



Women's purchase behaviour towards luxury products

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ABSTRACT:- Purpose and objectives of the study: The primary objective of the research is to find and understand the women's behaviour when it comes to buying luxury products. Here we want to know if awareness of product, opinion about product & buying decision of product depends on various demographic factors or not.

Research Methodology:- Data was collected from 100 respondents in Mumbai and Navi Mumbai. These people belonged to people of different occupations, income groups, religions, age groups, education and marital status.

Results:- It is found that there is a relation between age of women & awareness of luxury products. But there is no relation between age of women & opinion of luxury products and buying of luxury products. Also there is no relation between education of women & awareness and opinion of luxury products. There is a relation between occupation of women & awareness of luxury products, but there is no relation between occupation of women & opinion of luxury products and buying of luxury products. There is no relation between marital status of women & opinion of luxury products and buying of luxury products. There is a relation between yearly income of women & awareness of luxury products, but there is no relation between yearly income of women & buying of luxury products.

Managerial implications:- Luxury brand companies can target women consumers by understanding what influences them to buy luxury brands. They can devise strategies to enable the women consumers to access their products easily.

Keywords:- Women, luxury, purchase behaviour, luxury brands

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Luxury brands:

Luxury is no longer restricted today to only the rich and the selected few but is being used for mass marketing now. The concept of luxury has been changing dramatically across time and culture. Earlier, luxury was connected with things like wines, champagne, designer clothes and sports cars. These days, people have become richer and luxury is a blurred genre that is no longer the preserve of the elite. More and more consumers have increased their financial status as the old values of tradition and nobility have become less important. People are having much more disposable income in comparison to earlier generations, resulting in a tendency towards fulfilling personal needs and aspirations through experience. Therefore, it could be said that luxury is more about experience (Yeoman and McMahon-Beattie, 2010), rather than financial value. This is not to say that luxury is about status, but luxury is more than financial value. Indeed, they run hand in hand. The need for personal gratification and aspirations has led to greater emphasis on having things which make life better and easy. It means that consumers want to improve their life. This is what Danziger (2005) and Israel (2003) mean when they say that luxury is not just restricted to trophies and status symbols but also covers things giving aesthetic experience and indulgence. This is also due to increasing purchasing power of women in society, which is a good sign for luxury markets such as wellbeing, clothes and tourism. We see that the earlier concept of luxury of consumption and elitism stills prevails especially in emerging economies of China. In the recent times, the Global Financial Crisis has led consumers to re-examine their priorities and as a consequence, attitudes and behaviours towards luxury have changed.

In management field it is accepted to distinguish luxury products from necessary and ordinary products within their category by their basic *characteristics*. These include things like financial value, quality, aesthetics, exclusivity and status giving. All of these characteristics are relative terms. A *luxury product* is characterised by a relatively high rating on each of these dimensions compared to other products of its category (Trommsdorff

and Heine 2008, p. 1670). Luxury brands are those whose ratio of functional utility to price is low while the ratio of intangible and situational utility to price is high.

1.2 Purchase of luxury brands: To understand a women's mind when it comes to shopping for products is a very difficult call to take. The mind is always dynamic with various things coming into picture and at the same time many things getting off the screen. Adding to this is the shopping culture that women across the globe follow. When it comes to shopping women tend to find it difficult to understand the basic purpose of the same. 'Luxury' has been defined by researchers as the state of great comfort and extravagant living or an inessential but desirable item. A group of people think that expensive goods are always good & credible. Although sometimes quality of expensive goods is not that good, but still people buy it because it's aspirational. According to Wiedmann & Hennigs (2007), individual values and social values influence purchasing intentions toward global luxury brands. Buying to impress others is an internal personal value that drives a motive for luxury fashion brands consumptions. Consumers get affected easily by this internal drive to create a favorable image in society.

There are different factors like ethnocentrism, materialism, conformity and vanity which influence purchase of luxury brands.

Consumer ethnocentrism: It is the study on how people prefer to consume domestic products rather than consuming foreign products. *It is the product choice with no domestic alternative.* In fact, it is quite important for marketing managers to understand. It has been explained that the person who has high levels of consumer ethnocentrism would have more favorable attitudes toward products from similar culture countries in comparison to products from different culture countries (Watsons and Wright, 2000).

Materialism: It is the belief about the importance of possessions in life by emphasizing on the ability to own material objects in terms of the type and quantity of the purchased products (Richin and Dawson, 1992).

Conformity: It is a type of social impact related with a change in behavior in order to fit in or to be correct within a group in society.

