could be checked by interpreting the different non verbal cues. Such non verbal cues like the gestures, body language, communication style, voice modulation can be analyzed for further guidance. On giving any specific answer when there is an alignment of the actual subject of the answer to that of his non verbal cues, we can assume that the answers given are reliable and stable. In case of questionnaire survey, reliability could be achieved by utilizing reliable grades of scaling- 5 point Likert Scale, 3 point scale etc. Ethical assumptions also help in ensuring the consistency of responses.

Validity of the research instruments is the evaluation of how original and acquiescent are the responses received from the research with that of the practical real world. (Lievens, Peeters, & Schollaert, 2008) It is also the measure of how functional would be the information

obtained as the result of such research methodology, in utilizing such for further research.

Validity can be of two different kinds- internal and external validity. Internal validity is achieved, when the questions constructed can successfully unearth the data required as per the research objectives. External validity can be achieved, when the information available from the research can be generalized.

For the purpose of this paper, the findings can be generalized after considering the limitations and scope of the research.

4. Interpretation & Analysis of Findings

This following section gives an overview of the findings of the research through using both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. The findings are given in separate sections of the research. In the last sub section of this section, an analysis of the findings is provided.

4.1. Interpretation of Qualitative Research Findings

For the dissertation purpose, 7 decision makers and leading management representatives of International Retail giants were interviewed, and a summarization of their combined responses for each question is mentioned as follows;

1. As per the responses of the respondents it was evident that brand positioning and efforts of brand building are important to their business as such allow their products and services to adopt human qualities through which values can be shared, and emotional connections can be made with the consumers. These consumers ultimately become loyal users and advocate these brands. Of the core benefits which are associated with such brand positioning, as per the respondents, the core benefit is that it helps the brand establish a specific position in the minds and perceptions of the consumers. Branding initiatives are adopted as it helps in creation of a specific market

and market share for the organization, helps in the generation of profitability, market valuation; it provides ability to the companies to expand beyond the specific product categories. Effective branding helps in improving the company image and helps in the recruitment and retention of best talent. Hence positioning can help in the general management of the business.

2. As per the responses of most of the respondents, it was evident that establishing of a frame was crucial for the initiative of the company's brand positioning. In fact brand position starts with the process of establishment of the frame. Such frame establishment helps in constructing the goal which the consumer wishes to achieve by using the brand. It is important that the marketing division of the company conducts the right frame, as it helps in detecting the aspects which will serve as the points of parity and points of difference with its counterpart brands. Namely, if an example is taken of Puma, which has successfully positioned itself as a stylish yet sporty brand, is effectively positioned to generate ideas of comfort with style in the minds of the consumer. For positioning, establishing such a frame of referencing is crucial.

3. Points of parity and points of difference are crucial for positioning of a brand. Establishing the points of parity is crucial when introducing a new brand in the market. One example for the same has been provided by a respondent, saying, a company launching its new brand of jeans, would not even be considered as a jeans-maker unless they have a number of cuts and variety in the material of denim. These are the points of parity, which every business operating in a specific product segment must have with its counterparts.

Points of difference are crucial when establishing and differentiating the brand in the minds of the consumers. However, one should not depend solely on the brand positioning on the points of difference. Strong, unique and favourable associations

which significantly help in distinguishing the brand from the others in the similar frame of reference are absolutely necessary for the success of such brand positioning.

However, as per the responses of the experts, one dimensional points of differentiation should be effectively avoided by the companies.

4. Product attributes valued by consumers cannot be listed, and with different segments of consumers, the most importance product attributes vary. However, a number of attributes can be named which are given importance by every segment of consumer. A list of the mostly valued product attributes associated with apparel of men consumers are as follows- quality, comfort, style and value for money. Men unlike women, do not dedicate extensive periods of time on shopping. And they look for fashion with comfort for every garment they choose to buy. Hence these attributes should be given importance to by a company intending to enter the industry of male apparel and accessories.
5. Product promotional strategy depends inherently on the type of product and the target customers for the company. With the advent and popularity of the World Wide Web, a significant portion of the promotion can be done by the internet. Product promotion of international retailers, are done through advertisements on television, and their dedicated websites. Product promotional workshops can be held at leading retailers' showrooms, where the brand would be kept and even at malls. For companies aiming at youth and teenage men, promotions can be done through social networking websites too. Advertisements in billboards and leading men's monthly and journals can also be given to attract the customers belonging to a slightly elder age group. After analyzing the responses of the experts it was understood that consumer buying behaviour is crucial for product positioning and branding initiatives. For a company undergoing brand extension, and product launch, consumer buying behaviour is

carefully analyzed and depending on the latent need and the most demanded attribute, the product positioning strategy is formulated and moulded.

6. One of the biggest mistakes which companies do is they start to build their brand awareness before even establishing themselves clearly and creating a brand position. This results in product confusion and not convincing any of the consumers. Also, often it has been observed that companies tend to promote product attributes which are not really valued by the consumers. Namely, men's fashion brands must promote the comfort and functional clothing with a fashionable edge instead of only concentrating on fashion. Also often it has been observed that in order to differentiate the product, companies put too much importance on the points of difference. This can be easily copied, and such PODs attract new entrants to copy such attributes. The core aim of the positioning should be to keep the competitors out and not to draw them towards it.
7. India is one of the mostly populated countries globally, and the economy has a high level of disposable income. The Indian middle class is gradually gaining awareness of the fashion brands and with the rise of the aspiration levels they are ever than willing to invest on lifestyle options. With the advent of internet, it is now easier for the international retailers to promote their brand awareness. All these factors and the fact of huge business potential prompt an international retailer to enter the Indian market. Profitability, product popularity, revenue generation etc are the core reasons behind expanding into newer markets.

Of the barriers which restrict the entrance of such new retailers in the Indian market, regulatory norms pose significant threats. In India, however, the threat of competition from existing domestic companies is significantly high in the male garments sector.

Specialized brands namely, Raymonds, Allen Solly etc have significant market share.

However, with the internet, Indian consumers are already aware of the leading International brands, hence the brand acceptance also exists even before the company launches its products in the Indian market.

8. The male casual as well as formal wear has gained a momentum and is gradually gaining the pace of growth. With more and more men now aware of their body image and fashionable look, are now intending to opt for branded clothes which are fuelling such a growth of the industry. With the concept of metro-sexual men, and product awareness of international brands, men are ever ready to experiment with clothes and cuts which were initially not popular at all. As per the general comments of the experts, everyone is unanimously agreeing to the fact that, in the future male fashion industry is expected to experience a vast growth.

4.2. Interpretations of Quantitative Research Findings

The responses of the two groups of respondents are analyzed through the help of questionnaire, and graphical representations are as follows;

4.2.1. Section A

4.2.1.1. Nature of Retail

Figure 1

Out of the 50 respondents, 28 opted for the Showroom style of product sales and the rest 22 opted for Retail outlets where a number of international brands are stored.

