THE EXPERIMENT

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

MILLENNIALS AND APPAREL E-COMMERCE: THE ONLINE APPAREL SHOPPING BEHAVIOR OF MILLENNIALS.

ABSTRACT

Millennials or the Millennial Generation are the demographic cohort beginning birth years from the early 1980s to the early 2000s. In this generation, there's a marked increase in use and familiarity with communication, media, and digital. With the advancement of Internet technology and smartphones, e-commerce is witnessing significant growth in India. A research survey is conducted amongst the millennials to find out the popularity of apparel as a segment of online business and how it could be improved in terms of technology to make it work better. The results showed that customers expect an experience similar to physical 'touch and feel', size standardization and virtual trial/fit room and the display as well as description of garment should be such that the user gets similar experience as that of buying from a physical store.

Keywords Millennial, Brick and Mortar, Physical store, Fashionista, Online Shopping, E-Commerce, Apparel

INTRODUCTION

Internet has become very popular in advanced and developing nations alike. India is no exception. As technology is advancing and the lifestyle of urban population is changing, there is also a change in the buying pattern. People are beginning to buy online rather than going to a physical store. The change is more marked with the millennials - a generation born after 1980s. This generation is often equipped with consumer technology like laptops and smartphones [1].With the kind of lifestyle millenials have adopted today, they don't find enough time for shopping from a physical store and find convenience of buying online compelling. Hi-speed bandwidth and improved quality of screens on smartphones is helping this explosive growth in adoption of e-commerce.The government and regulatory bodies are also playing their part by investing in infrastructure and policy support. These bodies have also initiated awareness drives to get wider users (including SMEs/ MSMEs) on to the e-Commerce bandwagon [2].It is estimated that the e-Commerce will contribute around 4 percent to the GDP by 2020[3].Currently e-Commerce accounts for 15-20 percent[4]of the total revenues for some of the big logistics companies. The revenue for logistics industry from inventory based consumer e-Commerce alone may grow by 70 times to USD 2.6 Billion (INR 14,300 crores) by 2020[5.] The fashionista is looking for apparel online as well as offline. By sitting at one place the customer can explore all the options available in the market and can even do a comparative study in terms of price and design options.

Method

A survey was conducted in the age group of 18-30 in Bengaluru to find out thepreferences of millennialsshopping for apparel on-line. What are the customer expectations from the online Apparel business? How much money do they spend on apparel shopping in a year? How often do they shop?Dothe millennials prefer online shopping? What are the most popular websites? And, finally what is the need of the hour for the online apparel business?

A questionnaire was formulated and data was collected from sample size of 227. The sample was split between 55% males and 45% females.53% of thesample were in the age group between18and 22years, followed by 31% between age group of 23 to 26years and 16% were above 27 years up to the age of 30 years.

64% were students and 27% were Government or private sector employees and 6% were into business.

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RESULTS

The survey showed that 65% people preferred to shopfor apparel from a physical store as compared to 35% who preferred online shopping. Themain reasons for preferring physical store were touch and feel of the fabric (41%), followed bychecking the size and trying the garment to check the fit (39%)followed by insufficient product details. A few also mentioned long delivery time and visual merchandising of the online store.Further, people preferred to shop from a physical store more than 10 times in a yearas compared to maximum 5 times from an online store. Of the people who preferred to buy online, their main reasons of buying online were convenience (39%) followed by sale/discounts/coupons (33%), availability of wide range of products (19%)and unavailability of products in a physical store (9%).

The most preferred apparel-type for online shoppers were T-shirts followed by Top wearand shirts [6].The least preferred apparels for online shopping found were Trousers /Denims followed by Suits/Salwar Kameez [7.]The main reason for the low preference were problems with the size chart (67%) and insufficiency of details/description of the product (16%).

A very significant number (73%) of people had returned the product bought online for reasons of size and fit (37%), product defects (19%) and the product delivered not being the same as shown online(15%).
The most important element while deciding to buy apparel online was its design, followed by product quality and brand [8]. The most preferred websites were Myntra -(29%), Jabong(19%) and Flipkart(19%).

CONCLUSION

While online shopping is growing, milennials still prefer to shop from a physical store as compared to online option. Themain reasons for choosing physical store were lack of 'touch and feel' of the fabric followed by problems of right fit.In order to make online shopping more popular the following areas need more work (a) Sizing and fit [10] (b) Improvement in how the product is displayed to the customers (c) Showcasing all possible design elements of the garment(d) Feel and touch of the garment.Theapparel E-commerce industry can really blossom if a technology solution to thesekey issues is found and thereafter this model of commerce will be as good as brick-and- mortar, if not better and more profitable.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

Tables and Charts

T-Shirt	Shirts	Tops	Trousers/Denim	Dress	Suits/SalwarKameez
42%	15%	16%	10%	11%	5%

Table-1Most preferred Apparels for online shopping

T-Shirt	Shirts	Tops	Trousers/Denim	Dress	Suits/SalwarKameez
8%	13%	4%	43%	15%	16%

Table-2 least preferred Apparels for online shopping

FACTORS PEOPLE CONSIDER WHILE BUYING CLOTHES

DESIGN 24% DISCOUNT 16% PRICE 18% PRODUCT QUALITY 22% BRAND 20%

Chart-1 Important factors for buying clothes

Customization of size and fit facility	Touch and feel of the garment	3-Dimensional view of the design	Video of the garment with Unique selling features
37%	27%	22%	14%

Table-3 Options to make online shopping better and improved

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