A Behavioral Study of Purchase Intention Among Apparel Customers

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Abstract— **In the contemporary competitive business landscape, a profound understanding of determinants shaping customer purchase intention and subsequent behavior is imperative. Hence, this research is aimed to scrutinize the relationship of brand awareness, perceived quality, and price discounts concerning the purchase intentions of apparel customers in the Colombo District. Conducting an explanatory cross-sectional study, both primary and secondary data were utilized. The primary data collection involved distributing an online questionnaire among 270 respondents through the snowball sampling method. Subsequently, the collected data underwent analysis using statistical tools such as SPSS. The findings underscored reliable and strong, significant relationships between the three independent variables (brand awareness, perceived quality, price discounts) and the customer purchase intention. Furthermore, the study's conceptual model demonstrated high model fitness. Nevertheless, the researcher advocates for future investigations to incorporate additional independent variables to comprehensively explore this domain.**

Keywords— Apparel Customers, Brand Awareness, Perceived Quality, Price Discounts, Purchase Intention

I. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary and dynamic landscape of business, where the influence of both retailers and customers has reached unprecedented levels, fostering enduring relationships with customers has become not just crucial but indispensable for the prosperity and sustainability of manufacturers [1]. However, despite the substantial financial investments made by organizations in marketing campaigns, there exists a critical gap in understanding the precise requirements of customers and the intricate relationship between these marketing endeavors and actual purchase intentions [2]. As organizations navigate this landscape, the ability to bridge this knowledge gap and establish a direct correlation between marketing efforts and customer responses becomes paramount for achieving sustained success in a fiercely competitive market. In essence, the contemporary business environment demands a paradigm shift in approach, where manufacturers not only invest in robust marketing campaigns but also prioritize acquiring a comprehensive understanding of their customers to cultivate enduring and mutually beneficial relationships [3].

In light of the evolving dynamics of customer preferences and the absence of comprehensive studies in Sri Lanka, there exists a pressing need to delve into the factors that significantly impact the purchase intentions of apparel customers. The lack of empirical investigations within this geographical context underscores the urgency to address this research gap systematically. Numerous scholarly works have emphasized the intricate relationship between customer behavior and various factors in the apparel industry.

The influence of brand image and service quality on purchase intention has been explored by Wu et al. [4], while Kotler [5] provides a foundational understanding of marketing management principles. The role of customer attitudes, knowledge, and values in sustainable apparel consumption is evident in works by Kozar and Hiller Connell [6], Dickson [7], and McNeill and Moore [8]. Moreover, the relevance of supply chain disclosure and transparent business practices is highlighted by Marshall et al. [9] and Bhaduri and Ha-Brookshire [10]. The impact of brand recognition on retail store image, as studied by Porter and Claycomb [11], further underscores the interconnectedness of various elements influencing customer behavior. In this context, the synthesis of existing literature underscores the multifaceted nature of factors influencing the customer purchase intention in the apparel industry, providing a solid foundation for an in-depth investigation tailored to the unique dynamics of the Sri Lankan market.

A. Research Questions

1. What is the impact of brand awareness on the purchase intention of apparel customers in Colombo district?

2. What is the impact of perceived quality on the purchase intention of apparel customers in Colombo district?

3. What is the impact of price discounts on the purchase intention of apparel customers in Colombo district?

B. Research Objectives

1. To investigate the impact of brand awareness on the purchase intention of apparel customers in Colombo district.

2. To investigate the impact of perceived quality on the purchase intention of apparel customers in Colombo district.

3. To investigate the impact of price discounts on the purchase intention of apparel customers in Colombo district.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

A. Materials

According to [12], this research can be categorized as an explanatory, cross-sectional study, focusing on establishing causal relationships among variables within a specific timeframe. Explanatory research aims to explain variable relationships by investigating a particular issue or scenario [13]. [14] have characterized the hypothetico-deductive method as a version of the scientific approach that systematically generates knowledge to address fundamental and managerial problems.

In this study, taking into account time limitations, the researcher has opted for a sample size of 270. Employing the snowball sampling technique, a non-probabilistic approach, the study included both male and female participants aged over 20, as both conventional literacy and IT literacy were prerequisites for completing the questionnaire. According to [15], snowball sampling begins with a convenience sample of one or more initial participants. In this research also, considering the time and other physical constraints, researcher initiated the data collection process using a selected group of apparel customers in Colombo district based on convenience sampling and requested them to share the questionnaire with suitable respondents, thereby initiating snowball sampling method.

