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Brand Positioning of Men Apparel Brands in Karnataka

☛ *Mrs. Rizwana Begum*, *Assistant Professor, P.G. Department of Business, Administration, P. A. College of Engineering, Mangaluru– 574 153, Karnataka.*
  E-mail: rizwana_mba@pace.edu.in

☛ *Dr. K. S. Sarala,* *Associate Professor and Head, Department of Commerce and Management, Sahyadri Arts and Commerce College, (Constituent College of Kuvempu University), Shimoga District – 577 301, Karnataka.*

Key Terms

Brand Positioning

Men apparel

Perpetual Mapping

ABSTRACT

In a crowded market place where it is critical to differentiate the brand, the marketers need to position the brand in the right way to attract the right kind of customers. Brand positioning is a critical element for the success of business and requires some careful thought and attention. The present research is undertaken in order to understand and analyse the brand positioning of selected men apparel brands from consumer perspective. Perceptual data was collected from the respondents and through the technique of perceptual mapping the positioning of various brands considered for the study are determined.

Introduction

Positioning is vital to brand management as it takes the product's tangible aspects and builds the intangibles in the minds of the customers in the form of a image. Brand positioning is an activity of offering a brand in such a way that occupies a distinctive place and value in the customers mind. It is the way the brand is perceived within a competitive set in the customers mind. Precisely, a brand's positioning articulates the goal that a consumer will achieve by using the brand and explains its superiority over other means of accomplishing this goal. Brand is the most valued possession of a firm. Brands play a significant role in signaling certain product characteristics to consumers. Positioning is vital to brand management, as it takes the product's tangible aspects and builds the intangibles in the minds of the customers in the form of a image. Brand positioning is an activity of offering a brand in such a way that occupies a distinctive place and value in the

customer's mind. It is the way the brand is perceived within a competitive set in the customers mind. Precisely, a brand's positioning articulates the goal that a consumer will achieve by using the brand and explains its superiority over the means of accomplishing this goal. In a crowded market place where it is critical to differentiate the brand the marketers need to differentiate the brand. The marketers need to position the brand in the right way to attract the right kind of customers. Brand positioning is a critical element for the success of business and requires some careful thought and attention.

Apparel Industry in India: An Overview

Apparel is one of the basic necessities of human civilization along with food, water and shelter. The Apparel Industry reflects people's lifestyles and shows their social and economic status. The worldwide apparel industry is one of the most important sectors of the economy with regard to investment, revenue, trade and employment generation all over the world.

Indian Apparel is the largest segment of the Indian Textile and Clothing Industry (IT&C); accounting to 60% -65% of the total Industry. Furthermore, it is one of the largest sources of foreign exchange flow into the country. As per the data published by Ministry of Textiles, in its annual report 2015-16, India is ranked as 6th largest exporter of apparel in the world after China, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Germany and Italy.

The domestic apparel market was US$ 84 billion as of 2015 and is expected to grow at a Compound Average Growth Rate (CAGR) of 13 per cent over the next five years. Currently, apparel industry contributes 15 per cent to the industrial production, 4 per cent to the GDP, and 17 per cent to the country's export earnings. Over 30 million people are directly employed in the apparel industry. The recent exclusion of excise duty on branded apparel has provided an incentive to retailers in terms of the overall market sentiment.

With a men's wear market size of US$ 33 billion in 2015 and accounting for 40 per cent of the overall market, men's wear is the largest segment in the Indian apparel market. The key players in the Indian market viz., Aditya Birla Nuvo, Raymonds Group and Arvind Group - are facing increasing competition from entry of international brands. Menswear continued to register strong double-digit retail value growth during 2015. Menswear managed to register a retail value growth of 15% in 2015 with sales touching 1.3 trillion. Aditya

Birla Nuvo continued to be the market leader with a retail value share of 5% in 2015. The company holds some of the top-performing brands of the Indian apparel industry such as Louis Philippe, Van Heusen, Peter England and Allen Solly. The company continued to focus on increasing its store counts and continued with its retail expansion plans to reach out to more consumers during 2015.

