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RESEARCH ARTICLE

A STUDY OF APPAREL BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY RESIDING IN CHANDIGARH

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ABSTRACT

The present research paper is focused on understanding the purchasing practices of male to female transgenders living in Chandigarh. It also studies the perspective retailers of apparel stores have towards transgender customer. Keeping this in view two sets of questionnaires were prepared to collect data. One focused on responses from male to female transgenders and second focused to collect reaction of retailers of apparel stores towards their transgender customers. 31 transgender respondents and 30 retailers of apparel stores were approached to fill the questionnaires. Sample of retail store respondents was further divided into two; 15 respondents from market place of Manimajra Chandigarh and 15 respondents from Sashtri Market, Sector 22 Chandigarh were taken. These markets were selected on the basis of the response of transgenders regarding the places where they liked to shop for apparel. The responses showed that the transgender community is becoming comfortable in the society. They do not feel threatened by people around them. 25.80% of the transgenders are of the opinion that the society is friendly towards them. They reported that social media had a role to play in their social acceptance and also help 67.74% of them to gain knowledge about the fashion trends as they feel interested. Majority of the transgenders like their garments to have a personal touch and therefore 54.83% of them design and get them tailored. On being asked about their wanting exclusive apparel store for transgenders, mixed reactions were received. 42% strongly agreed with the idea and 32% strongly disagreed. Comfort and fitting of garments were observed to be the two main factors affecting the apparel buying decision of transgender customers with 45.16% and 41.93% respectively. 74.18% of the transgender respondents found shopping to be stress relieving and fun. It was also seen that like male and female genders, 35% transgenders also end up spending more than their planned budget, showing that exhibiting impulsive buying behaviour was human nature. 55% retail store respondents treated their walk-in transgender customers like any other customer visiting their shops. 30% of the transgender customers visited their stores to buy party wear and 32% casual wear clothing. The store respondents never faced any difficulty in attending other customers in presence of transgender customers. They did not exhibit awkward behaviour and did not embarrass the store attendant asking for discounts.

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INTRODUCTION

Society is natural to man. Human nature is such that an individual cannot live in isolation. The family acts as a primary socialization unit for children where the child grows up and learns the basic values and norms of the culture. . It includes adults of both the genders and one or more children owned or adopted. The main genders that dominate the society are the male and female. Other than these two genders, another gender is the combination of both these genders termed as transgender.

This gender has to face a lot of difficulties and stress for their gender identity in the society. Clothing and shopping are two mood lifters and stress relievers that can help to cope up with stress. Now a days, clothing is becoming more of a functional need than just a basic need. Consumer behaviour is the process of taking a decision taken by a consumer to buy or not to buy a product. Factors that affect a decision to buy a product can be cultural, social, economic psychological or personal. The present research was undertaken to study the buying behavior of transgenders and the problems they face while buying clothing.

Perspective of apparel retail store owners towards transgenders was also taken to understand how transgenders are treated while shopping. The study was conducted in Union Territory of Chandigarh and focused on the male-to-female transgenders only.

Review of Literature: Aron (2003) "Fashion clothing consumption: antecedents and consequences of fashion clothing involvement" The study examined the effect of materialism and self-image product-image congruency on consumers' involvement in fashion clothing. It also examined purchase decision involvement, subjective fashion knowledge and consumer confidence. The results indicated that fashion clothing involvement was significantly effected by a consumer's degree of materialism, gender and age. Further, it was found that fashion clothing involvement influences fashion clothing knowledge. The results indicated that fashion clothing knowledge influenced consumer confidence in making purchase decisions about fashion. This could hold as time for transgenders as it is for male and female genders.