Snowball sampling method presented several limitations. One major concern was sampling bias, as participants are likely to refer individuals within their own networks, leading to a lack of diversity and potentially skewed data. This method also presented the possibility to result in overrepresentation of certain subgroups and limit the generalizability of findings. Additionally, there was a risk of privacy concerns, as referrals may feel pressured to participate due to their connection with initial respondents. To mitigate these limitations, efforts were made to initiate the sampling process with diverse and well-distributed initial participants to encourage greater variety in referrals. Furthermore, participants were assured of confidentiality and informed that participation was entirely voluntary, reducing social pressure and ethical concerns.

Primary data acquisition involved the distribution of a structured questionnaire via a Google Form, encompassing demographic details and critical facets associated with customer purchase intentions. Meanwhile, secondary data were gathered through extensive literature exploration encompassing books, articles, and internet resources, leveraging the expediency of online platforms for swift access to pertinent scholarly materials. Databases such as Emerald Insight and Academia were consulted to access previous academic endeavors pertinent to the research field, enriching the study's foundation with existing scholarly contributions.

Methodology

In this study, a quantitative methodology was adopted to meticulously evaluate the influence of brand awareness, perceived quality, and price discounts on the purchase intention of apparel customers. Subsequently, the amassed data was analyzed utilizing statistical software package IBM SPSS Statistics 20.0. These tools were instrumental in verifying and ensuring the validity and reliability of the collected data, correlation between variables, constructing regression models, and scrutinizing the hypotheses posited by the researcher.

The independent variables identified by the researcher encompass brand awareness, perceived quality, and price discounts, while the dependent variable pertains to the purchase intention of apparel customers. The researcher elucidated the interrelationships among these variables, providing rationale for expecting their existence and clarifying the anticipated relationships between them.

The relationship between brand awareness and purchase intention among apparel customers has garnered significant attention in customer behavior research. The brand awareness plays a crucial role in influencing customers' perceptions and attitudes toward apparel products, thereby impacting their purchase intentions [16].

H1: Brand awareness has a positive impact on the purchase intention of apparel customers.

Exploring the relationship between perceived quality and purchase intention in the apparel industry remains a central focus of contemporary customer behavior research. Recent studies emphasize the profound impact of perceived product quality on customers' intentions to purchase apparel items [17], [18].

H2: Perceived quality has a positive impact on the purchase intention of apparel customers.

The association between price discounts and purchase intention among apparel customers has been a focal point of recent research in customer behavior. Contemporary studies shed light on the significant impact of price discounts on customers' intentions to purchase apparel items [19], [20].

H3: Price discounts have a positive impact on the purchase intention of apparel customers.

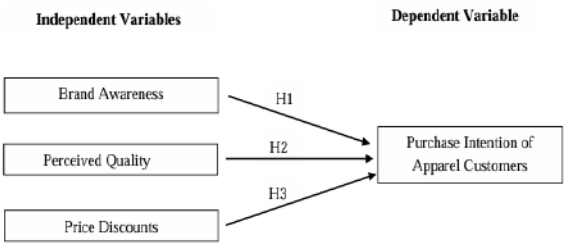


Fig. 1 Conceptual Framework

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

KMO and Bartlett's Test was conducted to determine the validity of the data used in the study. The variables were considered valid if the KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy value was greater than 0.5 and the significance value was less than 0.05. As evident from table 1, all the variables considered in this study were identified to be valid. In other words, it represents the correctness of the methods used to measure the variables.

Table 1: Summary of Validity Analysis

The Variable	**KMO Value**	**Significance**	**Conclusion**
Customer Purchase Intention	0.743	0.000	Valid
Brand Awareness	0.770	0.000	Valid
Perceived Quality	0.790	0.000	Valid
Price Discounts	0.770	0.000	Valid

Further, as illustrated in Table 2, the reliability coefficients of all variables (customer purchase intention, brand awareness, perceived quality, and price discounts) exceed the threshold of 0.7. This signifies the reliability of all variables under scrutiny within the study. This observation underscores the cohesive nature of the measuring items involved in assessing each variable. In other words, the entirety of variables investigated in this research demonstrates a capacity to yield stable and consistent outcomes. Notably, perceived quality emerges as the most reliable variable, exhibiting the highest Cronbach's value of 0.805. Conversely, customer purchase intention presents a comparatively lower level of consistency, denoted by its Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.739, making it the least consistent variable in this study.