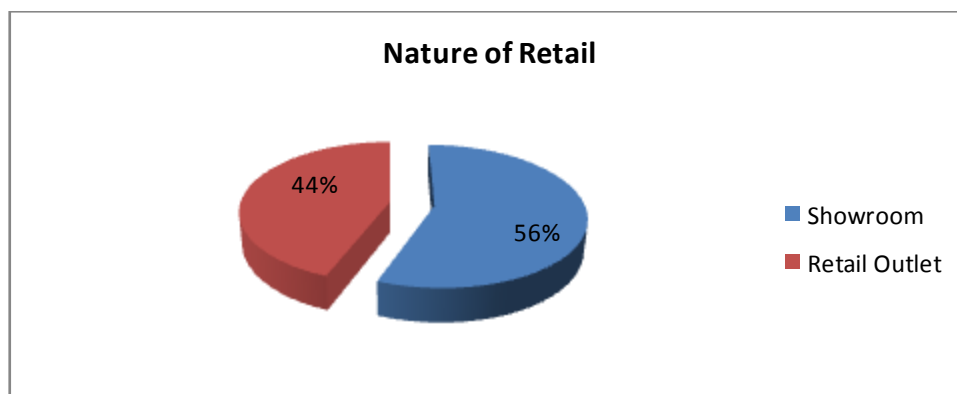
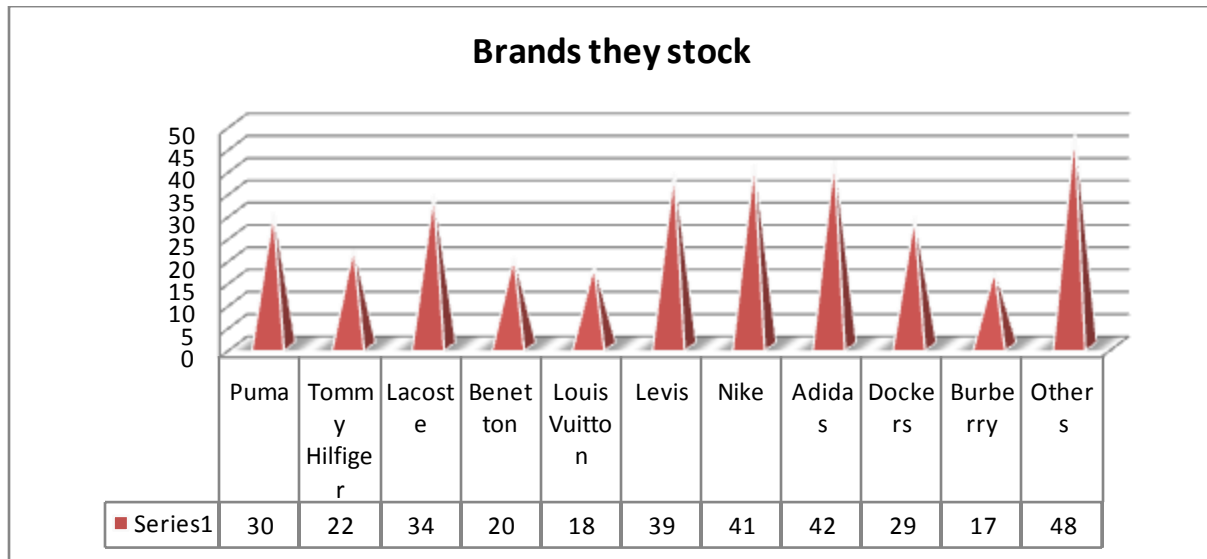


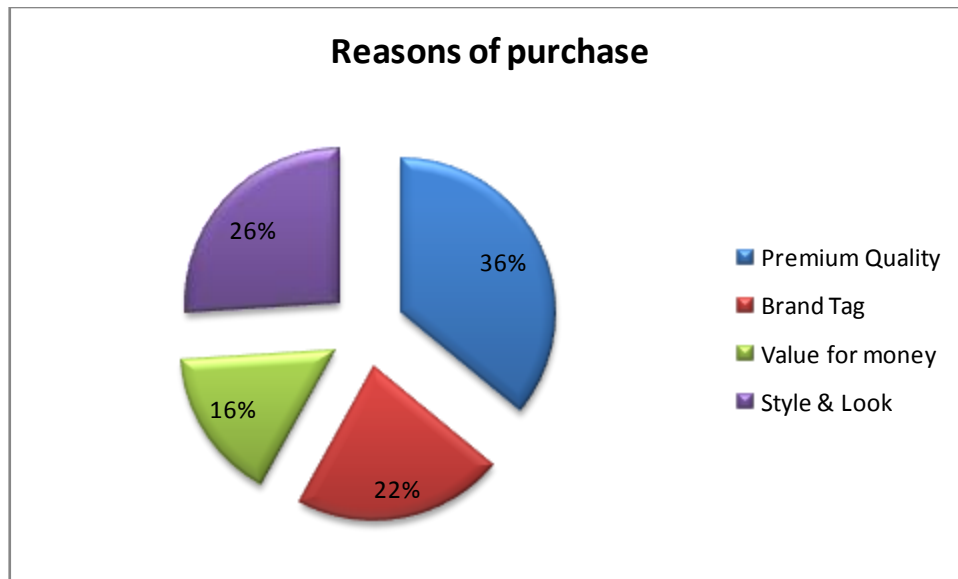
Figure 2

A list was provided to the respondents on selecting the brands they offer. The following is the graph for the same.



Of the table mentioned above, it can be clearly understood that the men's sporting brands have more popularity and availability. Premium brands namely, Louis Vuitton and Burberry have the lowest availability in comparison to other brands. Apart from the brands mentioned above, 96% of the retailers were of the opinion that they keep other brands too. Such brands include domestic men brands namely, Raymonds, Allen Solly, Provogue and other international brands.

Figure 3

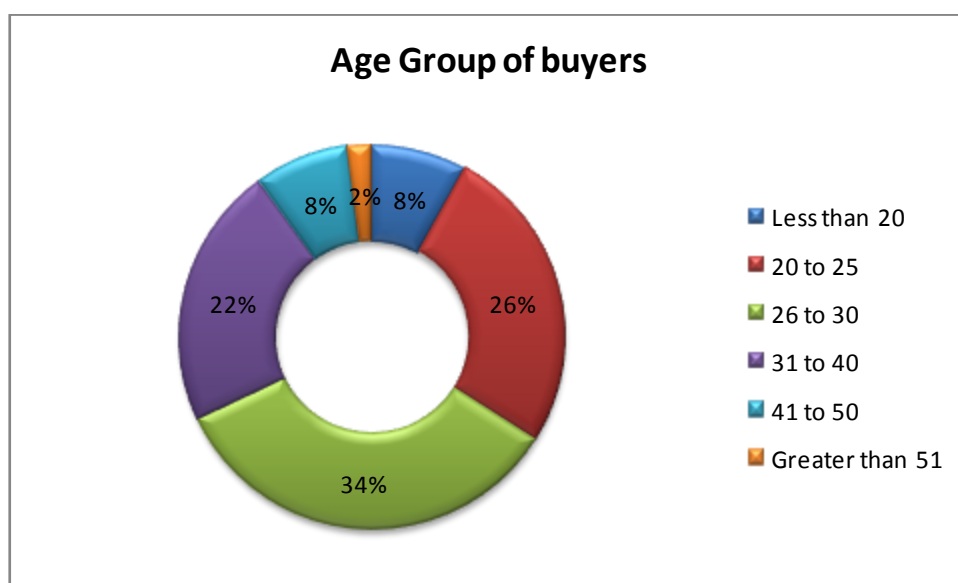


Of the different reasons, for which the retailer's stock such brands, are charted in the above mentioned graph. Most popular are the enhanced quality and the style which these international brands provide to the buyers.