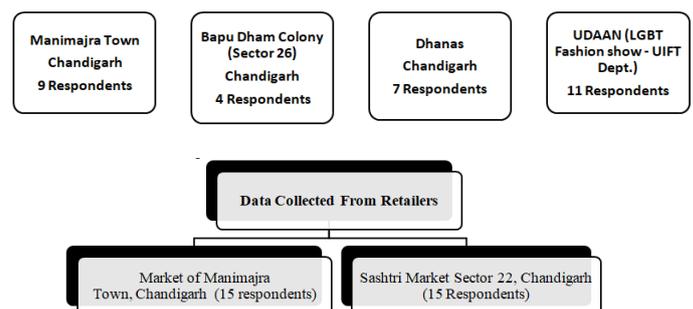
Sibel (2008) "The meaning and importance of clothing comfort: a case study for Turkey" Studied, the meaning and importance of clothing comfort and main comfort problems according to a group of Turkish consumers having different properties. The results indicated that, garment fit and comfort were the most important criteria for the investigated group during purchase decisions and nearly all of the respondents considered clothing comfort as more important than before. The basic comfort problems of people were mostly related to ease of movement, sweating and garment fit. Gerhard (2011) "A Neurological Study of Compulsive Buying Behaviour", the article described a study of the neural correlates of compulsive buying. The results showed evidence of significant differences between non-compulsive and compulsive buyers regarding brain activity in regions known to be involved in decision making. The findings gave a deeper insight into the nature of compulsive buying and were relevant to consumer policy. The transgender buyers can also be categorised as compulsive and non compulsive buyers on the basis of their buying behaviour and studied further.

Marika (2012) "Clothing choices, weight, and trait self-objectification" The study aimed to assess the link between clothing choice and aspects of body image. Results indicated that BMI and self-classified weight were positively correlated with the choice of clothes for camouflage. Self objectification was positively correlated with choice of clothes for fashion, and negatively correlated with choosing clothes for comfort. It was concluded that clothing represents an important but neglected aspect of contemporary women's management of their body's appearance. The same can be a hypothesis for study of transgenders. Guha (2013) in her study "The changing perception and buying behaviour of women consumer in Urban India" says that 'working women segment has significantly influenced the modern marketing concept'. The objective of the paper was to identify the changing perception and comparison of buying behaviour of working and non-working women in Urban India. It suggested that women due to their multiple roles, influence their own and of their family members' buying behaviour. The study also revealed that working women were price, quality and brand conscious and highly influenced by the others in shopping. The same can be said for the working and non working members of the

transgender community and there can be other or same factors responsible for the influence of shopping for transgenders.

METHODOLOGY

A sample of 31 Transgender respondents was taken for the purpose of study. The sample consisted of Male-To-Female Transgenders living in the Union Territory of Chandigarh. The purpose was to understand their buying practices and the effect of being a transgender on their shopping. On the basis of the response of transgenders, the two most visited markets by them (Local market of Manimajra, Chandigarh & Sashtri Market of Sector 22, Chandigarh) were taken to understand the attitude of the retail store owners towards the transgender Consumers. Two sets of interview schedules were developed for the study. A structured Questionnaire of total 25 items was developed to fulfil the objectives. Section A had 6 questions about demographic profile of transgenders living in Union Territory of Chandigarh. Section B had 15 questions related to the shopping behavior of transgenders. Section C had 4 questions related to the effect of being a transgender on the sellers. The second structured questionnaire with a total of 10 items was developed to study the perspective of retailers of apparel stores towards the transgender consumers. A pilot study was undertaken to see if the questions were appropriate and were good to extract the desired information.



RESULTS

Figure 1. Shows the type of clothing mostly preferred by the transgenders 45% of them prefer to go for comfortable garments. The second choice of transgender respondents was found to be the fitting of the garments as responded by 42% of the sample while just 12.90% of the respondents said they opted for the fashionable garments as their first choice. Data analysis of Figure 2. shows that 54.83% of the transgenders like to wear garments they got tailored. 39% of the transgenders liked wearing ready-made garments whereas only 6% preferred buying garments that were semi stitched and had to be fitted to size. Figure 3. Shows the choice of transgender respondents regarding having a separate Apparel Store for them. 32% of the respondents strongly disagreed while 42% strongly agreed for having separate apparel store for transgenders and 16.12% of the respondents somewhat agreed and 6% disagreed. 3% of the respondents preferred to remain neutral to the choice of having a separate apparel store for them. Figure 4. analysis shows that 32% of the transgender respondents found shopping to be a satisfying activity and 10% of the respondents felt shopping to be a stress reliever for them. 42% said that going for shopping was Fun for them while only 16.12% of the respondents said that it was hard to find clothing of their preference when they go for shopping.