Vanity: In this point of consumer behavior is related between the physical appearance and the concern of appearance. It is defined as the excessive concern for the view of physical appearance. Moreover, it is also related with the excessive concern for the personal achievement (Netemeyer, 1995).

Luxury consumption maybe significant to individuals in searching for social status and representation in a society. The higher the status an individual wants to be, the higher conspicuous consumption they expose.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Koonnaree Wongsiriwat (2007), in her study on purchase of luxurious hand bags in Bangkok, explains that emotional spending is an integral part of any purchases consumer make. Spending is now based on wants not needs. What we wear and how and when we wear it, provides others with a social situation.

- The leisure class women spend money in a way that makes them feel superior to others and in a way make the others feel poor.
- The handmade bags are more preferred though machine made provide better quality.
- Luxurious bags have become more of status symbol as they tend to signify purchasers ability to possess such a high quality goods and show off their income.
- Psychological factors play a major role as women feel costly luxurious bags are of the best quality.
- Working class of women feels that luxurious bags at work place show a better impression.
- The attractive offers, discounts, sales have a heavy impact on the behavior of buying of hand bags.
- Brand loyalty also influences the buying behavior as brand loyal women will prefer the same brand of handbags.
- Top of mind brand recall, brand recognition and awareness of a luxurious brand highly influences women.

KamolwanTovikkai&WiwatchaiJirawattananukool (2010) have done a study on factors influencing Thai women to purchase luxury goods. Thailand is one of the Southeast Asian countries where the niche market has been increased due to the continuous development of standard of living. Thailand is the country which has unique tradition, culture, and arts. Luxury seems to be familiar with Thai people. Thai people naturally appreciate fine thing which has full-grown over generations. Although, Thailand has not been colonized by western countries in the nineteenth century, but the country is open for trades ever since. Especially, in the late 1980s, the country emerged the economy. There are lots of foreign investments in Thailand, including many luxury brand companies.

The consumption of luxury fashion brands has increased and reached 300 million US dollar; the main driving force behind this is the growing number of rich and middle class people.

There is a big difference of behavior between luxury preference persons and non-luxury preference persons especially in demographic. There are many factors which impact on the luxury fashion products purchasing

behavior. The marketer should study these factors with utmost care in order to successfully enter into the market and remain the first choice of the customers.

Based on the demographic information, there are two indicators which are significant towards luxury fashion brands; purchasing intentions of young Thai women; amount of money spent on luxury fashion products and frequency of purchasing luxury fashion products. For other indicators, such as education level, monthly pocket-money, parents' income and living location, are not suitable to apply in marketing strategies in Thailand towards luxury fashion products. In other words, these indicators have no relationships and effect with purchasing intentions on Thai female students. For luxury preference persons, they usually purchase luxury fashion products every 3 months. Therefore, luxury brand marketers should arrange promotion period every 3 months in order to encourage more sales volume. On the other hand, non-luxury preference persons purchase the product once a year with less amount of money spent each time. This results lean toward supporting brand extension. A sub-brand has an ability in presenting the main brand image while the price can be set lower. Another recommendation should be given is an annual grand promotion campaign to attract those customers who tend to purchase the product once a year. In addition, bags, shoes and belts seem to be very popular among female students in Bangkok, luxury brand marketers can find promotions and/or customer activities relating to these products.

Social status is significantly the indicator of social recognition towards luxury fashion brands purchasing intentions of young Thai women. There is a strongly level of relationship on Thai female students on luxury fashion products in both luxury preference persons and non-luxury preference persons. Luxury brand marketers should aim to build brand image, incorporate its brand with prestigious and distinctive image and style.

Therefore, marketing communication should be focusing on propagation of brand symbol. Consumers who purchase luxury fashion brands want to be recognized. If the brand can fulfill this need, it acquire a chance to be successful.

The factors surrounding have to be included in the marketing strategy by emphasizing on Thai female students' luxury definition perception which is Great Comfort, Extravagant items and Best Quality items''. From this perception, consumers expect the luxury fashion products to come with these conditions. Therefore, marketers should put attention these qualifications. When the consumer's expectation match with actual performance, they will be satisfied, tend to re-purchase the same brand and soon become loyalty. From the results, just about half the respondents tend to re-purchase the same brand. This probably means that the expectation does not match with the actual performance. Marketers, therefore, should concentrate on both brand image and product quality in the order to suit with the consumer's expectation toward luxury fashion products. In the present, the luxury fashion brand culture in Thailand is not only spreading in the high class people, but also spread to middle class people and occasional low class people. It is because of a lot of the scattered advertising supports. A lot luxury fashion brands have designed magnificent store not just because to generate sales but also to communicate the power of the brands.

