

Innovations

Consumer's attitude towards popular brands and Non-popular brands with special reference to Apparels and Accessories

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Abstract

The aim of the study is to know the consumers' buying behaviour toward goods and services despite their brand and popularity during and post-pandemic scenarios. It is well known that the pandemic has crushed the economy and the flow of income and expenditure has been minimal throughout. The cost of the branded commodities and services has not been supportive nor affordable compared to the pre-pandemic situation. The government has been making changes and implementing financial support to small-scale industries in order to meet the local demand for goods and services to make the country self-reliant. The study focuses on consumer awareness of the local brands and the new initiatives to support the small business to enhance the economic situation. Popularity of clothing brands doesn't come overnight, the entrepreneurs need to invest their years of service, expertise, technology, hard work and strive by not sparing any efforts. India is a diverse economy, which comprises both the large enterprises and small enterprises. But the competition given by these large enterprises may squash the budding entrepreneurs and may ultimately result in a complete evaporation of the thought of entrepreneurship in the young minds due to the challenges. In order to transform the products from a non-popular brand to a popular brand, we need to focus on the key reasons behind their differentiation. Our study depicts the complete picture on how an ultimate consumer perceives a product, and what is needed in a product to become a popular brand.

Key Words: 1.Brand Awareness, 2Popular Brand, 3.Non-Popular Brand, 4.Customer Proclivity

Introduction

There has been a wide range of studies on the consumer buying behaviour and preferences that clearly projects the variables affecting purchase decisions. In this present scenario of lockdown, most of the goods and services are purchased online. A wide variety of new collections which are not so popular are available at a lower cost and in a good number.

Consumer preference of a product is definitely influenced by their income, time, availability, and quality, and also most of them would like to try new alternatives in the market. Small business owners and start-ups have a great opportunity to expand their market and gain new customers through online business. Local brands or non-popular goods and services are preferred by consumers up to an extent through consumer reviews, product ratings, peer recommendations, etc.

The study helps to understand the consumption of goods and customers' personal survey to explore new products is not just about affordability, social status, symbol or mere show off but also has a strong psychological approach to the utilities which enhances their comfort, fit or styling options. This helps portray themselves in society confidently.

Literature review

Antonio Iazzi & Savino Santovito (2016) conducted a study with Italian jeans consumers saying that the characteristic features of the product are the core reasons for its utility. So, the consumers with such preferences and budget constraints in mind might opt for alternate or non-popular items which could meet their requirements. The study emphasizes that branded goods are associated with psychological comfort and promise to the consumer expectations which leads to the repetition of the purchase. On the other hand, unbranded items require a lot of consumers' attention and time in order to examine their characteristics and their viability. In the absence of branded goods consumers tend to compare the desirable attributes of the product and also the price is considered a constraint.

Dr. Seema Hariramini in her latest publication to study the preference of brand and non-brand lifestyle products with over 100 respondents in Ahmedabad city embodies that the preference or usage of branded products is the result of high aspirations for an improved standard of living by all in the society. People with good income sources and access to social media are much attracted to brands and consider them to be a social status symbol, especially in growing metro cities and smart cities. Almost fifty per cent of the population are loyal to the brands because of their quality and popularity which separates them from the ordinary. Age, gender, and income don't influence one from getting desired product.

Hasan, Syed Akif, Subhani, Muhammad Imtiaz, and Osman, MsAmber 2012 studied the consumption pattern of various utilities including clothing and food in Pakistan. The study unveils that as the income of the individual increases, their preference shifts to branded utilities as they strongly believe that the expensive branded products have quality. The co-existence of branded and unbranded items and their consumption pattern are influenced due to the economic situation in the country. Stagflation prevailed which resulted in low production and high cost of utilities irrespective of brand or non-brand which gave rise to the co-movement consumption pattern of the utilities.

Hoyer, W. D., & Brown, S. P. (1990) shares their experimental knowledge of how the role of brands and their attempt to influence customers with their advertising say awareness through various media plays a critical role in influencing a consumer to buy it again and again despite the knowledge of the quality, cost and the other characteristics without product knowledge or comparison. The study shows an excellent demonstration of how such awareness created by certain brands without much effort and regardless of its quality psychologically programs an individual mind for a repeated purchase like a lullaby in a child's mind.