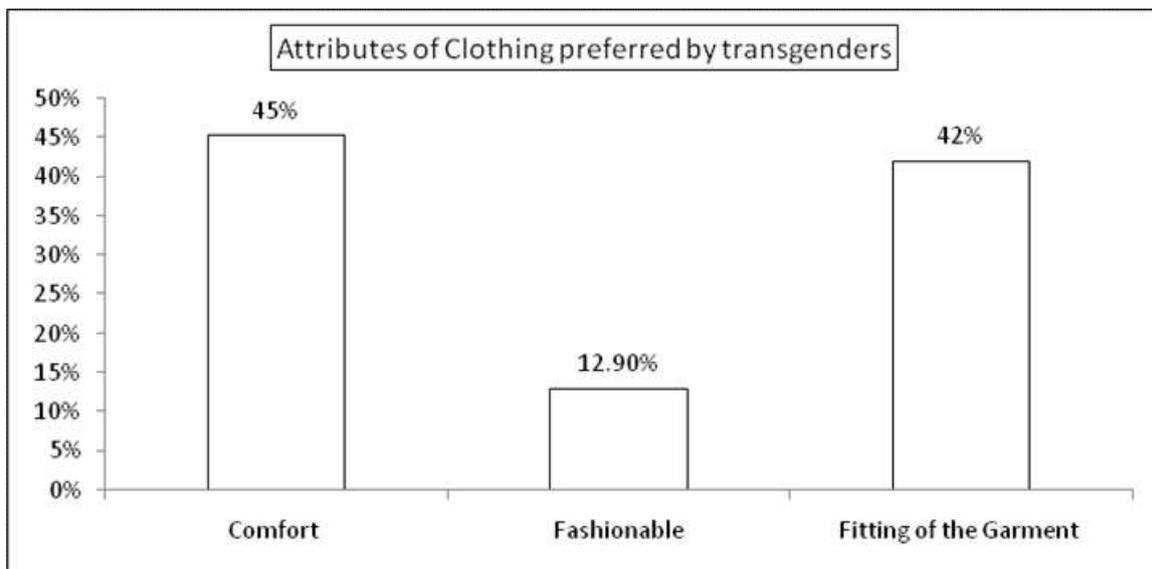


Figure 1. Attributes of Clothing preferred by Transgenders

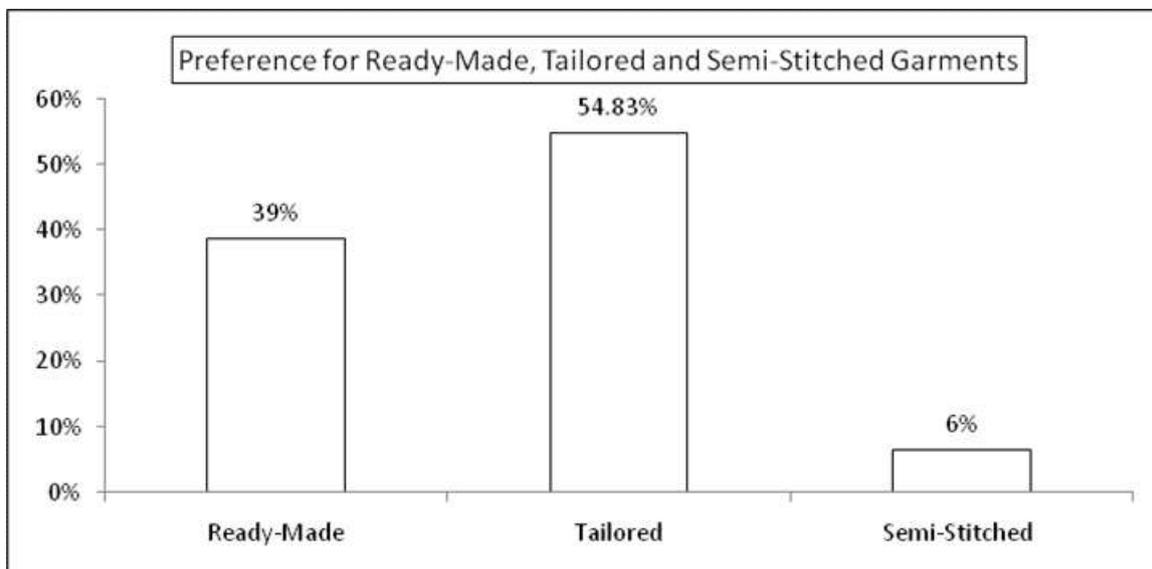


Figure 2. Preference for Ready-Made, Tailored and Semi-Stitched Garments