The growth in the organized retail market in India has led to increase in the sale of Branded apparel in the domestic market. Due to increased consumer spending, high brand consciousness, rising income and purchasing power, increasing number of dual income nuclear families, changing lifestyle and consumer behavior the organized retail apparel market is growing rapidly. Organized retail in India is the most dynamic industry and represents a huge opportunity for domestic markets. It is believed that growth in e-commerce, entry of foreign players and the potential implementation of a GST will further facilitate the shift to branded apparel. E-commerce is seen as a growth catalyst for brands for improving distribution but as a headwind for department stores. The entry of foreign brands is also accelerating mall foot traffic and providing attractive partnership opportunities for Indian companies. A sizeable local textile industry also provides a supportive ecosystem for branded apparel.

Review of Literature

An attempt has been made to review some of the earlier works which are relevant to the present study .Peter Doyle, (1975) concludes that most brands compete in well-established markets by suggesting that multi-dimensional scaling offers a useful approach to the brand-positioning problem. Sujan and James R Bettman, (1989) have conducted four studies, which demonstrate that perceptions of how different a brand is from other brands in the product category which affect perceptions of the brand's position within the category. Cornelia Pechmann, Ratneshwar S.(1991) suggested that direct comparative ads can enhance consumers' perceptions of the advertised brands by associating it with the comparison brand and simultaneously differentiate the brands by lowering consumer's perceptions of the comparison brand on the featured attribute.

Bart J. Bronnenberg and Luc Wathieu (1996) *r*evealed the relationship between two **positioning** variables, the promotion effectiveness measures and also explained the extent of asymmetries.

Subodh Bhat, Srinivas K Reddy (1998) suggested that brand symbolism and

functionality are separate phenomena and, further, that symbolism comprises two dimensions, termed prestige and personality expression. Sheinin, Daniel A (1998) found that position fit alters brand extension beliefs and attitudes, but its effects are moderated by the perceived fit between the extending brand and category Michael S. McCarthy, Donald G. Norris, (1999) found that branded ingredients consistently and positively affected moderate-quality host brands, but occasionally positively affected higher-quality host brands. Arindam Mukherjee (2007) portrayed the brand positioning as a mind game for the marketers. He has discussed the concept of `Points of Difference' and `Points of Parity' and explained the role of brand positioning in brand building and how it helps to grow the business. Christoph Fuchs, Adamantios Diamantopoulos (2008) conducted three complementary empirical studies aimed at shedding light on the brand positioning issues and constructed a multidimensional construct capturing conceptually-relevant dimensions of positioning success namely favorability, dissimilarity, uniqueness, and credibility. Muruganantham G. and Kaliyamoorthy S. (2008) emphasized brand positioning as the strategy that enables a firm to competitively and distinctively place its brand in the minds of the target

audience such that it becomes the most preferred brand. Sartaj Khera (2010) revealed that brands have been successful by identifying the right segment of consumers, establishing an appropriate positioning strategy to suit the target segment, creating a brand image and communicating the same so as to connect with target customer. Edar Anana and Walter Nique (2010) discussed the Perception-Based Analysis (PBA) and its adequacy for evaluating brand positioning from the point of view of the consumers.

Statement of the Problem and Need for the Study

Companies which are looking for the growth, positioning is the heart of competitive strategies. For any business, the ultimate aim is to satisfy the customer and to gain a valued position in the customers mind. It is the Brand Positioning that keeps the potential buyer aware of what the brand is, who it is for, and what it offers. Positioning of brands in the minds of consumers is becoming an important determinant of market success. Does the consumer recognize and recall apparel brand? Has the brand been positioned in the right way in the minds of the consumers? These are some questions which need to be answered for the effective brand positioning. Thus, the present research aims

at understanding and analysing the brand positioning of apparel brands in Karnataka. The work carried out on men's apparel in Karnataka state is very limited and inadequate. Hence, it has been chosen to study and analyse brand positioning of selected men apparel brands from consumers' perspective comprehensively.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of the study is to understand and analyse the brand positioning of selected men apparel brands in Karnataka. Other objectives are presented as under:

- To develop the perceptual map that depicts the positioning of branded apparels in association with attributes.
- To offer suggestions in the form of measures to be taken by the selected companies to enhance its brand positioning.

Scope of the Study

To serve the intent of the study exclusively men apparel brands have been considered as the menswear segment is the largest part of Indian apparel sector. The survey based empirical enquiry is conducted for the purpose of the study. The area of research geographically covers the state of Karnataka.

