Research Article

FACTORS AND BRAND SELECTION- AN INVESTIGATION OF GOLD JEWELLERY CONSUMERS OF SELECTED BRANDED GOLD JEWELLERY SHOPS IN KERALA

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ABSTRACT

Gold is a valuable yellow metal and is one of the first metals to be known to man. In India gold is religion and inseparable part of culture. Today, gold has emerged as an important means for investment also. In developed countries sighting gigantic shopping malls is very common whereas in Kerala similar trend is visible among branded gold jewellery shops. Kerala has one of the largest number of gold jewellers in India. All the major jewellery brands in Kerala like Josco, Bhima, Malabar Gold, Kalyan Jewellers, Alukkas Group are competing with each other to capture the market. All of these brands have branches at national and international level and they are playing a leading role in the branded gold jewellery market in Kerala. Various factors influence consumers to choose a brand and at the same time brands are spending millions for advertisements and celebrities. The major purpose of visiting a branded gold jewellery shop, factors influencing the buying behaviour of consumers and the association between these factors and brand selection are the core areas covered in this study.

INTRODUCTION

Gold is a precious metal with universal acceptance and it can be seen everywhere from jewellery to technology. Of all the precious metals it has achieved the position as the most popular alternative for the purpose of investment. People keep gold in many forms. Liquidity, ease in handling, hedge against various emergencies, higher returns and affordable price make it a most attractive investment option. The most popular form of gold is jewellery.

Gold jewellery is one of the oldest forms of body adornment. The history of the jewellery shows that it has different uses among different cultures. In ancient time kings and royal people used to adorn themselves with jewellery and it was their status symbol. There is not much change in this concept even in the modern era. Jewellery is a must wear for women on special occasions. Till 1990's non-branded jewellery shops and jewellers or goldsmiths in local areas dominated the gold jewellery sector. Buyers had implicit faith in his jeweller. But the late 1990s witnessed a drastic shift in consumer perception and branded jewellery shops entered in the gold jewellery market.

Branded jewellers struggled to compete with traditional jewellers and were forced to find out some way to differentiate themselves and it was a huge success. Hall marking, demonstrating the purity of gold, introducing fashionable and light weight jewellery instead of chunky ones, promotional measures like advertising, sales promotion, salesmanship and public media have created a revolution in the field of gold jewellery market. The present study is an attempt to analyse the influence of various factors on brand selection as well as its influence on the buying behaviour of the gold jewellery consumers in Kerala

Significance and scope of the study

Gold Jewellery is one of the prominent sectors in India. India has witnessed drastic changes in this sector especially after 1990. The emergence of branded jewellery is a new trend that is shaping the Indian jewellery market. East Asia, the Indian sub-continent and the Middle-East accounted for approximately 66 percent of consumer demand in 2012 (Honey, 2013). Kerala is popular as God's own country is now Gold's own country as it has achieved top position as the biggest gold consumers' in the country. The presence of major branded gold jewellery shops made it as a popular gold destination in the country. Various Factors like price, purity of the gold, pressure from family members, brand image/name, availability of various fashions, advertisements, free gifts and coupons, influence of celebrity, quality of service, resale price and exchange offer are

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influencing consumers towards brands. All branded jewellery shops are giving due importance to these factors and are spending millions on factors like advertisement and celebrities. What are the important factors influencing consumers towards a particular brand and whether these factors differ according to brands and whether there is any association between brand selection and factors form part of the study?

Statement of the Problem

Keralite's love for gold ornaments can be traced back to very ancient days. Keralite's consider gold as something invaluably precious and divine. Gold continues to be the most traded commodity in Kerala. The gold market in Kerala is dominated by family jewellers and branded jewellers. Jewellery business especially branded gold jewellery business is a flourishing business venture in Kerala. People visit jewellery shops for different purposes. To identify the major purpose for which they visit the shop is important in jewellery business. Various factors are influencing consumers to select a shop. Price, purity of the gold, pressure from family members, brand image, availability of fashions, promotional measures, influence of celebrity and the like are some of the factors. These factors may differ according to every brand. One or more factors could influence customers to choose a brand.