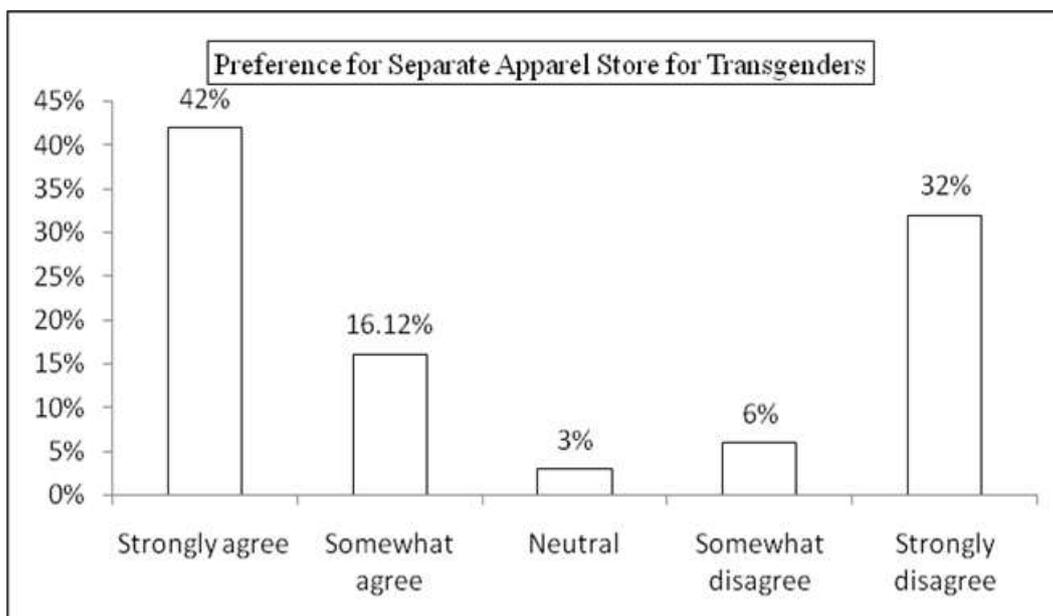




Figure 4. Effect of Shopping on Transgenders

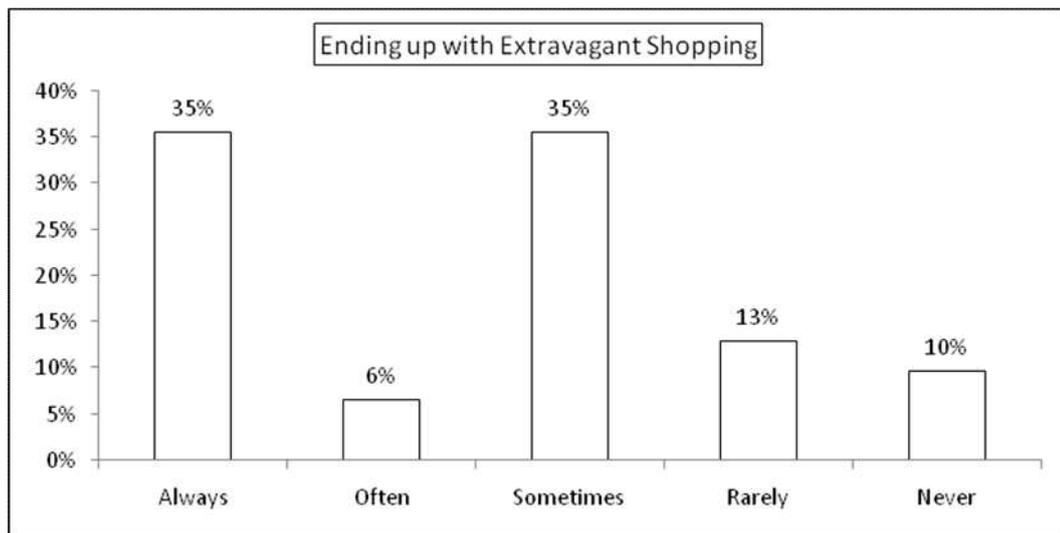


Figure 5. Ending up with Extravagant Shopping

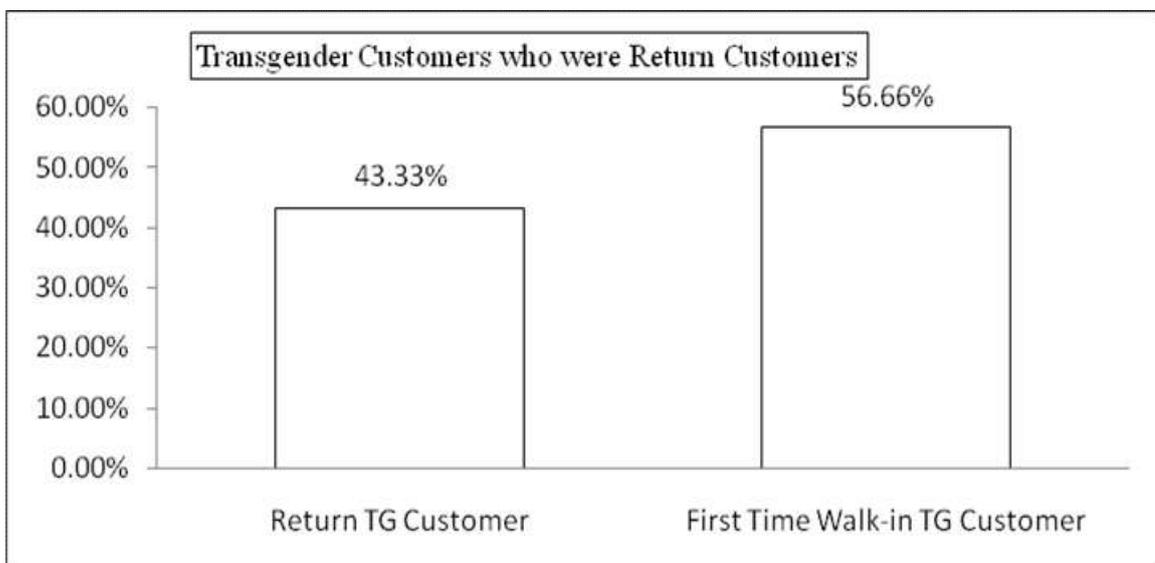