The present study focuses on various brands under the umbrella of major apparel companies like Aditya Birla fashion, Raymonds group. The apparel brands which are considered for the study are Louis Phillippe, Van Heusen, Allen Solly, Peter England and Raymonds. The data related to the present work has been collected from the sources available and the period of study covers five years from 2011 to 2016.

Methodology and Sources of Data

The methodology adopted in the present research is descriptive in nature, which is undertaken in order to ascertain and to describe the characteristics of the variables included in the research. The entire data required for the study is collected through both primary data and secondary sources of data. The primary data relating to the study are collected through self administered pretested structured questionnaire. The secondary data relating to the study has been collected from various published records, reports, books, journals, magazines and online sources.

Research instrument used

A structured pre tested questionnaire is used for collecting the primary data for the purpose of the study. The questionnaire is divided into two parts, Part –A consists of questions related to the demographics of respondents and Part –B

consists of few questions related to the awareness, spending pattern, frequency of purchasing. Further, brand positioning attributes are given in the form of statements to be rated by the respondents in Likert's seven and ten scales.

Sample Design and Framework

Multi Stage Sampling is adopted for the present study. In the first stage, Judgment Sampling method is followed whereby as the study is geographically confined to the Karnataka state, the entire state consisting of 30 districts is subdivided into four divisions namely Bengaluru, Kalburgi, Belagavi and Mysuru divisions.

In the next stage, Stratified Random Sampling method is adopted, where the number of retail outlets of selected apparel brands in each district was ascertained. Giving due weightage to the each division and depending on the number of retail outlets ten districts are considered for the study covering Bengaluru Urban and Bengaluru Rural, Davanagere, Shivamogga, Belagavi, Dharwad, Bellary, Kalaburagi, Dakshina Kannada, Mysuru and Udupi.

Later, as per the Proportionate Stratified Sampling Method the male population of each district is considered and the sample is drawn from each stratum

(district) which is proportional to the male population in the district. Thus, the sample size considered for the present study is 400 (95% Confidence level, 5% Confidence interval).

Statistical Techniques and Tools

As far as the methodology is concerned, Perceptual mapping method has been applied in order to understand and analyse the positioning of selected brands. The statistical technique adopted is Factor analysis. The perceptual mapping analysis is carried out using Marketing Engineering for Excel software package.

Analysis and Interpretations

Perception mapping method has been applied in order to understand and analyse the positioning of selected brands. Firstly, a set of 22 attributes is formulated [the list of defined attributes is presented in Table–1]. The perception of the respondents across each of the specified attribute was collected. The respondents were asked to rank or rate the attributes on a likert scale measurement ranging from 1 to 7. (1- Entirely Disagree, 2 – Mostly Disagree, 3 – Somewhat Disagree, 4 – Neutral, 5 – Somewhat Agree, 6 – Mostly Agree, to 7 – Entirely Agree).

Next, the data which is based on the perception of the customers has been summarized by taking the average across customers for each attribute and across each brand.

Table -1 depicts the average score each brand achieved on each attribute collected from a sample of 400 respondents. Table-1 is typically referred as Perceptual data.

Accordingly, for Louis Philippe brand apparel, it is observed that the average score range between 6.0 and 6.5 indicating a greater level of agreement taking into consideration of attributes except for two attributes namely *Advertisement Cost* and *Lot to pay,* where the average is 3.34 and 2.73 indicating disagreement by the selected respondents.