Objectives of the study

The study is conducted with the following main objectives.

- ❖ To investigate how a consumer chooses a product on what basis.
- ❖ To know whether the repeated purchase behaviour is influenced by brand awareness tactics by the companies
- ❖ To examine that the consumer particularly buy a branded product even for the first time just being influenced by the brand awareness (advertising).
- ❖ To study the consumer's attitude towards non-branded products
- ❖ To understand how the consumer judge a product that is unfamiliar but branded with high price and packaging as a good/better one rather than an unbranded item with good quality and cost

Background of the study

What is a branded product?

"Broadly, a product is anything that can be offered to a market to satisfy a want or need, including physical goods, services, experiences, events, persons, places, properties, organizations, information, and ideas" (Kotler & Keller, 2015).

"A brand is a name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers" (American Marketing Association).

In this competitive world, most corporates try very hard to build their business and its expansion, earning profits and increasing their share value, but not everything to prevail and make a mark on the business world. Today, all this can be achieved with an initial step which is brand awareness through advertising. with a smart advertising campaign and tactics, the one who can imprint on the consumers'minds regarding their product could have a promising future for their company. so, advertising is everything in today's smart world.

What is brand awareness?

Brand awareness is the ability of a product or a service to be identified or recognized by a lot. This is achieved using various ways to be seen by the consumers repeatedly, thereby creating a sense of familiarity within the consumers'minds which ultimately persuades the consumers to buy it even though they are not acquainted with any such product or service. The following are such ways:

- Referral programs
- Freebies
- Freemium with credit
- Infographics
- Local partnership
- Car wraps
- Social media contests
- Social focus
- LinkedIn publishing
- Pro storytelling
- Podcasts
- Unique personality
- PPC advertising
- Remarketing campaigns

- Paid social advertising
- Controversy
- Influencer marketing

What is an unbranded or Generic product?

An unbranded or Generic product is a product or service which is easily available at a lesser price. It is quite opposite of the branded products. It is also known as a substitute product. These are not known to all because they are hardly advertised. These generic products come in trimmed packaging and plain labels. Consumers compare them with branded items most often. They are of the most affordable prices due to less packaging and plain labelling.

Consumer buying behaviour

It is said to be the actions and efforts made by the consumers from the moment the need arrives for any product till it is satisfied. It is a process that is explained below. It has five different stages.

- A. Recognition of Need
- B. Information search
- C. Evaluation of Alternatives
- D. Purchase decision
- E. Post-purchase evaluation



Fig: consumer buying behaviour

- A) The initial stage is recognition of needs, in this stage consumers look for goods that could satisfy their needs. It is a desirable stage.
- B) In this stage the consumer gathers all information available regarding the product or service. The search could be online, offline, peer recommendations, etc.
- C) This is the stage where the product is evaluated. They seem to consider the price options, substitutes available, and whether the product serves the purpose or not also, they will have a chance to look at non or unbranded items as well.
- D) In this stage the consumer makes a decision about the product which is most suitable.
- E) This is the last stage; in this, the consumer actually gets to use the product and evaluates his choice or decision. He/she can provide feedback after usage. If it is positive there is a greater chance that there could be repeated purchases or else, they dislike it forever.

Types of buying behaviour

1. Complex buying behaviour

This is the behaviour observed in the consumer when they are purchasing an item that is worth more. They go through every stage of decision-making is recognition, information search, evaluation, etc., very

thoroughly and precisely. This sort of complex behaviour can be observed say for example buying a house or an expensive car etc.

2. Habitual buying behaviour

These buyers form a ton of consumers. *New purchase type consumers* are relatively impatient. they want to try everything fast and do not want to repeat the purchase again, more like they go with the flow. They look for something trendy and new always. *Relative value type consumers* are very concerned about the value of money they spend and also the usage of the product in a long run. They look for the best deals anywhere on the products they like and hesitate for unknown products.