4.2.1.2. *Buyers' Market*

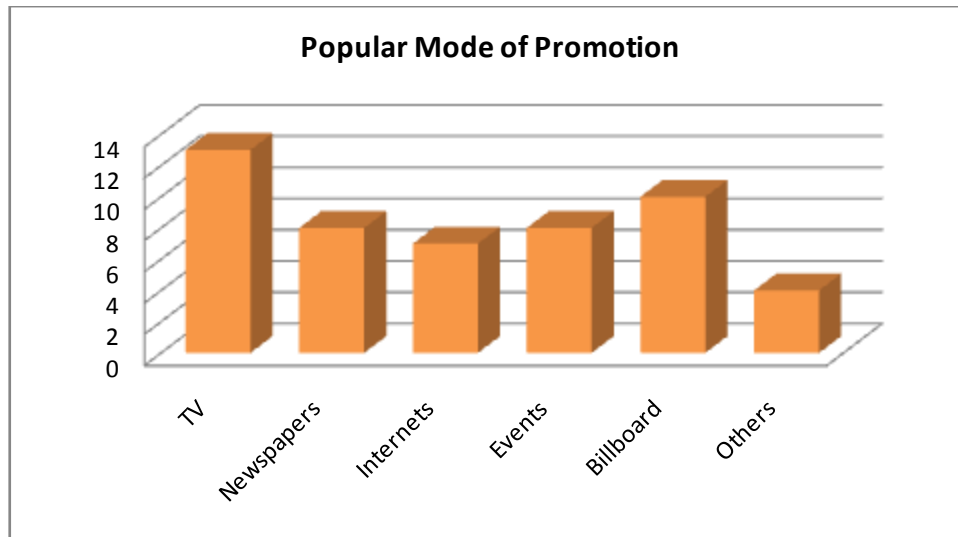
The retailer respondents were asked to tick their target buyer age group. As per their responses the following graph was constructed;

Figure 4



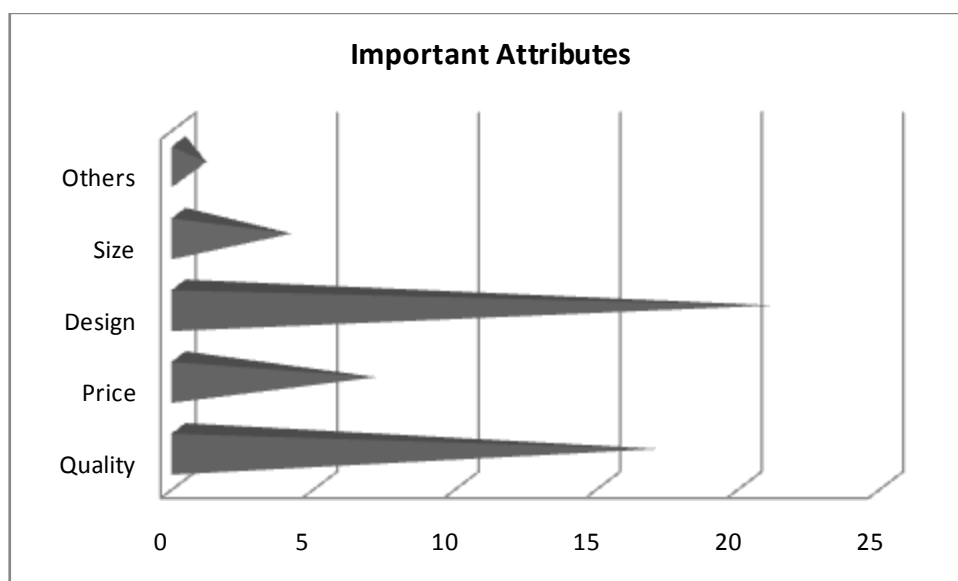
From the graph it can be clearly observed that the maximum target age group is of 26 to 30, following closely by the 20-25 age groups.

Figure 5



As per the responses it was identified, that television was the most popular mode of promotion of new product launch and brand awareness. Billboards, newspapers and events were also ranked high in product promotion.

Figure 6



As per the retailers, of the different attributes which are propelling the consumers to buy the products, Design and Quality are ranked the highest.

Figure 7

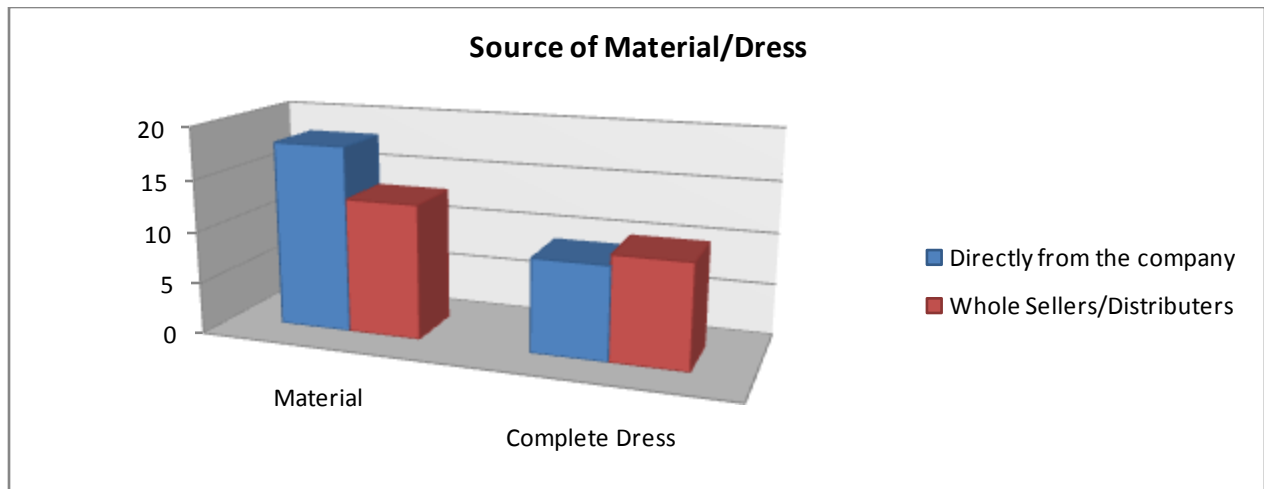


On the question on positioning of their own retail brands, most of the respondents were of the opinion that superior quality and style were the core product attributes which are focused in their positioning strategy.