Hence the present study entitled "Factors and Brand Selection- An Investigation of gold jewellery consumers of selected branded gold jewellery shops in Kerala".

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A comprehensive review of related past studies helps the researcher to adopt, modify and improve the concept ualisation of framework and provide a link with past approaches. The findings and recommendation of the past literature relating brand promotion of gold jewellery business in Kerala and its impact on the consumers are not many.

Sundaram(2007) described in his article that the escalating price of gold has adversely affected the small gold jewellers, while the big jewellers manage it by spending on advertisement and offering discount schemes.

World Gold Council (2006) analysed the impact of consumer attitudes on gold jewellery demand. The emotional attributes and benefits of gold, as well as its practical or financial benefits which plays an important and complementary role to women around the world were unearthed in the Council's study.

Table 1 Distribution of branches of selected brands in Kerala

Shops	South	Sample size	Central	Sample Size	North	Sample Size	Total sample
Bhima	Tvm-3 Kottayam-1 Allappey-1 Adoor-1	49	Kochi-4 Kottayam-1 Thodupuzha-1 Thrissur-1	58	Kozhikode-1 Kannur-1 Sulthan Bathery-1 Palakkad-1 Total-4	33	140
	Total-6		Total-7		Palakkad-2		
Josco	Tvm-4 Kollam-1 Pathanamthittaa-1 Thiruvalla-1 Total-7	61	Kochi-2 Kottayam-1 Thodupuzha-3 Thrissur-3 Total-7	61	Total-2	18	140
Kalyan	Kollam-1 Tvm-1 Thiruvalla-1	42	Kottayam-1 Thrissur-1 Cochin-1	42	Kozhikkode-1 Palakkad-1 Pathanamthitta-1 Kannur-1 Total-4	57	141
Malabar	Total=3 Adoor-1 Allappey-1 Kollam-1 Tvm-1 Karunagappally-1 Pathanamthitta-1 Thiruvalla-1	30	Total-3 Angamaly-1 Thrissur-3 Cochi-2 Kottayam-1 Moovattupuzha-1 Thodupuzha-1	39	Total-4 Calicut-1 Kalpatta-1 Kanjangadu-1 Kannur-1 Kasargodu-1 Malappuram-3 Palakkad-1 Perinthalmanna-1 Sulthan Bathery-1 Thalassery-1 Kondotty-1 Kottakkal-1 Payyannor-1 Vadakara-1 Edappally-1	73	142
	Total-7		Total-9		Total-17		
					Total		563

Objectives of the study

1. To analyze the various factors influencing consumers towards selected brands.
2. To study the association between brands and factors.

Hypothesis of the study

There is no significant association between factors and brands

Statistical Techniques for the present study

Arithmetic mean, Chi-square test and Kruskal-Wallis test

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The present study is based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data were collected from the gold jewellery consumers of Bhima, Josco, Malabar and Kalyan Jewellers in the state of Kerala. The districts of Thiruvananthapuram, Thrissur and Palakkad have been selected as the sample districts from the state of Kerala on account of the concentration of jewellery business of the selected brands in these districts.

Proportionate Stratified Random Sampling Method of Probability Sampling Methods was adopted for the selection of sample respondents. For the purpose of the study and for collecting primary data, the entire state of Kerala is divided into three zones such as South, Central and North Zone and Jewellery Shops such as Bhima, Josco, Kalyan and Malabar Gold were selected. From the three zones 3 districts were selected for intensive study such as Thiruvananthapuram, Thrissur and Palakkad. 140 samples each from Bhima, Joscoand 141 samples from Kalyan Jewellers and 142 Samples from Malabar Gold were selected for the detailed study. The sample size is selected on the basis of weekly population size of the selected branded jewellery shops at the confidence level 95 per cent and confidence interval 8 per cent. Weekly population is calculated on the basis of the average number of jewellery consumers visiting the shop a day. The weekly population size of Bhima and Josco is 2000, Kalyan jewellers is 2200 and Malabar Gold is 2500.