3. Dissonance-reducing buying behaviour

This type of consumer is often associated with post-purchase behaviour, they tend to compare the product they got to the product they wanted to buy. They don't try to get the product information for the worth they are paying because they have preoccupied thoughts of what they wanted to buy rather than what they got. Eventually, they blame the brand or customer service for ill information regarding the product bought.

3. Variety seeking behaviour

These types of consumers seek variety on every available occasion to buy, they want new things every time. They are not loyal to the brands; they just want to relish the moment. They purchase most often when there is a new collection or a new store.

Major factors that influence consumer behaviour:

1. **Cultural factors** play a crucial role in buying behaviour. Individuals are influenced by their cultural aspects such as the region, subculture, social class, etc.
2. **Economic Factors** such as personal income for example salary, economic status, availability of cash, etc., influence the consumer
3. **Personal Factors** such as the age of the consumer, his\her lifestyle, and personality also influence buying behaviour.
4. **Psychological Factors** Human psychology is a major determinant when purchasing a product. Their attitude towards brands and perception plays a vital role in decision-making.
5. **Social Factors** we are social beings and we live around many people who influence our buying behaviour say family, friends, peer groups, social status etc.,

What are fast-fashion Brands?

Fast fashion is the latest trend where inexpensive clothes are produced and made available by mass-market retailers. These are available at an affordable cost to everyone in any kind of economy so, this is also a great reason which is causing harm to the environment due to the 'use and throw away attitude of the users.

Earth.org states that '*Fast fashion' clothing retailers like Zara, Forever 21 and H&M make cheap and fashionable clothing, but the cost comes at a high price. According to the UN Environment Programme, the fashion industry is the second-biggest consumer of water and is responsible for 8-10% of global carbon emissions – more than all international flights and maritime shipping combined.*

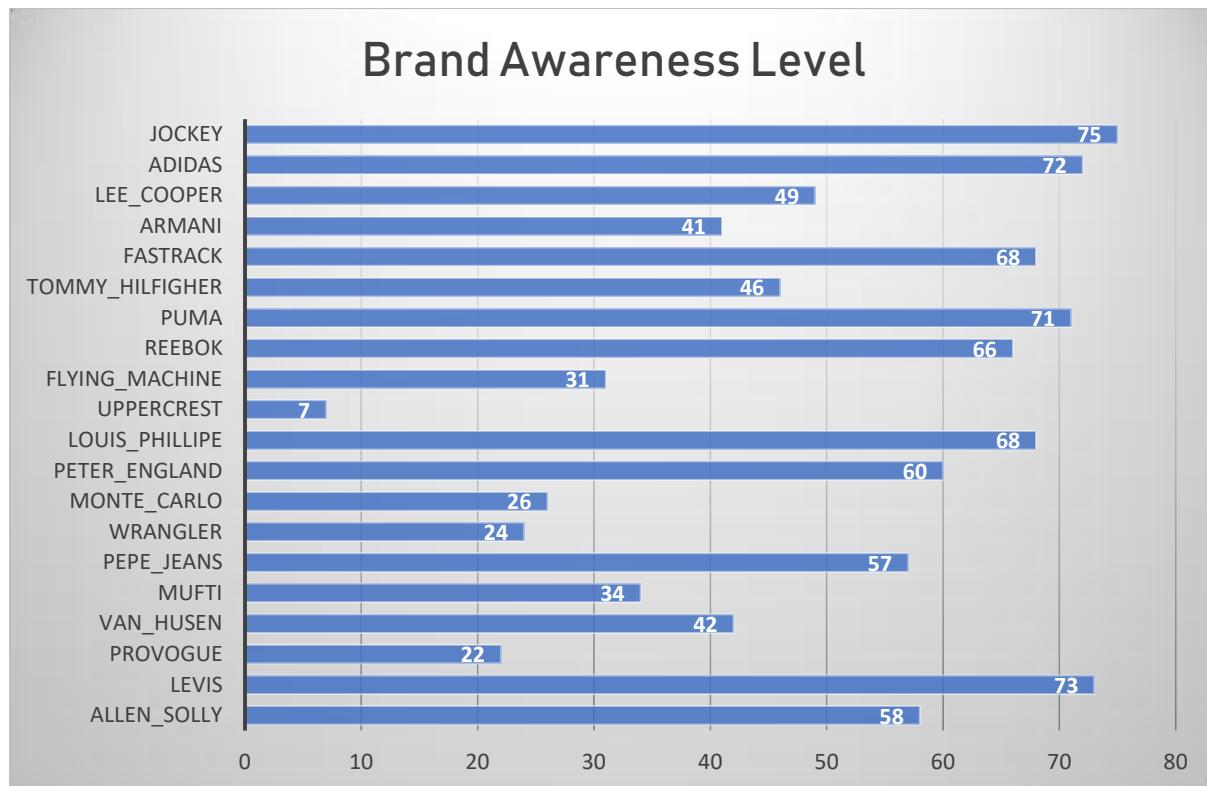
As we all enjoy stunning looks and fashionable praise which are affordable at a low cost there are certain factors to be considered there within. Due to the use and throw away attitude of the users there is irreplaceable damage to the environment. According to the business insider, 85% of these used clothes are dumped every year. there is a need to create awareness regarding the fast fashion side effects on nature and it is everyone's responsibility in doing so. This is not a simple issue to be ignored!!

