

Customer Preferences of Different Sports Wear and Equipment Manufacturing Companies/Brands

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Abstract— This Research Paper studies the present market scenario of different sportswear and equipment manufacturing companies like Nike, Reebok, Puma and Adidas. The research paper also describe the major trends and focusing on marketing strategies used by these firms to achieve the Market share and position into the mind sets of the consumer or final user. The research paper also considering the primary as well as secondary data Analysis.

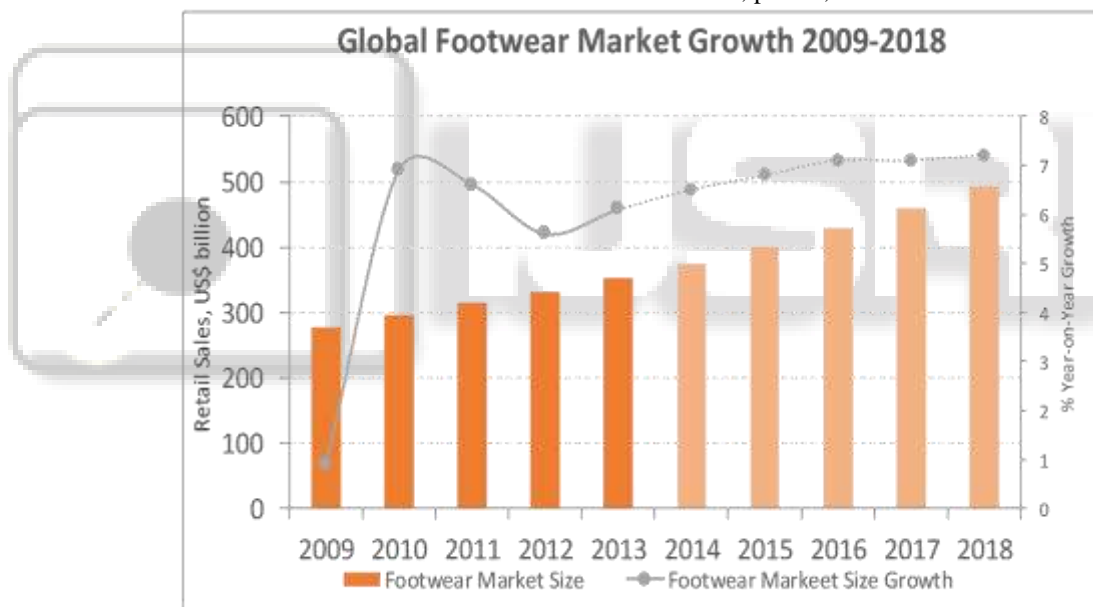
Key words: Major Footwear manufacturing Companies, marketing strategies

India is the second largest global producer of footwear after China, accounting for 13% of global footwear production of 16 billion pairs. India produces 2065 million pairs of different categories of footwear (leather footwear - 909 million pairs, leather shoe uppers - 100 million pairs and non-leather footwear - 1056 million pairs). India exports about 115 million pairs. Thus, nearly 95% of its production goes to meet its own domestic demand.

The major production centers in India are Chennai, Ranipet, Ambur in Tamil Nadu, Mumbai in Maharashtra, Kanpur in U.P., Jalandhar in Punjab, Agra, Delhi, Karnal, Ludhiana, Sonapat, Faridabad, Pune, Kolkata, Calicut and Ernakulam. About 1.10 million are engaged in the footwear manufacturing industry. Footwear exported from India are Dress Shoes, Casuals, Moccasins, Sport Shoes, Horrachies, Sandals, Ballerinas, Boots, Sandals and Chappals made of rubber, plastic, P.V.C. and other materials.

I. INTRODUCTION

The footwear sector is a very significant segment of the leather industry in India; rather it is the engine of growth for the entire Indian leather industry.