Perceptual Data

Table 1: Average scores of each brand

Attributes / Brands	Louis Philippe	Vanheusen	Peter England	Raymonds	Allen Solly
Pleasurable and gratifying	6.44	6.11	5.81	6.04	5.96
Elegant and classy	6.46	6.21	6.01	6.14	5.96
Brand Trusted	6.42	6.19	6.00	6.02	6.19
Advertised price of brand is high	3.34	3.31	3.01	3.29	3.24
Lot to pay for this brand	2.73	2.43	2.47	3.00	2.83
Finest fabric is used by this brand	6.19	6.15	5.81	6.04	6.26
Immediate purchase of brand	6.17	6.13	5.99	6.04	6.11
Brand gives value for money	6.29	6.36	6.05	6.22	6.25
Brand reflects the kind of person	6.42	6.16	5.96	5.96	6.26
Brand is favourable	6.36	6.16	5.78	6.08	6.17
Brand makes me feel good about myself	6.42	6.07	5.87	6.08	6.21
More fashion innovativeness exists	6.36	6.03	5.88	5.95	6.21
Offers international and fusion/	6.36	6.17	6.03	5.95	6.09
Has more design and variety	6.28	6.04	6.00	5.96	6.17
Traditional designs are still followed	6.13	6.09	5.94	6.02	5.96
Standardized fit and stitch	6.22	6.19	5.92	6.06	6.04
Loyalty towards this brand	6.35	6.09	5.89	6.00	6.16
brand is clearly superior	6.46	6.34	6.03	6.11	6.35
Comfort in wearing	6.42	6.19	6.00	6.18	6.02
Durability of the product	6.40	6.16	6.04	6.07	6.06
Style and Design	6.49	6.04	6.05	5.98	5.98
Brand Awareness	6.30	6.34	6.04	6.17	6.22

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Similarly, in case of *Vanheusen* brand, it is observed that the average score range between 6.0 and 6.40 indicating a greater level of agreement taking into consideration of attributes except for two attributes namely *Advertisement Cost* and *Lot to pay,* where the average is 3.31 and 2.43 indicating disagreement by the selected respondents. Furthermore, with respect to *Peter England* brand, it is observed that the average score range between 5.80 and 6.10 indicating moderate level of agreement taking into consideration of attributes except for two attributes namely *Advertisement Cost* and *Lot to pay,* where the average is 3.01 and 2.47 indicating disagreement by the selected respondents.

Likewise, with respect to *Raymonds* brand, it is observed that the average score range between 5.90 and 6.20 indicating a somewhat [moderate level] of agreement taking into consideration of attributes except for two attributes namely *Advertisement Cost* and *Lot to pay,* where the average is 3.29 and 3.00 indicating disagreement by the selected respondents. Finally, with respect to *Alley Solly* brand, it is observed that the average score range between 5.90 and 6.20 indicating a somewhat [moderate level] of agreement taking into consideration of attributes except for two attributes namely *Advertisement Cost* and *Lot to pay,* where the average is 3.29 and 3.00 indicating disagreement by the selected respondents

Variance Explained:

Table 2: Variance explained as a function of the number of dimensions.

Dimensions / Items	1	2	3	4	5
Total variance explained	0.748	0.104	0.086	0.062	0.000
Cumulative variance explained	0.748	0.852	0.938	1.000	1.000

The total variance accounted or explained by the first factor (see Table -2) is 0.748 (74.8%). Thus, it can be inferred that attributes classified under the first factor explain about 75 percent of variance within the attributes. Similarly, the total variance accounted or explained by the second factor is 0.104 (10.4%) indicating

that only ten percent of variance is accounted by the second factor. Cumulatively, the first and the second factor together explain or account for about 85 percent total variance by all the attributes. In continuation, the third factor or dimension explains only 0.086 or 8.6 percent of the total variance explained.

Thus, cumulatively about 93 percent of total variance is accounted by three factors and consider only three factors. Further, another aspect that is required for drawing the perceptual map is the coordinates [factor loadings obtained through Principal component Analysis method] of each attribute across each factor (see Table -3). The value under each factor and each attribute is plotted on the graph on the perceptual map [this indicates the position of the brand on the map].

Table 3: Factor scores of brands across dimensions

Dimensions / Brands	1	2	3
Louis Philippe	0.7177	0.4567	-0.1416
Vanheusen	0.1501	-0.158	0.5742
Peter England	-0.6363	0.5802	-0.1908
Raymonds	-0.2397	-0.2916	0.4197
Allen Solly	0.0082	-0.5872	-0.6616