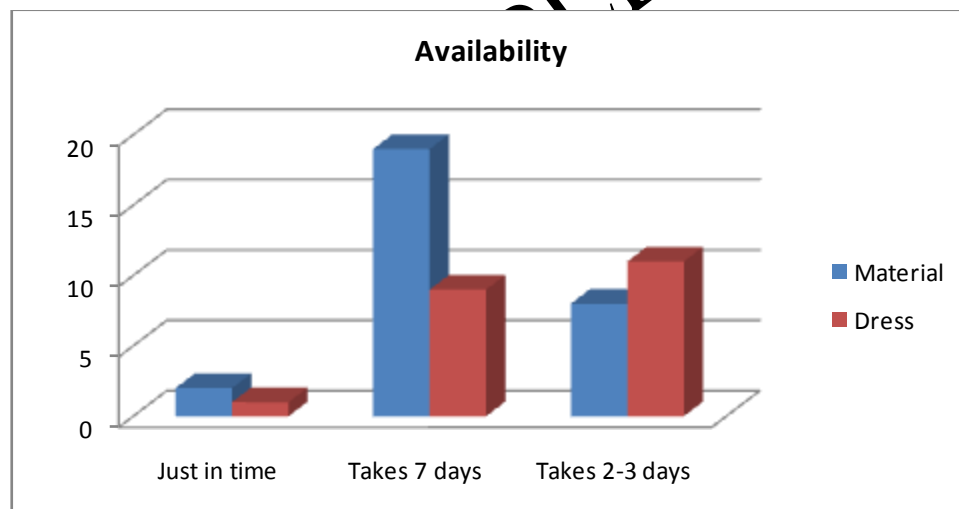
4.2.1.3. Distribution Channel

On questioned regarding specifications of their distribution channels, and the sourcing of the materials and the completed dress, following graph represents the reply of the 50 respondents.

Figure 8

**Figure 9**

On questioned about the availability of the dress or the material, the following was the reply of the respondents. Maximum were of the opinion that the material takes around 7 days time to reach the sales point.



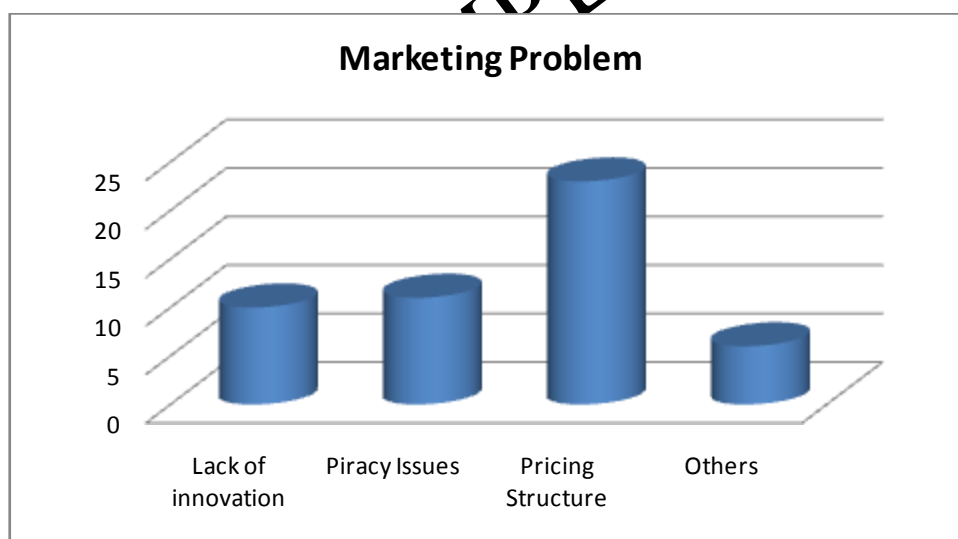
4.2.1.4. Problems Faced by the Retailers

This section of questions dealt with the type and the nature of the problems faced by the retailers. The first graph shows the graphical representation of the problems faced by the distributor and the company.

Figure 10

**Figure 11**

The following graph depicts the various marketing problems faced by the companies. The following graph depicts such problems.



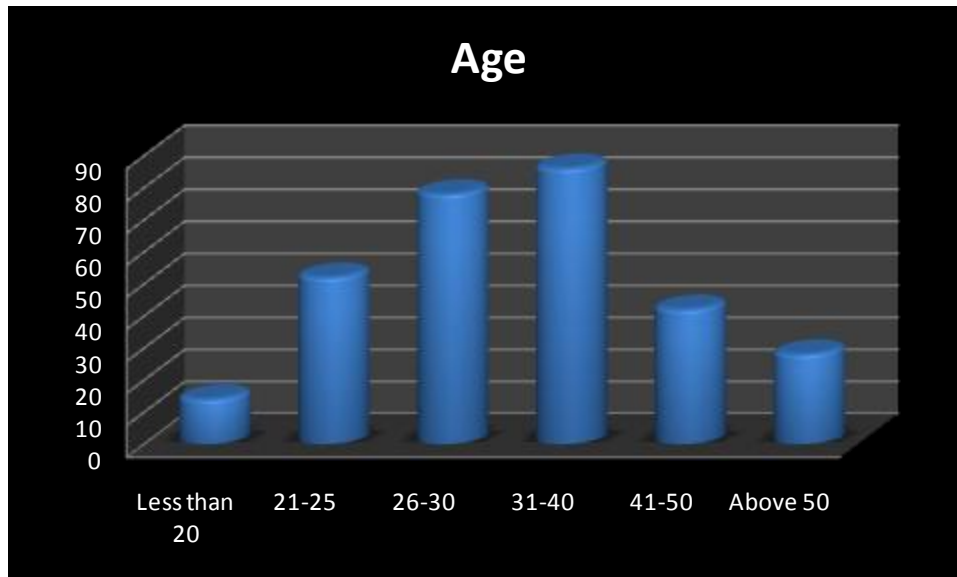
Of the above graphs, it can be identified that, inventory management and the pricing structure are the biggest problems faced by the retailers retailing international brands.

4.2.2. Section B

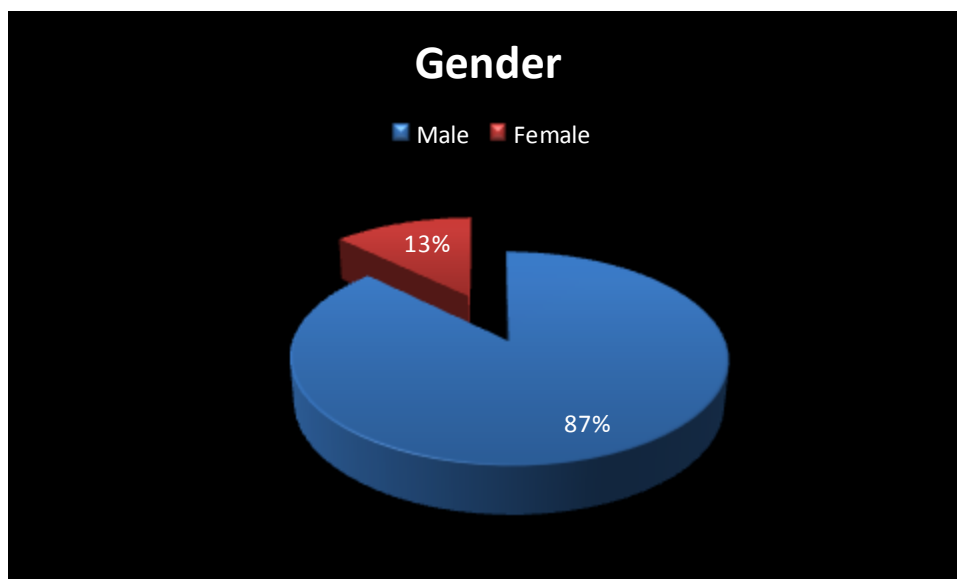
This section depicts the answers provided by the 300 sample size of respondents consisting of the buyers.