A. Footwear Imports Global Trend:

Major Importing Countries of Footwear (Leather and Non-Leather) (Value in Million US\$)

Country	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
USA	19835.93	20039.13	20104.41	17904.13	21530.97
Germany	5591.77	5966.99	6529.33	6037.73	6814.89
France	4778.07	5473.04	5714.00	5379.78	5802.18
UK	4950.49	5281.55	5213.00	4772.59	5529.01
Italy	4047.37	4529.77	4810.25	4484.10	4928.22
Hong Kong	4984.59	4881.67	4944.40	3974.30	4676.06
Japan	3509.83	3750.04	4112.99	4077.58	4468.16
Russia	1121.68	2067.82	2843.81	2149.42	3768.80
Spain	2036.21	2388.74	2917.97	2464.34	2816.83
Netherlands	1978.33	2297.95	2570.86	2481.35	2752.38
Belgium	2057.39	2543.04	2892.62	2554.50	2554.59
Canada	1507.21	1677.05	1748.04	1645.09	1869.25

Source: ITC, Geneva

B. Future Trends:

Keeping in view its past performance, current trends in global trade, the industry's inherent strengths and growth prospects, the footwear industry aims to augment production, thereby enhancing its exports from the current level of US\$ 2.07 billion.

C. Indian Footwear Industry Poised For Growth

India has state-of-the-art manufacturing plants. The footwear sector has matured from the level of the manual footwear manufacturing method to the automated footwear manufacturing systems. Footwear production units are installed with world class machines. Manned by skilled technicians, these machines help to turn any new innovative idea into reality. Support systems created for the sector have indeed served the footwear industry well. India has a well-developed footwear component manufacturing industry. The future growth of the footwear industry in India will continue to be market-driven, and oriented towards EU and US markets. With technology and quality of the footwear improving year after year, Indian Footwear industry is stamping its class and expertise in the global footwear trade.

D. Indian Footwear Industry Overview:

Indian leather industry is the core strength of the Indian footwear industry. It is the engine of growth for the entire Indian leather industry and India is the second largest global producer of footwear after China.

Reputed global brands like Florsheim, Nunn Bush, Stacy Adams, Gabor, Clarks, Nike, Reebok, Ecco, Deichmann, Elefanten, St Michaels, Hasley, Salamander and Colehaan are manufactured under license in India. Besides, many global retail chains seeking quality products at competitive prices are actively sourcing footwear from India.

While leather shoes and uppers are produced in medium to large-scale units, the sandals and chappals are produced in the household and cottage sector. The industry is poised for adopting the modern and state-of-the-art technology to suit the exacting international requirements and standards. India produces more of gent's footwear while the world's major production is in ladies footwear. In the case of chapels and sandals, use of non-leather material is prevalent in the domestic market.

Leather footwear exported from India are dress shoes, casuals, moccasins, sport shoes, horrachies, sandals, ballerinas, boots. Non-leather footwear exported from India are Shoes, Sandals and Chappals made of rubber, plastic, P.V.C. and other materials.

With changing lifestyles and increasing affluence, domestic demand for footwear is projected to grow at a faster rate than has been seen. There are already many new domestic brands of footwear and many foreign brands such as Nike, Adidas, Puma, Reebok, Florsheim, Rockport, etc. have also been able to enter the market.

With quick economic growth, massive population base, increasing income levels, changing lifestyle and consumer preferences, India has seen an incredible growth in its sportswear industry over the past few years. The country has been exploiting its favourable demographics, which make it one of the most attractive places for both domestic and international sportswear players to take

advantage of the highly profitable market. As a result, all the international players, including Nike, Adidas and Reebok, are striving hard to grab a share of the market. The current market estimates and future projections are completely based on the set of feasible market trends which take into concern consumer behaviour and spending patterns that may affect growth of the sportswear industry.

However the sportswear market has many segments such as - sports footwear and sports apparel, rural/urban divide and gender-wise demand projections etc. But the current sportswear market is dominated by the sports apparel sector, but future growth will be driven by the sports footwear segment. Thus the sportswear industry is booming and Nike, Adidas, RBK and Puma are among the top players of the segment.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. What Is The Study About?

The study focuses on the determination of customer preferences among the different sports wear brands. The study conducted is on the marketing strategies and the present scenario of the market that is captured by different sportswear and equipment manufacturing companies like Nike, Puma, Adidas and Reebok.