Tools for Collection of Data

Consumer survey schedule was used to collect data from the gold jewellery consumers of selected brands.

Limitations of the study

The researcher had to confine the study on accounts of the limitations listed below.

1. As the study deals with the major gold jewellery brands in Kerala, the management of the respective brands were reluctant in providing all the information.
2. The primary data were collected from gold jewellery consumers while they were busy buying gold. Their considered opinion may vary from time to time. However, the validity of such data is ensured as the researcher contacted them in personal.

Analysis and Interpretation

Descriptive Statistics-Purpose of Visit			
Purpose of Visit	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Marriage	4.213	1.4233	2
Functions & Celebrations	3.849	1.0072	3
Investment	5.016	1.1893	1
Gifting Purpose	3.272	1.2395	4
Offerings	1.663	1.1505	6
Self-Use	2.993	1.8893	5
Total	40.606	12.0341	

Source: Primary Data

With reference to the purpose of visit to various branded jewellery shops, the predominant intention of the respondents was for investment purpose, which got a mean score of $5.016, \pm 1.19$. The second rank is assigned to marriage purpose with a mean score of $4.213, \pm 1.42$. The third rank is given for functions and celebrations with a mean score of $3.849, \pm 1007$.

Descriptive Statistics- Factors Influencing Buying Decisions

Factors	Rank	Mean	Std. Deviation
Price	9	3.391	1.1705
Purity of Gold	2	4.282	.8438
Pressure from Family Members	11	2.885	1.2984
Brand Image/Name	5	4.121	1.0552
Availability of Various fashions	7	3.599	1.1516
Advertisement	4	4.153	.8736
Free Gifts and Coupons	10	2.977	.9152
Influence of Celebrity	8	3.439	1.4309
Quality of Service	6	4.105	1.1802
Resale Price	3	4.160	.8764
Exchange Offer	1	4.407	.8200

Source: Primary Data

With reference to the factors influencing buying decisions, the predominant factor of the respondents was exchange offer, which got a mean score of $4.407, \pm 0.82$. The second rank is assigned to purity of gold with a mean score of $4.282, \pm 0.8438$. The third rank is given for resale price with a mean score of $4.16, \pm 0.8$ and so on.

This shows that frequent exchange of gold jewellery is the predominant factor which motivates the respondents to buy the branded gold.

Kruskal-Wallis Test-Association between brands and factors

Factors	Branded Jewellery Shops	N	Mean
	Bhima	140	236.50
	Josco	140	444.69
	Kalyan	141	281.49
	Malabar Gold	142	166.96
Price	Total	563	
	CVTS(Pearson Chi-Square)		243.282
	P Value		.000
	Result		significant
	Bhima	140	320.98
	Josco	140	244.28
	Kalyan	141	174.40
	Malabar Gold	142	387.60
Purity of Gold	Total	563	
	CVTS(Pearson Chi-Square)		163.998
	P Value		.000
	Result		Significant
	Bhima	140	212.05
	Josco	140	254.12