Table 2: Summary of Reliability Analysis

The variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability	Conclusion
Customer Purchase Intention	0.739	0.739 > 0.7	Reliable
Brand Awareness	0.785	0.785 > 0.7	Reliable
Perceived Quality	0.805	0.805 > 0.7	Reliable
Price Discounts	0.781	0.781 > 0.7	Reliable

According to table 3, a strong positive correlation is evident between customer purchase intention and brand awareness, with the relationship exhibiting a magnitude of 65.2%. This finding suggests that an increase in brand awareness positively influences customer purchase intention. Moreover, the statistical significance, indicated by a significance value below 0.05, confirms the presence of a significant relationship between customer purchase intention and brand awareness.

Table 4 has suggested a strong positive correlation is observed between customer purchase intention and perceived quality, quantified at 67.9%. This suggests that an enhancement in perceived quality is associated with a concurrent increase in customer purchase intention. Furthermore, the significance value, falling below the threshold of 0.05, affirms the presence of a statistically significant relationship between customer purchase intention and perceived quality.

A strong positive correlation is evident between customer purchase intention and price discounts, characterized by a correlation coefficient of 71.9% which has been illustrated in table 5. This indicates that an escalation in price discounts is associated with a simultaneous increase in customer purchase intention. Moreover, the statistical significance, denoted by a significance value below 0.05, confirms a significant relationship between customer purchase intention and price discounts.

Table 3: Correlation between Customer Purchase Intention and Brand Awareness

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	Significance of the Relationship
Customer Purchase Intention	Brand Awareness	0.652	0.000

Table 4: Correlation between Customer Purchase Intention and Perceived Quality

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	Significance of the Relationship
Customer Purchase Intention	Perceived Quality	0.679	0.000

Table 5: Correlation between Customer Purchase Intention and Price Discounts

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	Significance of the Relationship
Customer Purchase Intention	Price Discounts	0.719	0.000

As observed in table 6, R squared stands at 0.597, surpassing the 0.5 threshold, thereby indicating a relatively stronger model fit. This particular R squared value of 0.597 explicates that collectively, the independent variables expound upon 59.7% of the variation in the dependent variable. However, considering the adjusted R squared, which stands at 0.592, it suggests that the inclusion of additional input variables may lead to a reduction in predictive power. Despite the R squared value surpassing the 0.5 benchmark (0.597 > 0.5), it should be noted that this does not classify as a model with exceedingly high fitness. Consequently, this signifies a model that may warrant further investigation and refinement in future research endeavors.

H1: Brand awareness has a positive impact on the purchase intention of apparel customers.

Based on the statistical significance derived from the regression outcomes, the significance value corresponding to the brand awareness variable is observed to be less than 0.05 (0.000 < 0.05), consequently leading to the acceptance of the formulated hypothesis (H1). Furthermore, the beta coefficient associated with this variable is determined to be 0.226, elucidating that there exists a 22.6% influence stemming from the brand awareness on the customer purchase intention of the apparel customers in the Colombo district. This positive association implies that an enhancement of the brand awareness by 1 unit by an apparel company could potentially elevate the purchase intention of customers in the Colombo district by 0.226 units.

H2: Perceived quality has a positive impact on the purchase intention of apparel customers.

Based on the regression analysis, the significance value linked with the perceived quality variable is determined to be below 0.05 (0.001 < 0.05), consequently leading to the acceptance of the formulated hypothesis (H2). Moreover, the beta coefficient attributed to this variable is calculated to be 0.220, indicating a 22% impact resulting from perceived quality on the customer purchase intention among apparel customers within the Colombo district. This positive correlation suggests that by improving perceived quality by 1 unit, an apparel company has the potential to increase the purchase intentions of its customers in the Colombo district by approximately 0.220 units.

H3: Price discounts have a positive impact on the purchase intention of apparel customers.