Figure 6. Transgender Customers Who Were Return Customers

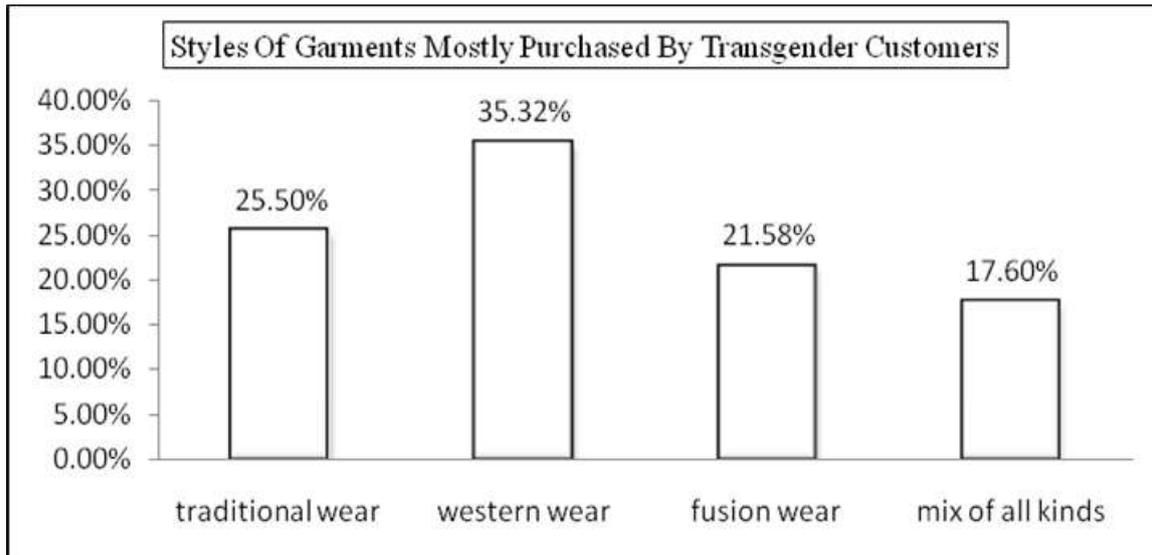


Figure 7. Styles of Garments Mostly Purchased by Transgender Customers

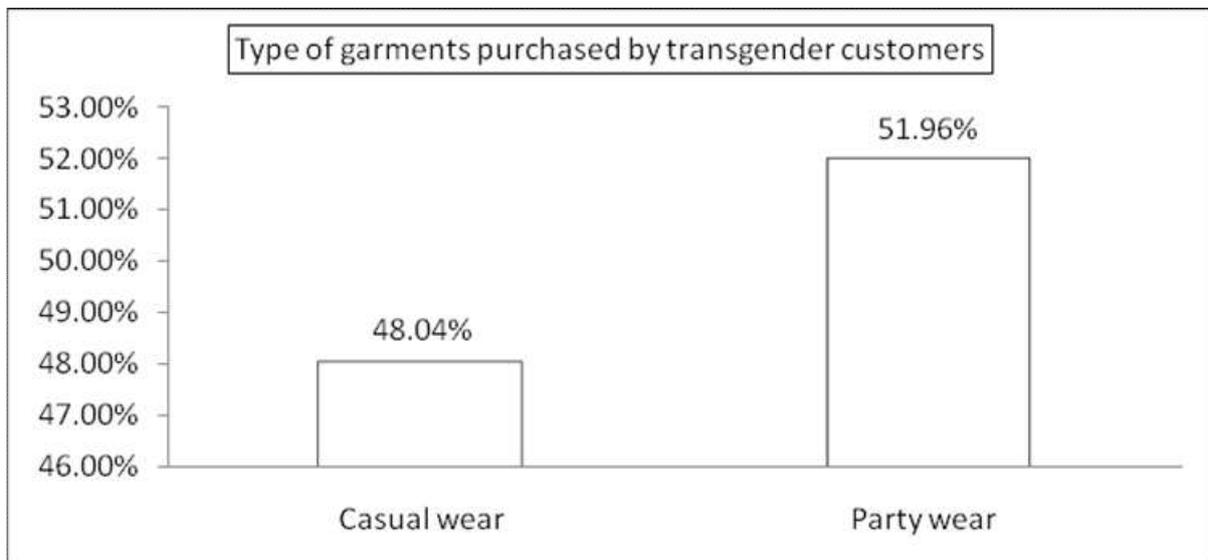