Factor	Brand	Count	Value
Pressure from family members	Kalyan	141	382.14
	Malabar Gold	142	279.02
	Total	563	
	CVTS(Pearson Chi-Square)		87.396
	P Value		.000
	Result		significant
Brand image/Name	Bhima	140	266.33
	Josco	140	109.66
	Kalyan	141	361.45
	Malabar Gold	142	388.47
	Total	563	
	CVTS(Pearson Chi-Square)		297.150
	P Value		.000
	Result		significant
Availability of various fashions	Bhima	140	178.36
	Josco	140	265.61
	Kalyan	141	228.98
	Malabar Gold	142	452.99
	Total	563	
	CVTS(Pearson Chi-Square)		246.079
	P Value		.000
	Result		significant
Advertisement	Bhima	140	236.09
	Josco	140	214.84
	Kalyan	141	398.18
	Malabar Gold	142	278.12
	Total	563	
	CVTS(Pearson Chi-Square)		125.510
	P Value		.000
	Result		significant
Free Gifts and Coupons	Bhima	140	277.22
	Josco	140	328.63
	Kalyan	141	229.52
	Malabar Gold	142	292.85
	Total	563	
	CVTS(Pearson Chi-Square)		31.674
	P Value		.000
	Result		significant
Influence of celebrity	Bhima	140	216.15
	Josco	140	118.55
	Kalyan	141	376.72
	Malabar Gold	142	414.01
	Total	563	
	CVTS(Pearson Chi-Square)		326.456
	P Value		.000
	Result		significant
Quality of Service	Bhima	140	313.55
	Josco	140	309.59
	Kalyan	141	131.95
	Malabar Gold	142	372.68
	Total	563	
	CVTS(Pearson Chi-Square)		207.922
	P Value		.000
	Result		significant
Resale Price	Bhima	140	390.88
	Josco	140	301.96
	Kalyan	141	211.52
	Malabar Gold	142	224.96
	Total	563	
	CVTS(Pearson Chi-Square)		124.529
	P Value		.000
	Result		significant
Exchange Offer	Bhima	140	336.82
	Josco	140	335.20
	Kalyan	141	210.94
	Malabar Gold	142	246.06
	Total	563	
	CVTS(Pearson Chi-Square)		82.491
	P Value		.000
	Result		significant

Source: Primary data

Since the CVTS (Chi-Square Test) is 243.282 and P Value is 0.000, (P<0.05), Ho formulated in this regard is rejected. That means there is significant association between brand and factor price. Price has a considerable influence on Josco Jewellery. CVTS (Chi-Square Test) is 163.998 and P Value is 0.000, (P<0.05), Ho formulated in this regard is rejected. That means there is significant association between brand and factor purity of the gold. This shows that brand and factor purity of the gold is dependent to each other and purity of the gold has a considerable influence on Malabar Gold.

CVTS (Chi-Square Test) is 87.396 and P Value is 0.000, (P<0.05), Ho formulated in this regard is rejected. That means there is significant association between Brand and factor Pressure from family members and pressure from family members has a considerable influence on Kalyan jewellery. CVTS (Chi-Square Test) is 297.150 and P Value is 0.000, (P<0.05), Ho formulated in this regard is rejected. That means there is significant association between brand and factor brand image/Name and brand image/name has a considerable influence on Malabar Gold.

CVTS (Chi-Square Test) is 246.079 and P Value is 0.000, (P<0.05), Ho formulated in this regard is rejected. That means there is significant association between brand and factor availability of various fashions and it has a considerable influence on Malabar Gold.

CVTS (Chi-Square Test) is 125.510 and P Value is 0.000, (P<0.05), Ho formulated in this regard is rejected. That means there is significant association between brand and factor advertisement and advertisement has a considerable influence on Kalyan Jewellers.

CVTS (Chi-Square Test) is 31.674 and P Value is 0.000, (P<0.05), Ho formulated in this regard is rejected. That means there is significant association between brand and free gifts and coupons and it has a considerable influence on Josco jewellers. CVTS (Chi-Square Test) is 326.456 and P Value is 0.000, (P<0.05), Ho formulated in this regard is rejected. That means there is significant association between brand and influence of celebrity. Influence of celebrity has a considerable influence on Malabar gold.

CVTS (Chi-Square Test) is 207.922 and P Value is 0.000, (P<0.05), Ho formulated in this regard is rejected. That means there is significant association between brand and quality of service and quality of service has a considerable influence on Malabar gold.

CVTS (Chi-Square Test) is 124.829 and P Value is 0.000, (P<0.05), Ho formulated in this regard is rejected. That means there is significant association between brand and resale price. Resale price has a considerable influence on Bhima jewellers. CVTS (Chi-Square Test) is 82.491 and P Value is 0.000, (P<0.05), Ho formulated in this regard is rejected. That means there is significant association between brand and exchange offer. Exchange offer has a considerable influence on Bhima Jewellers.

Findings of the study

1. According to the table purpose of visit to jewellery shops, the predominant intention of the respondents was for investment purpose followed by marriage purpose and for functions and celebrations. Offerings got the least rank among the respondents.