Table 3.1: Factor scores of attributes across dimensions

Dimensions / Attributes	1	2	3
Pleasurable and gratifying	0.9087	0.1745	0.1648
elegant and classy	0.7872	0.4049	0.3399
Brand Trusted	0.9551	0.1297	-0.1978
Advertised price of brand is high	0.7913	-0.4143	0.3321
Lot to pay for this brand	0.0336	-0.1431	-0.0449
Finest fabric is used by this brand	0.7692	-0.5975	-0.1687
Immediate purchase of brand	0.9232	-0.1656	-0.0231
Brand gives value for money	0.737	-0.4364	0.3408
Brand reflects the kind of person	0.8931	0.0057	-0.3663
Brand is favourable	0.9459	-0.2611	0.0094
Brand makes me feel good about myself	0.8727	-0.0956	-0.2309
More fashion innovativeness exists	0.8952	-0.0474	-0.4331
Offers international and fusion/	0.8341	0.3507	-0.119
Has more design and variety	0.8226	0.126	-0.5508
Traditional designs are still followed	0.8563	0.1714	0.4872
Standardized fit and stitch	0.910	-0.0691	0.3747
Loyalty towards this brand	0.9657	-0.0349	-0.2378
brand is clearly superior	0.8857	-0.167	-0.1595
Comfort in wearing	0.7776	0.2643	0.3034
Durability of the product	0.8957	0.4155	0.0576
Style and Design	0.7439	0.5943	-0.115
Brand Awareness	0.7879	-0.282	0.2768

Similarly, Table -3.1 depicts the coordinates [correlation value] of each attribute against each factor, which would be plotted on a two dimensional graph [X and Y axes] which identify the position of the each brand.

Accordingly, classification of attributes along with the labeling of the factors is depicted in Table - 4. Firstly, 11 attributes namely Trusted Brand, Brand favourable, Brand Awareness, Pleasure and Gratifying, Immediate Purchase, Reflection of Personality, Durability of the product, Superior Brand, Makes me feel good, Elegant and Classy and Comfort in wearing are grouped together as the first factor and is labeled as "**Elegancy and Gratification**".

Table – 4: Based on the factor analysis 22 attributes are grouped into three factors

Attributes	Factor Label
Trusted Brand	
Brand favourable	
Brand Awareness	
Pleasure and Gratifying	
Immediate Purchase	
Reflection of Personality	Elegancy and Gratification (Factor # 1)
Durability of the product	
Superior Brand	
Makes me feel good	
Elegant and Classy	
Comfort in wearing	
Fashion Innovativeness	
Offers International Fusion	
More Design and Variety	
Finest Fabric Used	Design and Fashion Innovativeness (Factor # 2)
Style and Design	
Standardized fit and Stitch	
Traditional design is still followed	
Brand Loyalty	
Lot to Pay	
Value for Money	Price (Factor # 3)
High Advertisement Price	

Similarly, eight attributes namely Fashion Innovativeness, Offers International Fusion, More Design and Variety, Finest Fabric Used, Style and Design, Standardized fit and Stitch, Traditional design is still followed and Brand Loyalty are grouped together as second factor and is labeled as "**Design and Fashion**

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**Innovativeness**". Finally, three attributes namely Lot to Pay, Value for Money and High Advertisement Price are grouped together as the third factor and is labeled as "**Price**".

Location of Brands on a perceptual map:

A. Positioning of brands on Factor # 1 and Factor # 2:

Factor score matrix in factor analysis gives the location of each product on each factor.