Figure 12

Respondents were asked about the gender and age group, and their responses are charted as per the following graphs;



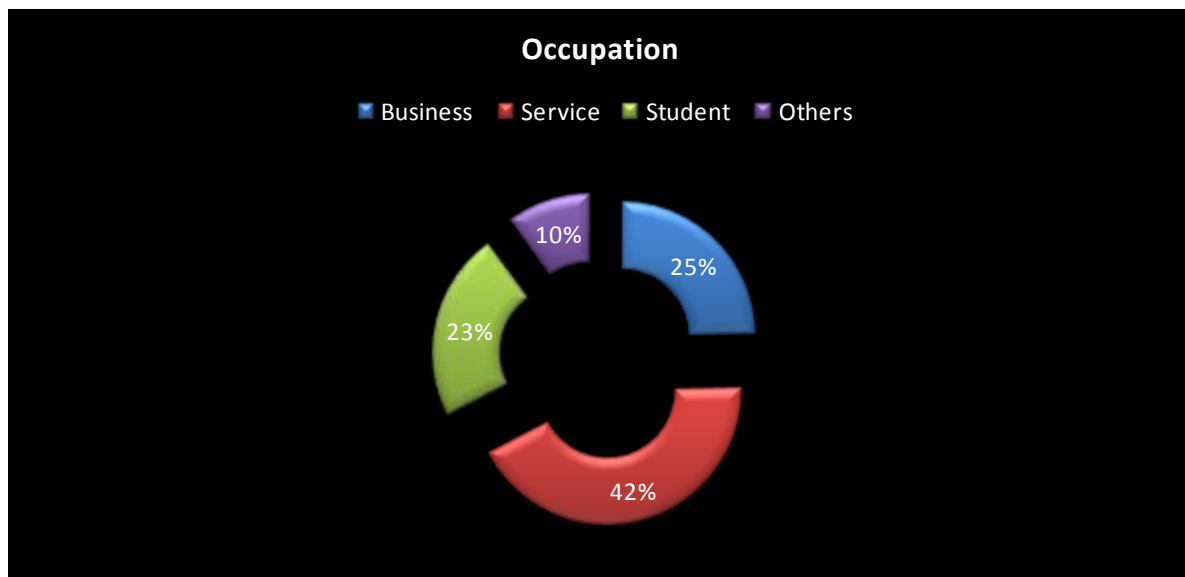
After analysis it was found that maximum of the respondents belonged to the age group of 31-40, followed closely with a second highest 26-30. Very less respondents belonged to the age group of teenage youth.

Figure 13

As the dissertation is based on male casual and formal wear, we tried to focus on the male buyers. However, a section of the women buyers were included who purchase male casual and formal garments for gifting purpose to their husbands, brothers, sons, friends etc. 87% of the respondents were men and the rest were women.

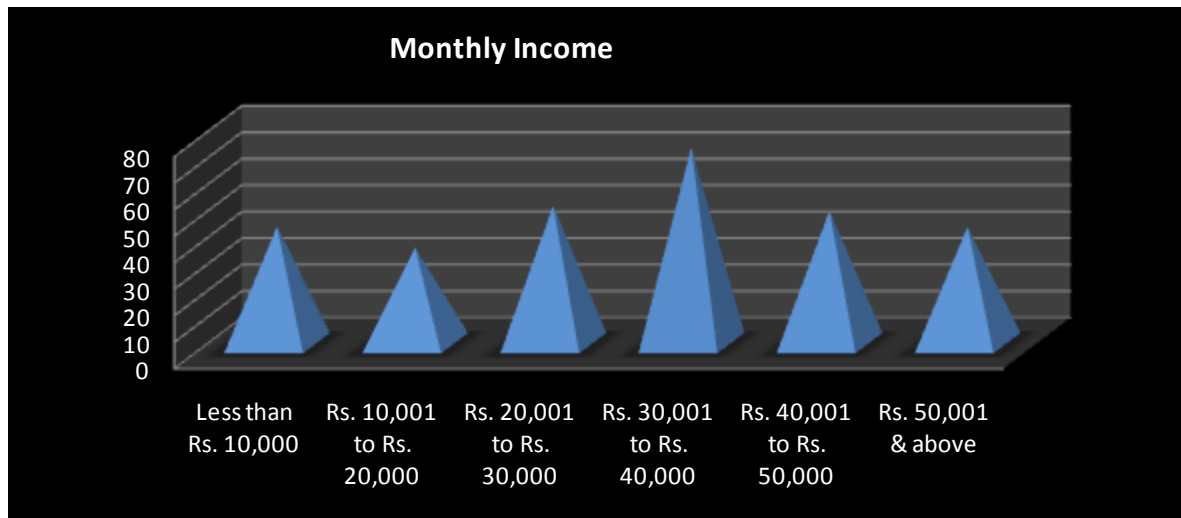
Figure 14

Apart from asking about age and gender, one question was dedicated on the occupation of the respondents, and the responses are represented graphically as follows;



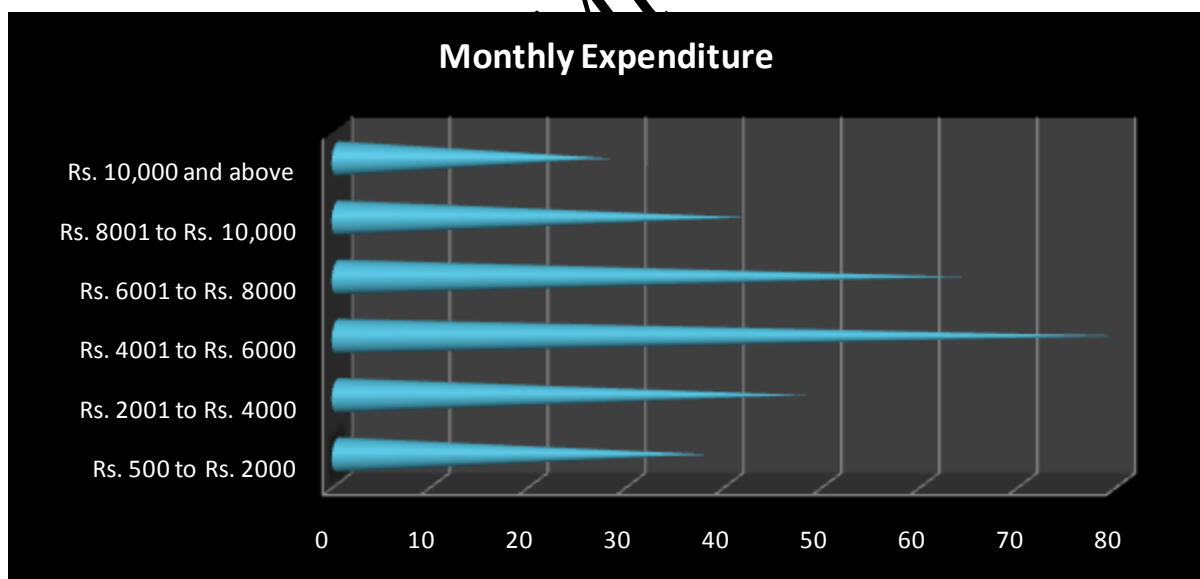
From the above graph, it is evident that the maximum section of the respondents was employees, 25% were businessmen, 23% were students and the rest had other specifications.