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

Brand Awareness level:

We have made a survey in order to get to know the brand awareness level of certain consumers in the market with special reference to clothing, textiles and garments. When we mentioned the top brands in the clothing line in our questionnaire, we found that the respondents who are aware of all the top brands are huge in number, which might be because of the advertising campaigns of these brands. Here is a detailed description of what percentage of people are aware of the brands available in the market, and to what extent.

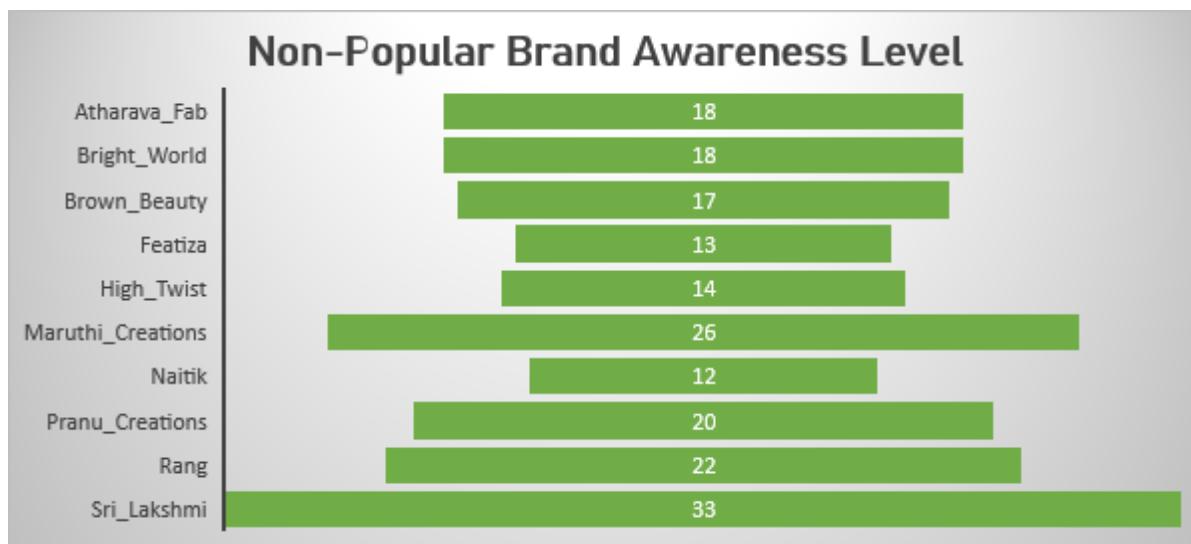
Popular Brand Awareness Frequencies				
		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Brand Awareness of	Allen Solly	58	5.9%	65.9%
	Levi's	73	7.4%	83.0%
	Provogue	22	2.2%	25.0%
	VanHeusen	42	4.2%	47.7%
	Mufti	34	3.4%	38.6%
	PepeJeans	57	5.8%	64.8%
	Wrangler	24	2.4%	27.3%
	Monte Carlo	26	2.6%	29.5%
	PeterEngland	60	6.1%	68.2%
	Louis Phillippe	68	6.9%	77.3%
	Upper crest	7	0.7%	8.0%
	Flying machine	31	3.1%	35.2%
	Reebok	66	6.7%	75.0%
	Puma	71	7.2%	80.7%
	Tommy Hilfiger	46	4.6%	52.3%
	Fastrack	68	6.9%	77.3%
	Armani	41	4.1%	46.6%
	Lee Cooper	49	4.9%	55.7%
	Adidas	72	7.3%	81.8%
	Jockey	75	7.6%	85.2%
Total		990	100.0%	1125.0%