2. The study proved that the most influencing factor for buying gold jewellery is the exchange offers and schemes provided by branded jewellers. Purity of gold and resale price are the next two important factors that influence consumers for buying branded jewellery. Pressure from family member was given least importance by the respondents as a factor that influences their buying decisions.

3. The Kruskal-Wallis test has proved that there is significant association between brand and price. This shows that the brand and the factor price are dependent to each other. In the case of josco jewellery price has considerable influence on the respondents.

The table shows that there is significant association between brand and the factor purity of gold. The table also shows that purity of gold has a considerable influence on the consumers of Malabar gold.

There is significant association between brand and the factor pressure from family members and it shows that brand and pressure from family members is dependent to each other. It clearly shows that the factor pressure from family members has a considerable influence on the consumers of Kalyan Jewellery. There is significant association between brand and brand image or name. It shows that brand and the factor brand name or image is dependent to each other. The table also clearly shows that brand name or image has a considerable influence on the consumers of Malabar gold.

There is significant association between brand and availability of various fashions. It shows that brand and the availability of various fashions is dependent to each other. The table also shows that the availability of various fashions has a considerable influence on the consumers of Malabar gold.

There is significant association between brand and the factor advertisement. It shows that brand and advertisement is dependent to each other and the table also shows that advertisement has a considerable influence on the consumers of Kalyan Jewellers.

There is significant association between brand and the factor free gifts and coupons. It shows that brand and free gifts and coupons is dependent to each other. The table also shows that free gifts and coupon has a considerable influence on the consumers of Josco Jewellers.

There is significant association between brand and the factor influence of celebrity. It shows that brand and the influence of celebrity is dependent to each other. The table shows that the influence of celebrity has a considerable influence on the consumers of Malabar gold.

There is significant association between brand and quality of service. The table also shows that quality of service has a considerable influence on the consumers of Malabar gold.
There is significant association between brand and resale price. The table also shows that resale price has a considerable influence on the consumers of Bhima Jewellers.

There is significant association between brand and exchange offers. It shows that brand and exchange offer is dependent to each other. The table also clearly explains that exchange offer

has a considerable influence on the consumers of Bhima Jewellers.

Suggestions

1. The study revealed the various factors that influence a consumer to buy branded gold jewellery. So branded jewellers should focus more on these factors which influence their existing as well as prospective consumers in order to attract and retain them. In the case of Malabar Gold, they could focus on their quality of service, influence of celebrity and variety jewellery. Likewise, Josco Jewellers should focus on influencing factors such as competitive price, free gifts and coupon. Correspondingly, Kalyan Jewellers should focus on influencing factors such as advertisement. Similarly, Bhima Jewellery should focus on influencing factors such as resale price and exchange offers.

2. The present as well as future generation is highly depended on internet and other IT related media and instruments. So branded jewellers should take these factors into consideration to woo tech-savvy generation.

3. Branded gold jewellers in Kerala can make use of the wide opportunities of conversational commerce in promoting their business.

4. Branded jewellers should spend enough time, money and energy to ensure the best hospitality that they can serve each and every consumer who visit their shop. They could arrange a playing area for kids so that parents coming with kids could shop hassle free as their kids will be engaged with toys and fun inside the shop. All children like toys, so branded jewellers could give them toys endorsed with their brand name or logo or emblem when they come to the shop with their parents. It is because kids have a natural tendency to visit the places where they were treated and pampered well and at the same time they can easily persuade their parents and make them bring to the shop or a place which they prefer. In addition to this as a part of hospitality they could offer newspaper, magazines and so on to people who accompany the consumers who spend plenty of time in the shop.

CONCLUSION

The gold jewellery industry faces several challenges which have an impact on consumption and the investment side of the market. While challenges in talent and skill development, research and technology adoption, and limited financing options are core to players catering to the consumption and demand for jewellery, an increasing investment demand with limited supply infrastructure affects the investment side of the market. The gold jewellery market in India and Kerala are adopting various strategies to capture gold jewellery market. The position they hold in consuming gold jewellery in the global market proves it.

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