MSL group (2011) conducted a research in China to gain insight into young female luxury consumer behavior in China. Luxury consumption in mainland China has reached 7.9 billion Euro and China is now the world's second largest consumer of luxury goods after Japan, and by 2020 it is expected to become the largest luxury market. For luxury brands, women are now the key target group. Women accounted for more than 50 percent of luxury sales in 2010. The main focus of the research was on the young, urban, female luxury consumers to learn who they are, what their lives look like, what they dream about and how best to communicate with them.

A few key findings are listed below:

- Brands need to segment the market more carefully i.e. Luxury brands need to understand the motivations underlying the purchasing behavior of these different consumers.
- Branding must start from the inside out. Every employee must be able to tell the brand story and to "live the brand".
- Young female luxury consumers rely heavily on "endorsements" to guide their purchases.
- Social media are becoming increasingly important in picking a brand.
- There is a lack of product and brand knowledge among the people.
- Shopping is being considered as a way of relieving pressures of everyday life.
- Shopping is all about the Experience. Many of the respondents felt that local shopping experience didn't measures up to international standards.
- Respondents are not too keen on purchasing luxury goods via the Internet.

- Chinese prefer European luxury brands. “Made in China” is associated with inferior quality, imitation and a lack of brand heritage.
- Fake luxury items were not welcomed by the respondents.
- People brought luxury items for the sake of social status.

The most important finding from the research was that this group is not homogeneous. While the group shares many similarities, they are also separated by different values and aspirations. Three groups of young, Chinese luxury loving women belonging to the one-child generation were identified as: Desktop Cinderella's, Golden Dolls and Trench Coat Tigers.

- The Desktop Cinderella: The Desktop Cinderella's are usually white-collar office ladies. Individually, they do not spend large amounts of money on luxury, but they do spend, and they are a large group. Moreover, of all three groups, they are the most desperate for luxuries
- Golden Dolls are often second-generation entrepreneurs. They have often been sent abroad at a relatively young age. Golden Dolls are the most impulsive and unpredictable of the three categories.
- Trench Coat Tigers have a genuine interest in fashion. They have developed, or are actively working to develop, a strong personal taste, often based on their experiences abroad. Tigers prefer low-profile brands and new, up-and-coming Designers.

Ching-Yaw Chen et al. (2012) explain the differences in Taiwanese women's purchasing decisions towards luxury goods and general products.

Taiwanese women are active in their workplace as they have higher education and more job opportunities and equality leading to more purchasing power. Viewpoints of consumer behaviors have evolved from earlier single disciplinary to interdisciplinary science whose structure and concept includes sociology, psychology, economics, marketing etc.

Consumer buying behaviors are based on individual satisfying their needs, seeking products, services or ideas. According to Nicosia model four parts that take part in decision making are: Information exposure, Information collection and option evaluation, transform motives into action after getting convinced through various media and feedbacks. Demographic variables like age, education, occupation, marital status, income play key factor in purchasing decisions. Taiwanese woman aged 21-40 dominate luxury goods shopping most of them being well educated and independent. They consider product origin, functionality, prices, reputation, brand awareness, appearance and design rather than TV shopping, venting bad mood, endorsers influence or just for the sake of it.

Luxurious goods which Taiwanese women prefer are purse, watch, jewelry, skin care product, home appliance. For general product purchase only reasonable price, product functionality, quality is considered. General products women purchase are pen, apparel, scooter, food, bicycle, etc. Taiwanese women show more emphasis on purchase motive for luxury goods than general products. Women value sales representatives' opinions and information from newspaper and magazines for luxury goods more than general goods. Women under 30 give more value to source information than above 51 years. Luxury products take help of social network sites to give product exposure to women. General products are purchased mostly through online shopping, TV shopping and mail orders.

Amani Aqeel (2012) in his study on factors influencing Saudi women to purchase luxury fashion brand explains that as Saudi Arabia continues to undergo considerable social and economic change, status-seeking behavior has taken priority within the classes, which has resulted in brand conscious consumers who are relatively experienced with luxury consumption.

With high levels of government spending, rising levels of disposable income and no personal income tax, it is not surprising that confidence is high among Saudi consumers. As Saudis enjoy limited access to cinemas, theatres and other leisure activities, shopping is a popular way to spend time and malls have become popular social venues.