Market has not only the branded products, there are less known products too. They too have their production, marketing and turnover. But when we think of the reason why they are not that popular, the first thing that comes to our mind is the marketing and advertisement stunt. All these not so popular products do exist in the market, so in our research we have picked up few non-popular brand names and placed it in our questionnaire, to see how many people actually knew about these products. In order to purchase a product, one has to know about it first, atleast its name and its purpose. Let's just see to what extent people are aware of these products.

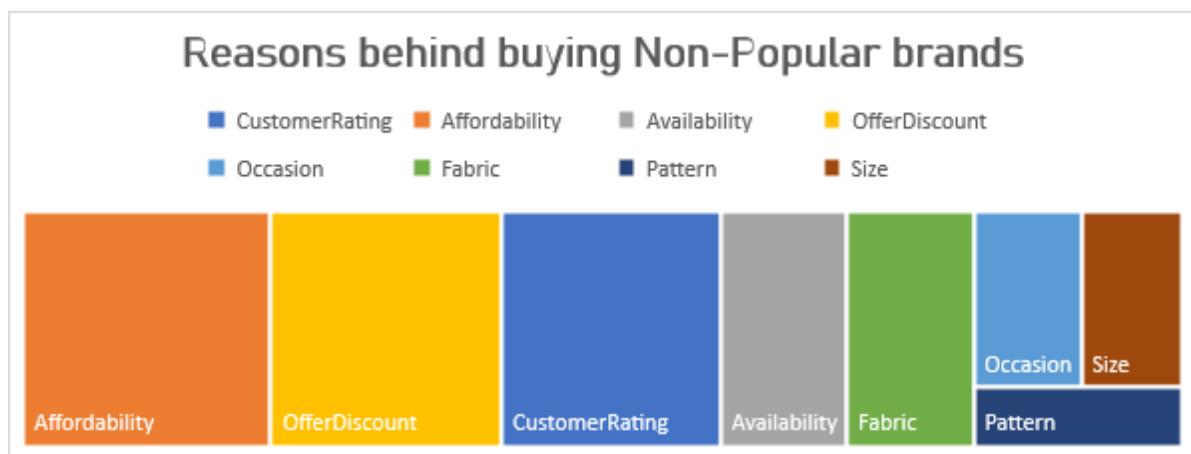
Non-Popular Brand Awareness Frequencies				
		Responses		Per cent of Cases
		N	Per cent	
Non-Popular Brand	AtharvaFab	18	9.3%	26.1%
	Bright World	18	9.3%	26.1%
	Brown Beauty	17	8.8%	24.6%
	Featiza	13	6.7%	18.8%
	High Twist	14	7.3%	20.3%
	MaruthiCreations	26	13.5%	37.7%
	Naitik	12	6.2%	17.4%
	PranuCreations	20	10.4%	29.0%
	Rang	22	11.4%	31.9%
	SriLakshmi	33	17.1%	47.8%
Total		193	100.0%	279.7%

Out of the total responses, we could find a little number of responses who are aware of these products. The same group of respondents are asked about these non-popular brands who were also asked about the popular brands. If we observe the analysis of data on both the popular brands and non-popular brands' awareness, we could clearly see that the responses of the popular brands are high that is 990, and the responses of the popular brand are low that is 193. Except for Maruthi creations and Sri Lakshmi, all the other brands are not well known to the consumers. Let's see with the better pictorial representation.