Fig- 1: Brand Positioning with respect to Factor #1 [Elegancy and Gratification] and Factor # 2 [Design and Fashion Innovativeness]
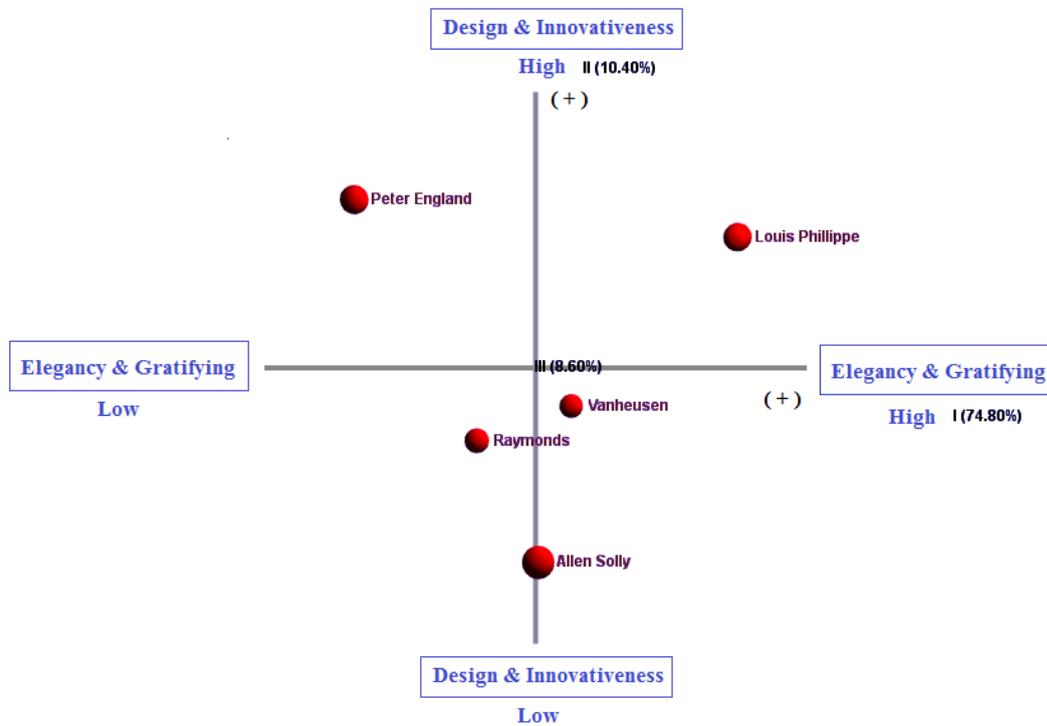
It is observed from the perceptual map depicted in Fig -1 that *Louis Philippe* brand apparel is closely associated [positioned strongly] based on *Elegancy and Gratification* and *Design and fashion innovativeness* factors. This indicates a strong position for *Louis Philippe* brand or product in the consumers' mindset would be a big achievement for the company. On the other, *Peter England* brand is positioned perpendicular [Upper left Quadrant] to *Louis Philippe brand*. In other words, in terms of *Elegancy and Gratification factor,* the factor score is negative [see table 3] and with *Design and fashion innovativeness,* the factor score is

positive. Hence, it is positioned on the upper left quadrant indicating not a strong positioning of this brand in customers' perception.

Now, with regard to **Raymonds** brand apparel, its positioning is seen in opposite direction [the factor scores for first and second factor for Raymonds is negative (see Table -3] as compared to *Louis Philippe* brand based on *Elegancy and Gratification* and *Design and fashion innovativeness* factors. To some extent,

even ***Allen Solly*** brand apparel is exactly positioned on the vertical line in left lower quadrant there by indicating a very low perception as far as *Design and fashion innovativeness* aspect is concerned. Finally, observing the positioning of **Vanheusen** brand apparel, it seems there is a closer distance with Louis Philippe brand thereby concluding that *Vanheusen* brand apparel is relatively in a better positioned [moderate] after Louis Philippe with respect factor #1 and factor # 2 respectively.