Numerous researches have shown that because people assume expensive products are better than cheaper ones, they tend to find luxury products more pleasurable regardless of their actual quality or utility. Some are of the opinion that people buy luxury items so they can fit in a certain social class.

There are four classes among the women that prevail in Saudi Arabia:

- 1) Muhafizeen- (Conservatives)
- 2) Mutazineen - (Well Balanced)
- 3) Usaryeen - (Family Oriented)
- 4) Mutamaredeen - (Rebels)

The mindsets of these four classes of women are totally different from each other thinking. They have their own way of arriving at a conclusion.

- Muhafizeen consumers have a conservative lifestyle and values and have historically shown little interest in brands beyond their practical rational benefits. However, nowadays, they are becoming increasingly brand aware.
- Mutazineen perceive “the brand” as something which can provide important emotional rewards. In particular, to help them express their new found sense of self-assurance and self-reliance and ultimately help express who they are.
- Usaryeen seek brands which are perceived to help them manage their busy lives. There is therefore a growing interest in convenience products, and a growing interest to try new products that can provide variety and value for money.
- Mutamaredeen have a high interest in brands and subscribe to the more materialistic values of Western society.

Hence it's seen that there are three main factors that influence the Saudi women towards the luxury fashion brands which pertain to the need for quality products, uniqueness of the product and its emotional value to an extent.

IV. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of the research is to find and understand the women's behaviour when it comes to buying luxury products and whether demographic variables like age, income and occupation are related to purchase of luxury brands.

V. RESEARCH DESIGN

The primary objective of the research is to find and understand the women's behaviour when it comes to buying luxury and branded products. The research focuses largely on the aspect that how women tend to react in a particular situation when the given situation gives a choice between luxury and general goods. The research basically understands what induces women to purchase luxury goods.

The method of data collection for this research will be a combination of primary and secondary data collection. In primary data collection; data will be collected mainly by using questionnaire and survey methods. Whereas in case of secondary data; the same will be collected from various research which have been done and through various magazines.

The universe for the research would mainly include women's between the age group of 20-40 years. This is because the luxury products are mainly demanded by this age group. The area from where the data is to be collected is restricted to Mumbai; since Mumbai is one of the major metro cities.

The time frame for the entire research ranges between two and a half months to three months. Time being a major constraint apart from the cost element the research has to be done in the best possible way giving the desired result and helping us to achieve the stated objectives.

The type of research would basically be a descriptive research.

V. SAMPLING DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION

In order to conduct our research on studying women's behaviour towards purchasing of luxury products, it is decided to use non-random sampling.

The basic targets for the sample are housewives, college going girls and working women. The age group that we prefer would be between 20 years to 40 years. These people will be contacted and would be interviewed through a questionnaire in the form of a face to face interaction. The sample size of this would be around **100** people and the target area would basically revolve around Mumbai and Navi Mumbai.

VI. ANALYSIS AND TESTING OF HYPOTHESES

Here we want to know if awareness of product, opinion about product & buying decision of product depends on various demographic factors or not.

1. H0: There is no relation between age group of women and purchase of luxury products

H1: There is a relation between age group of women and purchase of luxury products

Aware of luxury brands * Age

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.180 ^a	5	.006
Likelihood Ratio	9.026	5	.108
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.035	1	.005
N of Valid Cases	100		

VII. CONCLUSION

We reject H0, since the significance value is less than 0.05 thus conclude that there is a relation between age of women & awareness of luxury products.

Opinion about luxury product * Age

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	25.054 ^a	25	.459
Likelihood Ratio	23.865	25	.527
Linear-by-Linear Association	.269	1	.604
N of Valid Cases	100		

Conclusion:

We accept H0, since the significance value is greater than 0.05 thus conclude that there is no relation between age of women & opinion of luxury products among them.

Buying luxury brands * Age

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.012 ^a	5	.414
Likelihood Ratio	5.190	5	.393
Linear-by-Linear Association	.502	1	.478
N of Valid Cases	100		

Conclusion:

We accept H0, since the significance value is greater than 0.05 thus conclude that there is no relation between age of women & buying of luxury products.

2) H0: There is no relation between education level of women and purchase of luxury products

H1: There is a relation between education level of women and purchase of luxury products

Aware of luxury brands * Education

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.259 ^a	3	.016
Likelihood Ratio	8.737	3	.033
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.764	1	.009
N of Valid Cases	100		

Conclusion:

We reject H₀, since the significance value is less than 0.05 thus conclude that there is a relation between education of women & awareness of luxury products.