Customer Proclivity:

We have studied from our ongoing analysis that, people are more attracted to the popular brands. People show interest in purchasing a product which is familiar to them. Awareness plays a crucial role in consumer buying behaviour. But the actual inclination of the consumer is not entirely affected by the factors which are commonly known, such as brand. There exist other determinants which form part of consumer buying behaviour. Let's just see when a consumer is willing to buy the non-popular brands, and what is making them buy those products. What could be the factors impacting such a purchase:

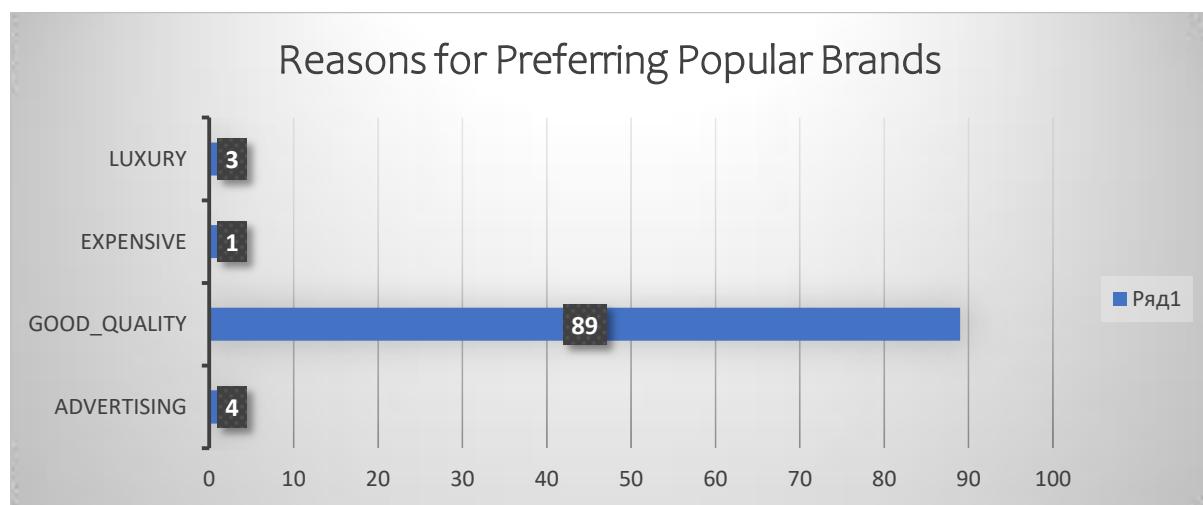


We have made a survey among all the potential consumers. As we have seen most of people prefer buying only the popular brands since their familiarity makes the consumers more comfortable in decision making. But sometimes, people do buy non-popular brands. We have asked certain questions regarding the reasons behind buying the non-popular brands in the first place. Out of the total responses, 18.9% of

the respondents prefer to buy these products because of the good customer review or customer rating, that is being given by previous users of the said commodity. by previous users of the said commodity. But on the top of the list the main reason is Affordability, 21.4% have chosen the option affordability. Most of the buyers go for the non-popular brand, due to the affordability factor. The next reason is Availability of that particular commodity. If a person is in need of a commodity which is available, depending on the extent of need, one would purchase that commodity. 10.9% of the respondents purchase the non-popular brands because they are easily available, when compared to their counterparts.