Fig 2: Brand Positioning with respect to Factor #1 [Elegancy and Gratification] and Factor # 3 [Price]
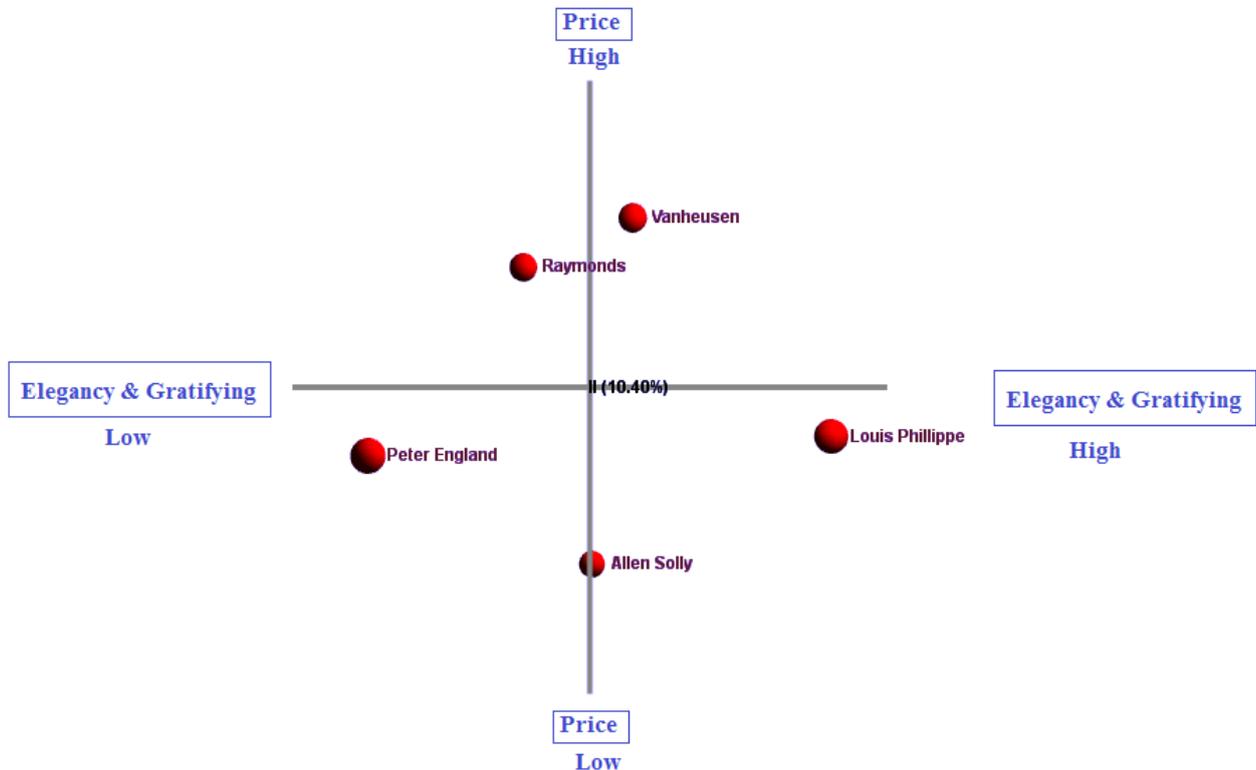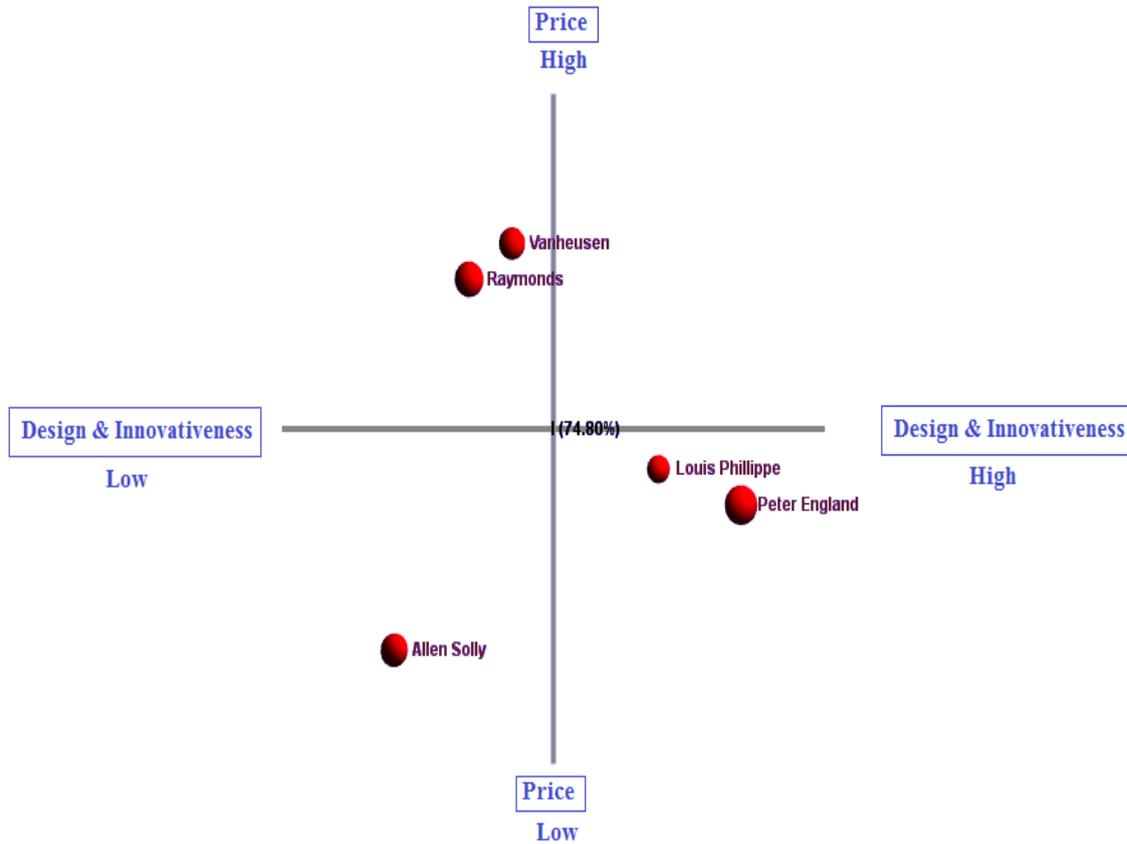