Figure 8. Type of garments purchased by transgender customers

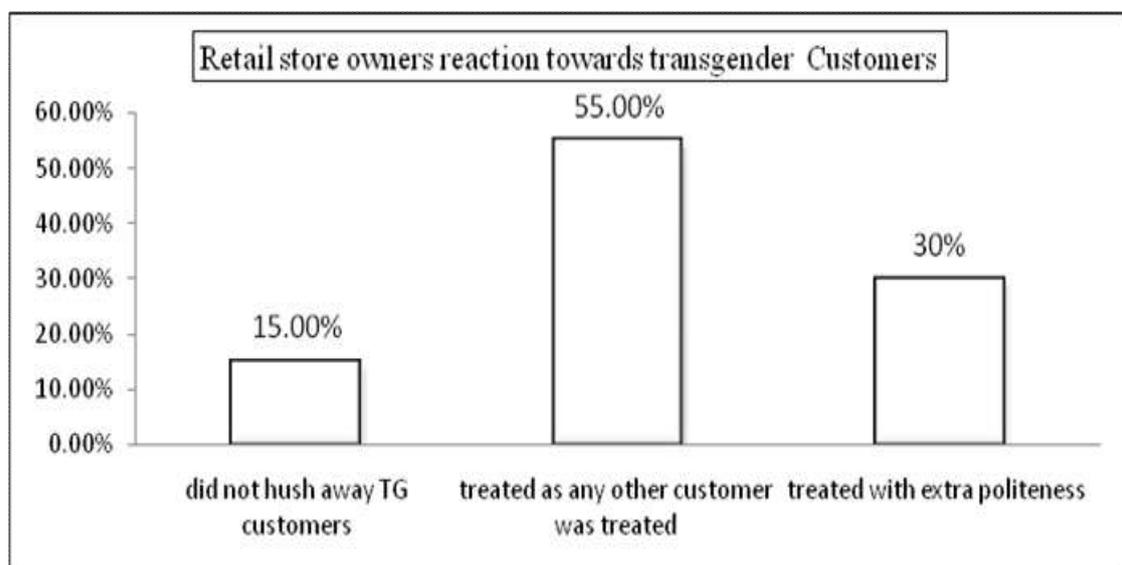


Figure 9. Retail Store Owners Reaction Towards Transgender Customers

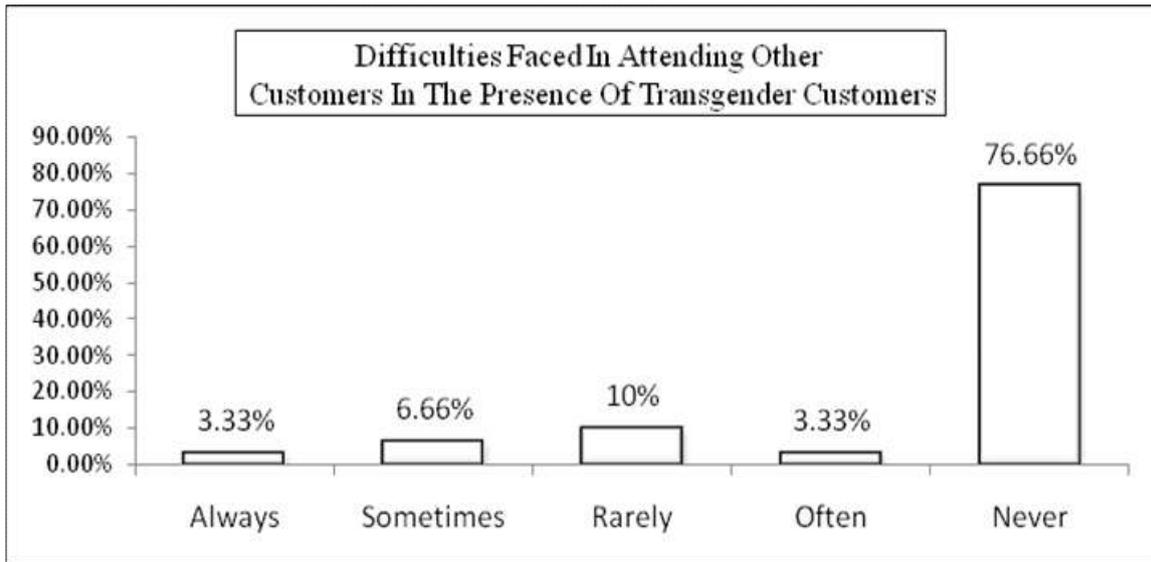