Along with customer preference we will also study the marketing strategies and some other fundamental concepts of marketing such as Market share of the sportswear companies, who is the market leader in all the company, how much potential companies are?, market segmentation of the different companies, positioning of the companies & Branding of the companies.

I have addressed above listed topics in our study. A study has been conducted by performing a detail analysis of the present market situation in these regard.

The detail study will focus on the strength & weakness of the companies. Therefore it will be helpful to the company to improve its market situation. The other topics also have been addressed in the study. The survey of questionnaire has been prepared & analysed in a manner so that it helps us to fulfil the above mention objectives.

B. What Type Of Data We Need?

Data needed for analysis of the present situation is in large quantity as after collecting data in large quantity we will be able to predict the situation in the market. But before doing any analysis we will have to study the brief history, products and marketing strategies of all four companies. Thus the data that we need will be categories from in two heads.

- Primary data
- Secondary data

1) Primary Data:

The primary data is very important for the analysis and the research to be taken place. The major portion of the primary data is been collected by the way of questionnaire. We also visited few of the company outlets in order to get list of products that are manufactured by the company and also the products that are demanded the most.

2) Secondary Data:

The secondary data is need in order to understand the company profile which includes

- History of the company
- Products

- Marketing Strategies
- Market Segments
- Promotions & Sponsorship
- Future Plans

These are the following topics or areas of information that I need to understand before conducting a research. However the products of each company are similar but the strategies implied are very much diversified. There is a lot of difference between their advertisements and sponsorship programmers. I collected all the secondary data from the internet by visiting the official website of the companies.

C. Where Can The Data Be Collected?

As the research is to be conducted on the bases of a survey that is to be filled by the students we went to areas where students are found in masses, as we had to survey at least 200 people we went to different places in groups. There were also numbers of surveys that we took on a one to one correspondence. I went to peoples houses and surveyed them. The number of places where students and people of different age group available were

- Colleges
- Boarding/ Hostel
- Coaching Classes

1) Colleges

I started surveying students of my college at first. I did that because in the college we can target respondent of our age and that is the segment we were targeting mainly. Another reason of taking survey in the college was that I can address a large number of people. Colleges are also a good place to take survey as I have selected samples randomly and according to my convince.

2) Boarding/ Hostels

I also distributed number of forms in different hostels in Ahmedabad as that is also a place where I can find students in masses. Another advantage of distributing forms in hostel is that I can survey people of different schools and colleges at one place.

3) Coaching Classes

I distributed forms and surveyed people by visiting coaching classes as that is also a place where I can find large number of student.

4) Material & Sample Size

The primary data has been collected through survey. I conducted 200 people's survey to interpret the conclusion and analysis the present scenario. This questionnaire were distributed among people of different age group mainly students between 15 to 23. However the survey was conducted by taking the samples randomly and according to my convinces.

5) Sampling Techniques Used

As in this project primary data collection was based on survey, different sampling techniques have been implemented for selection of samples. The ways in which samples were selected is listed as under.

- Simple Random Sampling
- Convince Sampling

These are the ways in which we had selected samples for my survey. I had selected samples from coaching classes,

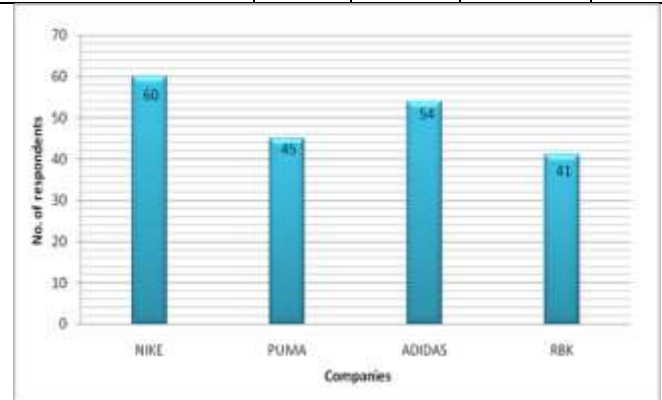
colleges, and hostels and also from surrounding areas. The ways though which survey was conducted is

- Telephonic Interview
- Personal Interview

III. FINDINGS & INTERPRETATION

1) Which Brand Is Prefer?