Figure 15



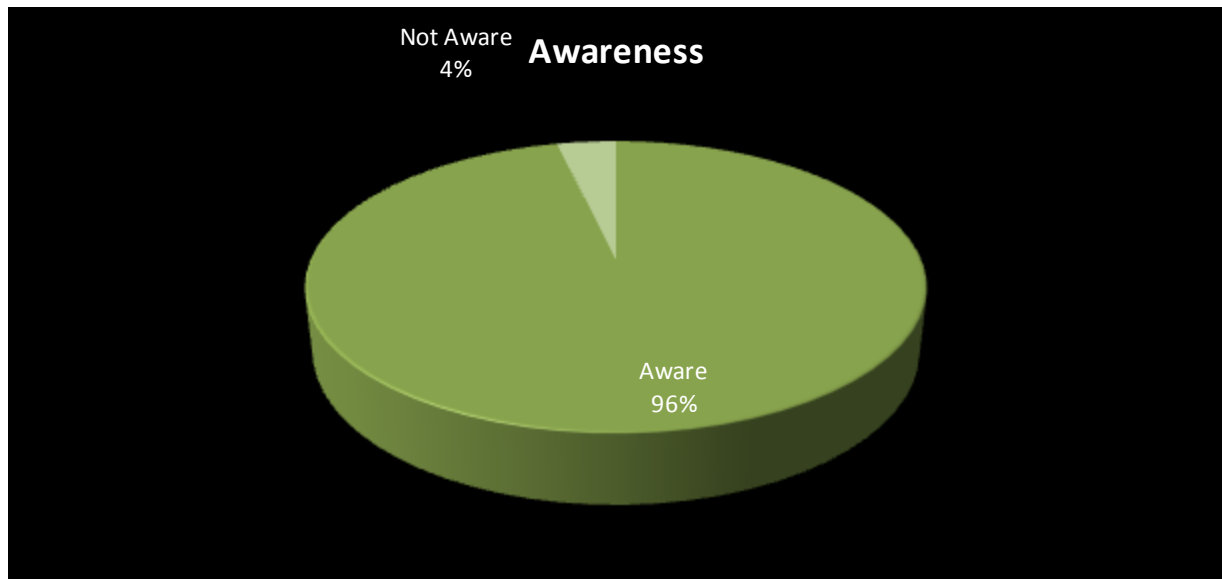
The respondents were asked to mention their monthly income, and as per their responses it was evident that the section comprising monthly income of Rs. 30,001 to Rs. 40,000 comprised the maximum section of the respondents.

Figure 16



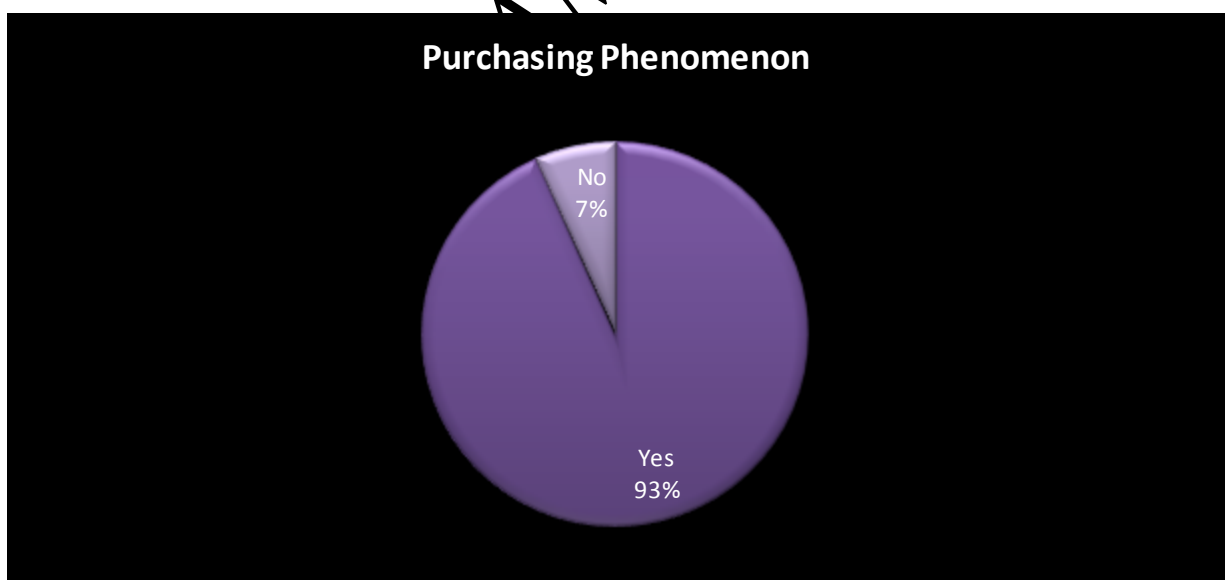
Of the answers of the respondents, maximum spends around Rs. 4001 to Rs. 6000 on international brands of apparel and accessories every three months.

Figure 17



When asked whether they were aware of international brands of men casual and formal wear, 96% were of the opinion that they were aware and the rest 4% were unaware about the existence of most of the international brands.

Figure 18

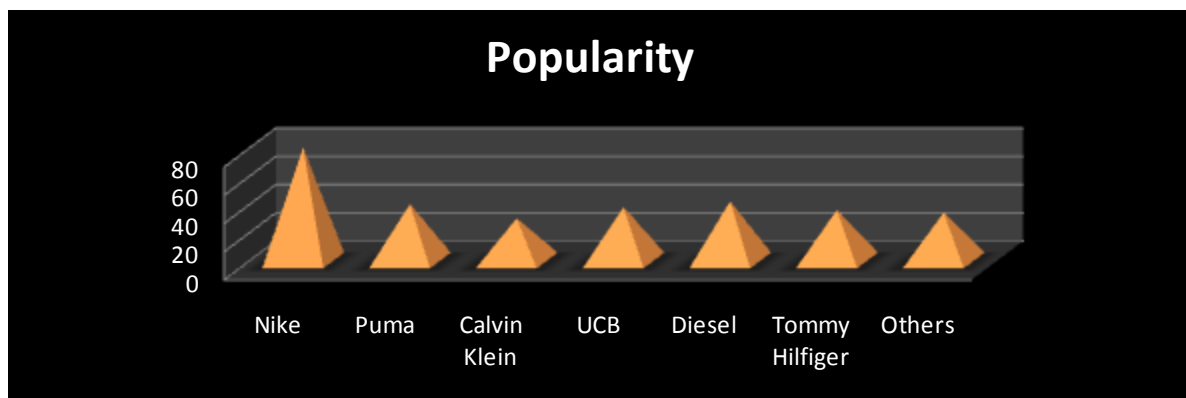


When asked whether they purchase international brands, 93% were of the opinion that they do, and the rest don't. From analyzing the above two graphs, it can be deduced that a section

of the respondents even being aware of the international brands do not purchase them out of their choice.