Based on the regression analysis outcomes, the significance value attributed to the variable concerning price discounts is observed to be below 0.05 (0.000 < 0.05), thereby leading to the acceptance of the stipulated hypothesis (H3). Additionally, the beta coefficient associated with this variable is calculated at 0.379, signifying a 37.9% impact stemming from price discounts on the customer purchase intention of the apparel customers in the Colombo district. This positive correlation indicates that increasing price discounts by 1 unit by an apparel company could potentially result in an increase of approximately 0.379 units in the purchase intention of its customers residing in the Colombo district.

Further, based on the analysis results, regression equation was updated as follows,

$$Y = \beta 0 + \beta 1X1 + \beta 2X2 + \beta 3X3$$
$$Y = 0.745 + 0.226X1 + 0.220X2 + 0.379X3$$

- Y = Customer Purchase Intention (Dependent Variable)
- β0 = Constant Value
- X1 = Brand Awareness
- β1 = Regression Coefficient of Brand Awareness
- X2 = Perceived Quality
- β2 = Regression Coefficient of Perceived Quality
- X3 = Price Discounts
- β3 = Regression Coefficient of Price Discounts

Table 6: Summary of Regression Analysis

Summary			
R Square		0.597	
Adjusted R Square		0.592	
Model Significance		0	
Hypotheses Testing	B Coefficient (Beta)	Significance	Accept/Reject
H1: Brand awareness has a positive impact on the purchase intention of apparel customers	0.226	0	Accept
H2: Perceived quality has a positive impact on the purchase intention of apparel customers	0.22	0.001	Accept

H3: Price discounts have a positive impact on the purchase intention of apparel customers	0.379	0	Accept

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on literature, brand awareness, perceived quality and price discounts were selected by the researcher and thus this study was conducted in order to fulfill the purpose of determining the impact of aforementioned independent variables on purchase intention of apparel customers in Colombo district. In order to fulfill this purpose, three research questions were developed.

RQ 1. What is the impact of brand awareness on the purchase intention of apparel customers in Colombo district?

The literature review posited a theoretical link between brand awareness and customer purchase intentions, citing research by Keller [21] and Macdonald & Sharp [22], highlighting the influential role of brand awareness in shaping purchase intentions. This theoretical proposition was substantiated through the outcomes of this study. The obtained Pearson's correlation coefficient of 0.652 coupled with a significance value below 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$) supported the conclusion that brand awareness exerts a strong, statistically significant, and positive influence on customer purchase intentions.

RQ 2. What is the impact of perceived quality on the purchase intention of apparel customers in Colombo district?

The empirical analysis revealed a Pearson's correlation coefficient of 0.679 coupled with a significance value of 0.000, affirming a substantial and statistically significant positive relationship between perceived quality and customer purchase intentions. This finding finds support in various previous studies within the existing literature. Notably, many scholars have contributed to reinforcing this assertion by highlighting the association between heightened perceived quality and amplified intentions toward purchase among customers.

RQ 3. What is the impact of price discounts on the purchase intention of apparel customers in Colombo district?

Scholarly literature posits that leveraging price discounts serves as a pervasive and effective mechanism for increasing sales, as indicated by the research of Bell, Ho, and Tang [23]. The analytical findings of this investigation further substantiate this theoretical underpinning. A Pearson's correlation coefficient of 0.719 coupled with a significance value of 0.000 affirm a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between price discounts and customer purchase intentions. Notably, based on the correlation outcomes, it was identified that price discounts emerged as the variable exhibiting the most substantial association with customer purchase intentions within the studied framework.

Ultimately, the multiple linear regression analysis revealed on an explanatory capacity, supported by the coefficient of determination (R squared), that brand awareness, perceived quality and price discounts collectively account for 59.7% of the variances observed in customer purchase intentions. This underscores the fitness of the formulated conceptual model within this study. Furthermore, the acceptance of all alternative hypotheses and rejection of null hypotheses is underscored by the significance values of all three independent variables falling below the threshold of 0.05.

The study's outcomes underscore the paramount importance of brand awareness, perceived quality and price discounts. Failure to address these elements may lead to potential customer attrition. The results distinctly underscore the significance of these factors in shaping customer purchase intentions and emphasize the importance for organizations to prioritize and enhance brand awareness while promoting robust perceived quality and price discounts to maintain a loyal customer base.

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