It is observed that Vanheusen brand is strongly positioned based on *Elegance and Gratification and Price,* whereas Louis

Phillippe brand is moderately positioned. A slightly weak positioning can be inferred from Raymonds' position in perceptual

map. The Peter England shows very low positioning compared to other brands as it

is positioned in the left lower quadrant of perceptual map.

Fig 3: Brand Positioning with respect to Factor # 2 [Design and Fashion Innovativeness] and Factor # 3 [Price]

The above perceptual map reveals that the brands Louis Phillippe and Peter England are moderately positioned with respect to *Design and fashion innovativeness and Price* and the brand Allen Solly has very weak positioning in terms of the factors considered.

Findings of the Study

To understand and analyze the positioning of selected brands perceptual mapping technique is applied.

- It is observed from the perceptual map that Louis Phillippe brand is strongly positioned based on Elegance and gratification, Design and Fashion Innovativeness factors.

- Van Heusen brand is moderately positioned after Louis Phillippe with respect to Elegance & Gratification.

- On the other, Peter England brand's factor score is negative for Elegance and

Gratification and for Design & Fashion Innovativeness the factor score is positive, hence indicating not a strong positioning of the brand.

▪ With regard to Raymonds brand factor scores for both the factors are negative, which indicates a profoundly very weak positioning.

▪ It is observed that Allen Solly brand has a very low positioning as far as Design & Fashion Innovativeness aspect is considered.

Suggestions of the Study

Suggestions are proposed to enable the marketing manager to formulate sound policies and have unique positioning for the desired brand.

✓ The marketing manager must make use of perceptual mapping to understand the position of the brand, its competitors and the market structure. The preferred positions or ideal points have to be discovered in the minds of consumers.

✓ As the Perceptual map position reveals Raymonds brand has to strive more with respect to the positioning strategies and to use the wide array of positioning strategies to create a differential advantage for the brand.

Limitations of the Study

In spite of all the best efforts put to make it comprehensive and scientific, as every study based on primary data will have its own limitations, the present work also suffers from certain limitations which are listed below:

✦ As the survey elicits responses from male consumers only, the results of the study cannot be generalized to all the consumers of apparel brands.

✦ The study is restricted to the selected men apparel brands, thus the findings of this research cannot be generalized to all the apparel brands.

✦ Responses to the questions are subject to individual biases and to that extent accuracy of some of the findings could be affected

✦ The private or store brands are not considered for the present study.

Conclusion

The present research analysed the brand positioning of selected men apparel brands from consumer perspective. Positioning is critical to brand building because it projects the brand identity and creates perception of brand in consumers mind. From the findings of the current research it can be concluded that brand positioning constituting of different attributes positively influence consumer

and the apparel brand Louis Phillippe has a profound positioning compared to other apparel brands considered for the study.

Brand positioning determines the distinctive features around which the brand has to be couched and communicated to the consumer.

Scope for further research

Although the present study sheds much needed light on brand positioning of selected apparel brands in the selected area, there are several areas that could be addressed further. The present research has analysed the brand positioning of selected men apparel brands, further research can be carried out on women and kids apparel too as these are predominant segments after men apparel. Research can also be carried out by including private or store brands and comparative analysis of brand positioning can be carried out. The time frame of present study was for five years from 2011 to 2016, further it can be explored to longer time period for more comprehensive study.

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