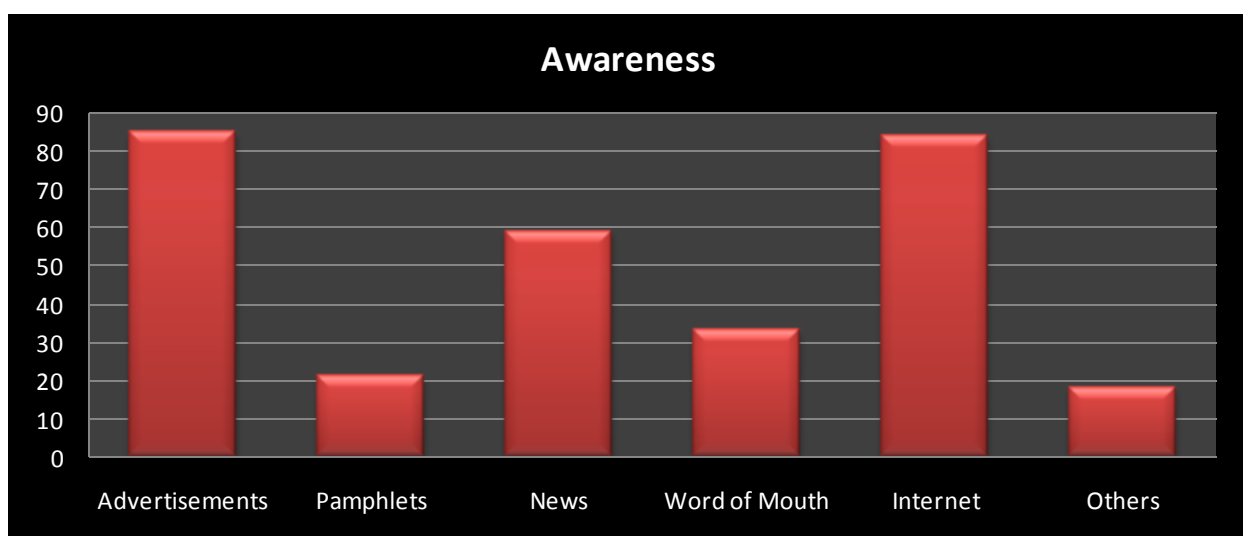
Figure 19

A number of brands were listed and the respondents were asked to tick their most favourite one.



From the above mentioned graph it is clear that Nike is the most popular one, followed closely by Diesel, Puma, UCB and Tommy Hilfiger. The rest brands followed a close suit.

Figure 20



The respondents answered that they gained awareness of the brand mostly through Internet and Advertisements. News and word of mouth also helped in generating interest and awareness of the brand.

Figure 21

Of the core attributes which prompted these buyers to opt for international brands, quality of the products and the personality of the brand determined their purchase decision the maximum.

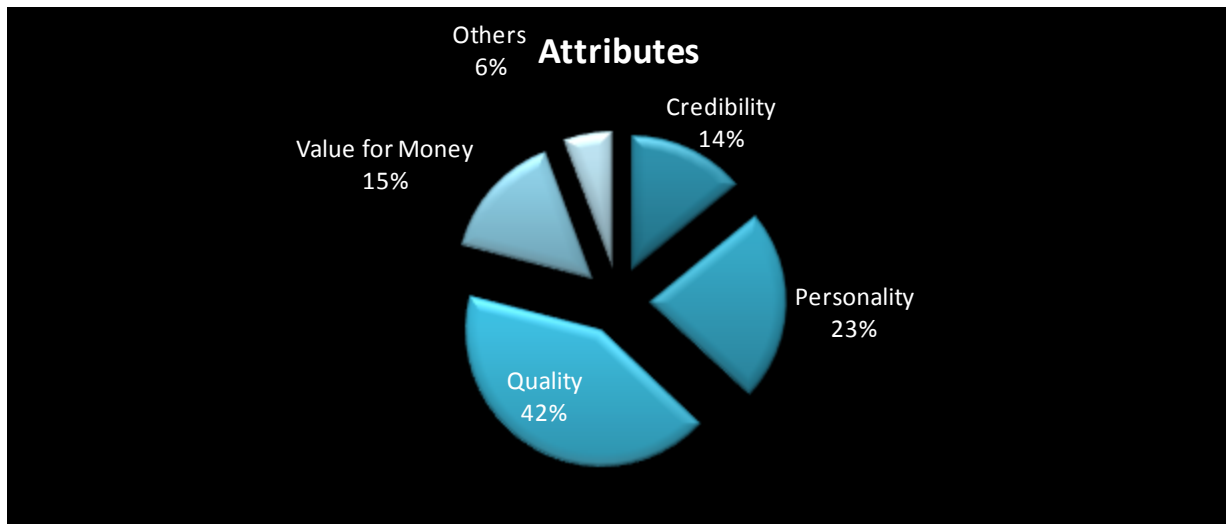
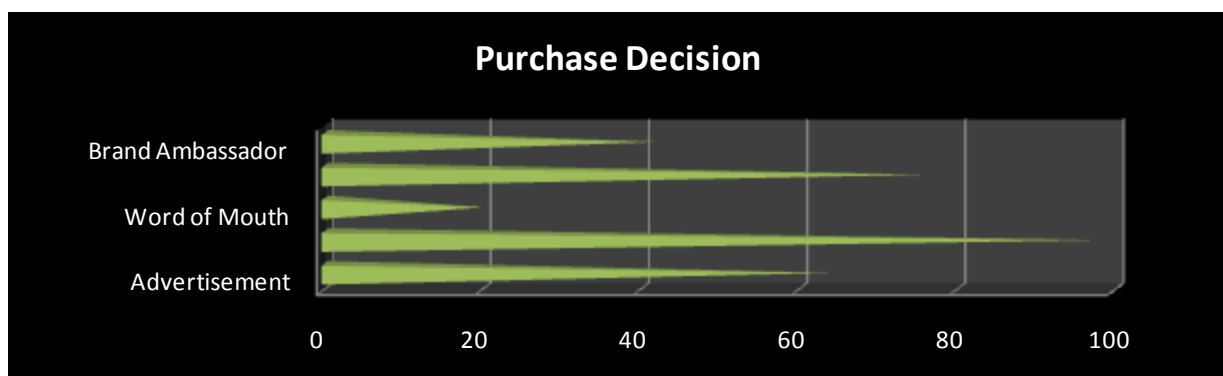


Figure 22

The respondents were asked about what mode of aspect drives their purchase decision of a specific brand, and as per their responses the following graph was presented.



It can be understood that the apparel quality as well as the past experience of the product drove a specific purchase decision of a buyer.

Figure 23

Lastly, the respondents were asked to gauge their overall experience about these international casual and formal wear brands of men, and based on their responses the following graph was structured.