COMPANY	NIKE	PUMA	ADIDAS	RBK
NO. OF RESPONDENTS	60	45	54	41
PERCCENTAGE (%)	30	22.5	27	20.5



From the above diagram we analyse that,

- Out of total numbers of 200 respondents, 60 respondents are preferred to use the products which are made by NIKE. It means, there are 30 % respondents are using the equipments or products of NIKE.
- Out of total numbers of 200 respondents, 45 respondents are preferred to use the products which are made by PUMA. It means, there are 22.5 % respondents are using the equipments or products of PUMA.
- Out of total numbers of 200 respondents, 54 respondents are preferred to use the products which are made by NIKE. It means, there are 27 % respondents are using the equipments or products of NIKE.
- Out of total numbers of 200 respondents, 41 respondents are preferred to use the products which are made by NIKE. It means, there are 20.5 % respondents are using the equipments or products of NIKE.

B. Interpretation:

- There are highest no. of respondents prefer the NIKE & there are lowest no. of respondents prefer the RBK.

Highest = 60

Lowest = 41

- The findings represent that maximum number of people prefers Nike as a brands and purchase the product manufactured under the brand name Nike. Thus from this representation we can determine that among the four major brands Nike has the maximum market share and Nike can also be called the market leader. If we see the representation then 93% of the people are satisfied with Nike.
- Adidas is the second most preferred brand. The finds also show that almost all of the customers who purchase products manufactured by Adidas are satisfied. If we see the representation then 87% of the people are satisfied with Adidas.

- Puma has the third place out of all the four brands, but almost all of the customers who purchase products manufactured by Puma are satisfied. If we see the representation then 84% of the people are satisfied with Puma.
- Reebok is the least preferred brand among the four brands in the market. Its market share is also minimum. However data shows that 85% of the people who use Reebok are satisfied by products manufactured by RBK.
- Irrespective of the brand every respondent is concerned about quality, comfort and popularity of the brand. Secondly almost all respondents prefer to purchase the product from the company outlet.
- Among different products the purchase of caps and footwear is the most.
- As all brands/companies manufacture similar products few respondents do not hesitate to switch among brands, if prices increase.

C. Suggestions

- After analysing the present market situation of all four companies. I would like to give some recommendations to all the companies in general, so that they can gain the maximum benefit from the present market situation.
- Companies should maintain the present quality standard, as maximum number of people choose a brand because good quality assurance.
- Companies should increase their company outlets as almost all the people irrespective of their brand prefer to buy product from company outlet or stores.
- As maximum people purchase Caps, T –Shirts and shoes/footwear, companies should bring out new variants under these products.
- Brands should advertise their product by conveying a strong message.
- The companies should maintain price stability as consumers are ready to change their preference with an increase in price.

convey a strong message and secondly when people were told to describe the brand in one word references to sports personalities like Roger Fredere, Sachin Tendulkar and M S Dhoni were given to describe the brand. Thus I can conclude that in this segment all brands have similar standards but they still remain different.

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IV. CONCLUSION

I have analysed the present market situation of all the four companies and after the analysis we conclude that Nike is the most preferred brand among all the brands. Thus Nike has the maximum market share and is also the market leader in the sport wear and equipment manufacturing segment. However Adidas comes second and RBK is the least preferred brand among all.

But analysis also shows that maximum numbers of people are satisfied with their present choice of brand. Although their preference is influenced by number of factors quality assurance is one common element that every consumer looks for. However as these four brands maintain almost equal quality standards, consumers are ready to switch their preference with an increase in price.

Another conclusion that can be sighted from the analysis is that consumer preference is based on the image and positioning of the brand in their mind. The positioning of the brand in the consumers mind is influenced by the message that the brand conveys and the celebrities that a brand is associated to. This analysis can be sighted because more number of people say that a brand should always