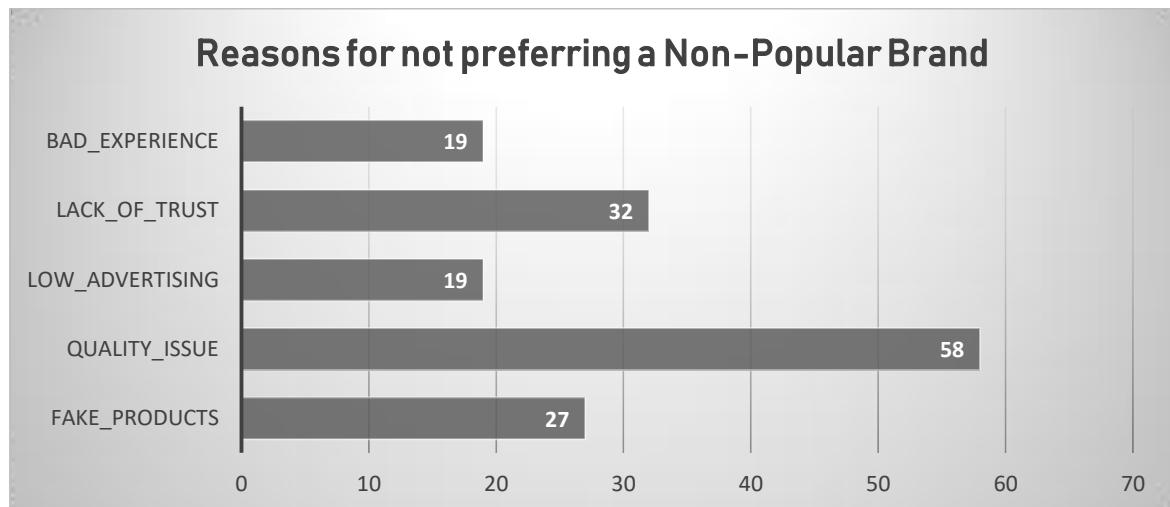
Out of the total respondents, 19.9% of them purchase the non-popular brands because they are on discount offers. Huge number of people do buy the products on sale which are sold on discounted prices. When we talk about the occasion or a special requirement of the day 7% of the respondents buy the non-popular brands just because of the occasional requirement. The main aspect of this clothing line depends on the fabric. So, 10.9% of the respondents purchase the non-popular product because of the availability of good fabric. Talking about rest of the reasons 4.5% of the respondents make the purchase because of the beautiful patterns and 6.5% of the people purchase the non-popular brands according to the availability of required size.

Under the concept of Customer Proclivity, we would be discussing various reasons behind the demand for the popular brands. Our respondents prefer buying the popular brands because of many reasons. Among them one of the top reasons is Good Quality. Majority of the people feel that the popular brands have a very good quality. And this making them buy more and more of the popular brands, instead of the non-popular ones. There are other reasons too, as shown in the chart below such as, due to the Luxury they feel significant. Some people buy products just because they are expensive enough, they don't want to purchase cheap products, then the expensive factor comes into picture for the reasons for preferring popular brands. There is another important factor which is well known to everyone, that is the Advertising. Advertising plays a very crucial role in making the people purchase certain commodities especially the popular brands, since they spend millions of dollars just to bring the product to the knowledge of the consumers in the targeted market.



When we talk about reasons for not preferring the non-popular brand is due to bad experience, lack of trust, low advertising, quality issues and fake products. In our survey we found that majority of the responses say they had quality issues with the non-popular brand products in the past, and justify their intention to go for a popular brand. Many of them say they received fake products which lasted not long enough. Fake products are those which try to be the replica of some popular brand, it will manipulate the consumers who are looking for the original one but end up buying the fake products due to unavailability of the original.