Opinion about luxury product * Education

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.875 ^a	15	.929
Likelihood Ratio	8.664	15	.894
Linear-by-Linear Association	.000	1	1.000
N of Valid Cases	100		

Conclusion: We accept H₀, since the significance value is greater than 0.05 thus conclude that there is no relation between education of women & opinion of luxury products.

Buying luxury brands * Education

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.943 ^a	3	.401
Likelihood Ratio	2.260	3	.520
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.412	1	.235
N of Valid Cases	100		

Conclusion: We accept H₀, since the significance value is greater than 0.05 thus conclude that there is no relation between education of women & buying of luxury products.

3. H₀: There is no relation between occupation of women and purchase of luxury products

H₁: There is a relation between occupation of women and purchase of luxury products

Aware of luxury brands * Occupation

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.683 ^a	4	.030
Likelihood Ratio	6.230	4	.183
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.806	1	.028
N of Valid Cases	100		

Conclusion: We reject H₀, since the significance value is less than 0.05 thus conclude that there is a relation between occupation of women & awareness of luxury products.

Opinion about luxury product * Occupation

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.252 ^a	20	.701
Likelihood Ratio	18.448	20	.558
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.696	1	.193
N of Valid Cases	100		

Conclusion: We accept H0, since the result is greater than 0.05 thus conclude that there is no relation between occupation of women & opinion of luxury products.

Buying luxury brands * Occupation

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.714 ^a	4	.103
Likelihood Ratio	6.821	4	.146
Linear-by-Linear Association	.489	1	.484
No of Valid Cases	100		

Conclusion: We accept H0, since the result is greater than 0.05 thus conclude that there is no relation between occupation of women & buying of luxury products.

4. H0: There is no relation between marital status of women and purchase of luxury products

H1: There is a relation between marital status of women and purchase of luxury products

Opinion about luxury product * Marital status

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.811 ^a	10	.550
Likelihood Ratio	10.760	10	.376
Linear-by-Linear Association	.032	1	.858
N of Valid Cases	100		

Conclusion: We accept H0, since the result is greater than 0.05 thus conclude that there is no relation between marital status of women & opinion of luxury products.

Buying luxury brands * Marital status

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.615 ^a	2	.735
Likelihood Ratio	.692	2	.707
Linear-by-Linear Association	.001	1	.979
N of Valid Cases	100		

Conclusion: We accept H0, since the significance value is greater than 0.05 thus conclude that there is no relation between marital status of women & buying of luxury products.

5. H0: There is no relation between income level of women and purchase of luxury products

H1: There is a relation between income level of women and purchase of luxury products

Aware of luxury brands * Yearly income

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	27.487 ^a	9	.001
Likelihood Ratio	16.828	9	.051
Linear-by-Linear Association	.468	1	.494
N of Valid Cases	100		

Conclusion: We reject H₀, since the significance value is less than 0.05 thus conclude that there is a relation between yearly income of women & awareness of luxury products.

Opinion about luxury product * Yearly income

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	41.552 ^a	45	.619
Likelihood Ratio	46.771	45	.400
Linear-by-Linear Association	.133	1	.716
N of Valid Cases	100		

Conclusion: We accept H₀, since the significance value is greater than 0.05 thus conclude that there is no relation between occupation of women & opinion of luxury products.

Buying luxury brands * Yearly income

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.385 ^a	9	.109
Likelihood Ratio	13.664	9	.135
Linear-by-Linear Association	.863	1	.353
N of Valid Cases	100		

Conclusion: We accept H₀, since the significance value is greater than 0.05 thus conclude that there is no relation between yearly income of women & buying of luxury products.

Results: (i) There is a relation between age of women & awareness of luxury products.

(ii) There is no relation between age of women & opinion of luxury products among them.

(iii) There is no relation between age of women & buying of luxury products.

(iv) There is no relation between education of women & opinion of luxury products.

(v) There is no relation between education of women & buying of luxury products.

(vi) There is a relation between occupation of women & awareness of luxury products.

(vii) There is no relation between occupation of women & opinion of luxury products.

(viii) There is no relation between occupation of women & buying of luxury products.

(ix) There is no relation between marital status of women & opinion of luxury products.

(x) There is no relation between marital status of women & buying of luxury products.

(xi) There is a relation between yearly income of women & awareness of luxury products.

(xii) There is no relation between occupation of women & opinion of luxury products.

(xiii) There is no relation between yearly income of women & buying of luxury products.

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