4.3. Analysis

From administering the dual modes of research and interpreting the results of the research methodologies, it was evident that brand positioning is a crucial need for all the international retailers dealing with the men's casual and formal wear. After interpreting the results of the respondents situated in the city of Bangalore, it was evident that for new entrants to do business in the Indian market, they need to adapt a specific product attribute, hence a specific product positioning strategy. Retailers must adopt a specific frame of reference and then adapts its points of difference and points of parity with its counterpart brands. The international brands for men's casual wear and formal wear do conduct extensive product positioning strategies which help their apparel and accessories to occupy a specific position

in the minds of the consumers and also help in attracting the right target consumer. Hence, the Alternative Hypothesis is proved, after conducting the research.

5. Conclusion

This specific section of the paper will try to conclude the complete research by providing a just account of the summary, the objectives, and findings and will also provide a set of the recommendations, and a brief section of extended research.

5.1. Review of Research Objectives

The core objective of the research was to analyze the international retailers and their basic need for positioning strategies and to identify whether they conduct extensive brand positioning strategies for themselves. Through this research, importance of brand positioning was established and it was also identified that international retailers operating in India do conduct thorough brand positioning to establish their brands in the Indian market. It was our objective to identify the core reasons for an international retailer to entry into newer markets, and by conducting the qualitative research methodology the core reasons of expansion and the main barriers of entry were pointed out and explored. Hence it was being concluded that all the research objectives were met and achieved.

5.2. Key Findings & Recommendations

The findings are listed down in this section and a set of recommendations are mentioned in this section.

- A number of international retail brands are the leading players in the men's apparel and accessories sector in India.
- In Bangalore, most of the respondents are aware of these international brands and they actively purchase these international brands in a regular fashion.

- These international brands have a very specific positioning strategy and have successfully focused on a specific attribute in the minds of the consumers.
- For retailers to enter in this specific sector, they need to conduct a thorough brand positioning procedure.
- As per the retailers, the Indian youth are the main buyers of this segment and they effectively spend a considerable section of their income to purchase these garments.
- The Indian purchasers give most importance to the quality of these international brands and the style and the specific personality attribute attached to it.

From the findings of this specific research, a set of recommendations can be constructed.

They are as follows;

- For retailers and new entrants intending to operate in this sector, they need to first establish a frame of reference and then identify its points of parity and the points of difference between their own products and their counterparts.
- After establishing a product positioning strategy, the retailer then must start taking branding initiatives and adopt effective promotional measures.
- In the Indian youth to initiate product awareness, they must select television and internet for their modes of promotion, as these two modes are the most popular ones.
- Promotional strategies must include word of mouth publicity and also events through which further product promotion can be carried out.
- Retailers must focus on quality and the stylish look, for gaining popularity amongst its consumers and to compete with the established brands in the market segment.

5.3. Areas of Extended Research

As already mentioned, the research study has been conducted under the constraints of time and cost. A section of the Bangalore society has been chosen for the purpose of the research,

and hence it cannot give a complete picture of the male fashion industry in India. However, researches on the international retail brands operating in India, and extended research work can be further undertaken as per the relevance. The data given and the interpreted results can be further utilized in other researches.

6. Appendices

6.1. Appendix 1: Personal Interview Questions

1. What is brand positioning to your company, and why do you participate in such an activity? What as per to you are the major benefits of such branding?
2. Under brand positioning, what frame have you established for your company? And how have you done that?
3. How important are the Points of Difference, and whether they are well distinguishable? What are the points of parity?
4. What product attributes do you feel are mostly valued by the consumers?
5. What is the ideal promotional strategy which helps in brand positioning? How important is consumer behaviour in determining your brand position?
6. What as per to you are the several drawbacks associated with the procedure of brand positioning which companies should look out for?
7. What are the key reasons which prompt a retailer to enter the Indian market? What are the core barriers of such new entrance?
8. What is your general viewpoint about the male casual wear industry? What is the future of male formal wear?

6.2. Appendix 2: Questionnaire for Quantitative Research

International fashion retailers: an assessment of brand positioning

Section A: QUESTIONNAIRE RETAILERS

Questions target international fashion retailers of casual and formal international wear for Male

Brand:

Country of origin:

Retailers name:

Contact number:

Year of starting:

NATURE OF RETAIL

1. Showroom []
 Retail Outlets (with multiple brands) []
2. **Brands sold and reasons for stocking.**
 - Puma
 - Tommy Hilfiger
 - Lacoste
 - Benetton
 - Louis Vuitton
 - Levis
 - Nike
 - Adidas
 - Dockers
 - Burberry
 - Others
3. **Reasons of Purchase**
 - Premium Quality
 - Brand Tag
 - Value for Money
 - Style & Look

THE MARKET

4. Buyers age group

- Less than 20
- 21-25
- 26-30
- 31-40

- 41-50
- Above 51

5. Preference of mode of advertisement:

- TV ☐
- Newspapers ☐
- Internet ☐
- Events ☐
- Billboard ☐
- Others (specify):

6. What attributes according to you are important to customers

- Quality ☐
- Price ☐
- Design ☐
- Size ☐
- Others (specify):

7. What is the positioning of your brand in customer mind?

Value for money

Superior quality

Stylish

Other (specify)

DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL

8. Source of material & dress

	Material	Dress
Directly from the company		
Wholesalers / distributors		

9. Availability

	Material	Dress
As when required		
Take at least a week		
In 2-3 days		

PROBLEMS FACED**10. Wholesalers/company**

	Dress
Delivery time	
Inventory management	
Defect Product	
Any other specify _____	

11. Marketing

	DRESS
Lack of innovation	
Piracy issues	
Pricing structures	
Any other specify _____	

SAMPLE

Section B**International fashion retailers: An assessment of brand positioning****Customers questionnaire**

Name:

Contact:

1. Age group of respondent

- Less than 20
- 21-25
- 26-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- Above 51

2. Gender

- Male
- Female

3. Occupation :

- i. Businessman
- ii. Service
- iii. Student
- iv. Any other specify.....

SAMPLE

4. House hold income per month;

- Rs. 10,000 and less
- Rs. 10,001- Rs. 20,000
- Rs. 20,001 to Rs. 30,000
- Rs. 30,001 to Rs. 40,000
- Rs. 40,001 to Rs. 50,000
- Rs. 50,001 and above

5. Average expenditure international fashion brand (Rs per every 3 months) :

- Rs. 500-Rs. 2000
- Rs. 2001- Rs. 4000
- Rs. 4001- Rs. 6000
- Rs. 6001-Rs. 8000
- Rs. 8001- Rs. 10,000
- Rs. 10,000 and above

6. Your awareness about international fashion retailer

Aware

☐

Not aware

☐**7. Do you buy international branded clothes?**

Yes

☐

No

☐**8. Preferred international brand (tick only one):**

- Nike
- Puma
- CK
- UCB
- Diesel
- Tommy Hilfiger
- Others

9. How do you know about the brands:

- Advertisements
- Pamphlets
- Word of mouth
- Internet
- Others

10. What are the attributes you like about this brand versus others similar?

- Credibility
- Personality
- Quality
- Value for Money
- Others

11. What influences your purchase decision?

- Advertisement
- Apparel Quality
- Word of mouth
- Past experience
- Brand Ambassador

12. How has been the experience with the usage of this product?

- Extremely satisfactory
- Satisfactory
- No Opinion
- Unsatisfactory
- Extremely Unsatisfactory

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