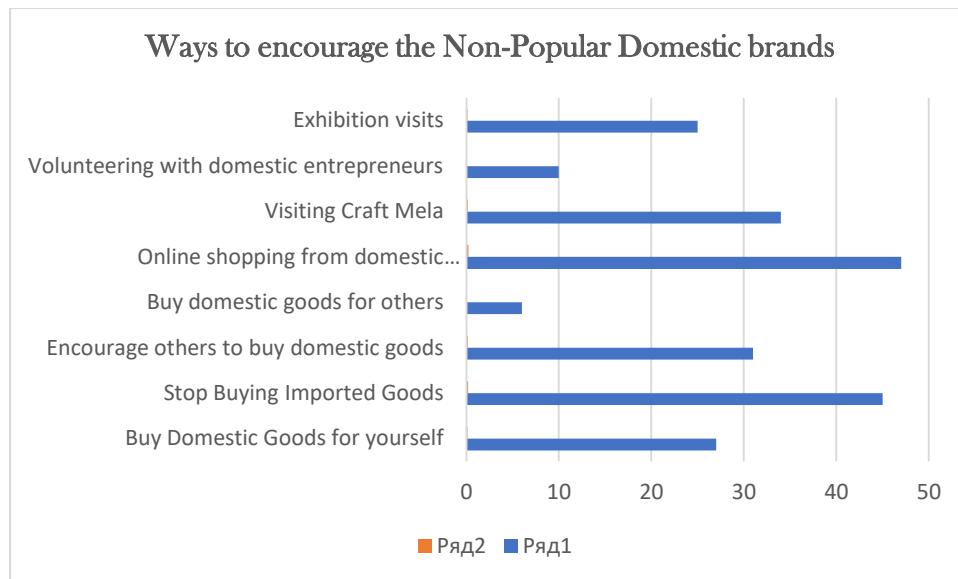
Most of the products in the market become non-popular because they are not well known to the consumers. The reason behind this lack of acknowledgement is due to unavailability of advertising. Advertising plays a very crucial role in making the product familiar with the consumers. Many say they had a bad experience with the products which are non-popular, this bad experience carries on for ages and wouldn't let them buy any non-popular brand anytime soon. All these ultimately leads to lack of trust. Since the trust factor plays a crucial role in decision making process of a consumer, lack of it results in ultimate denial of the product.



Non-Popular Domestic brands:

Most of the Popular brands we know have their origin in foreign countries. In every segment of the apparels, clothing, garments, we find the foreign brands competing with the domestic brands everywhere. Availability of huge capital contribution, technology and economies of scale, these large-scale industries could take the advantage of cost effectiveness and competitive advantage and could be able to sell their products with good quality and less prices. This is not the case with domestic small-scale entrepreneurs. Their capital investment is restricted to their financial ability. Their input costs completely rely on the meagre cash flows and working capital. They couldn't manufacture their products for low costs, since the availability of the inputs are not at discounted prices, since they are not bought in huge lots for concessional rates.

On top of these expensive inputs, the external costs such as for logistics, advertisements, customer relationship management, etc., discourages the manufacturer to expect for more profit margin, and articulate reasonable product pricing. The competitive market makes the product available at lower prices for the consumers, in order to take the competitive advantage and to grab a huge share of the market. This is not affordable to the small-scale industries. They couldn't sustain in this competition for a longer period of time. The new budding start-ups would be crushed by these huge giants, and the new generation is not at all seem to be interested in getting into this business against all these challenges. After all life is already complicated, they don't want to complicate it even more.



As a citizen of India, it is our responsibility to contribute towards the economic development of the nation. One way or another we need to be part of protecting the integrity and sovereignty of our country. As our Prime Minister shri. Narendra Modi has rightly launched the mission of Aatmanirbhar Bharat, with a view to self-sustain. We need to encourage the domestic entrepreneurs to stay afloat and excel in future and become Unicorns. In our survey we asked our respondents about the ways to encourage the Non-Popular Domestic brands, many of them encourage the domestic sales by purchasing the products in exhibitions set up by them. Few of the respondents volunteer with the domestic entrepreneurs, to bring awareness among people regarding the quality and durability of their products.

Many educational institutions have a practice of making their students go to craft melas. We do go too; this would connect the domestic manufacturers with the market. Most of the crafts are hand made and brings glory to the place of origin of that particular art. Visiting these places more often encourages those people who are involved in this business and the future generations to come. Pandemic has brought a huge change in our lives. The usage of online services has increased tremendously just in a matter of two years. The good news is the non-popular brands have made a big move in introducing their products to the consumers through online mode. It has made easier to both the consumers and the producers to access certain products at a very low prices and right on the expected time and in expected quantities.

Most of our respondents encourage the domestic entrepreneurs by purchasing through online platforms with more options to explore. In order to encourage these sales most of the respondents buy the domestic products for themselves or buying them for others. Some respondents, not only made purchases for them and others, they have spread the word and encouraged other people to buy these products. Another important aspect to consider is most of the respondents are found of depending completely of the imported goods. But now they are making some amendments in order to cut loose of these imports. But it takes time, nothing happens overnight. All the efforts are being made and future is with lot of hopes to overcome these difficulties, and one day we will become self-reliant, that is Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

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