Figure 10. Difficulties Faced in Attending Other Customers in the Presence of Transgender Customers

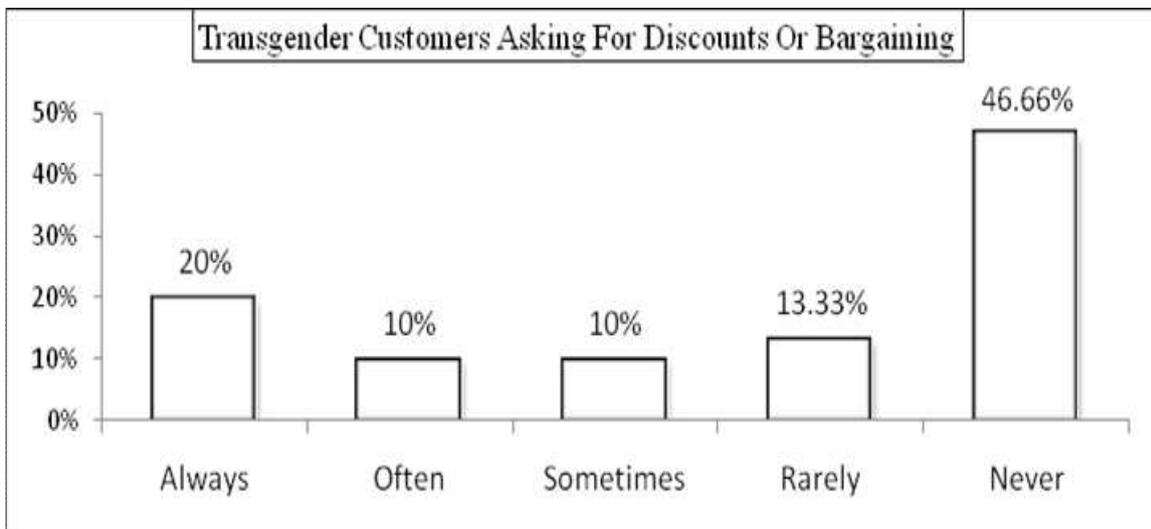


Figure 11. Transgender Customers Asking for Discounts or Bargaining

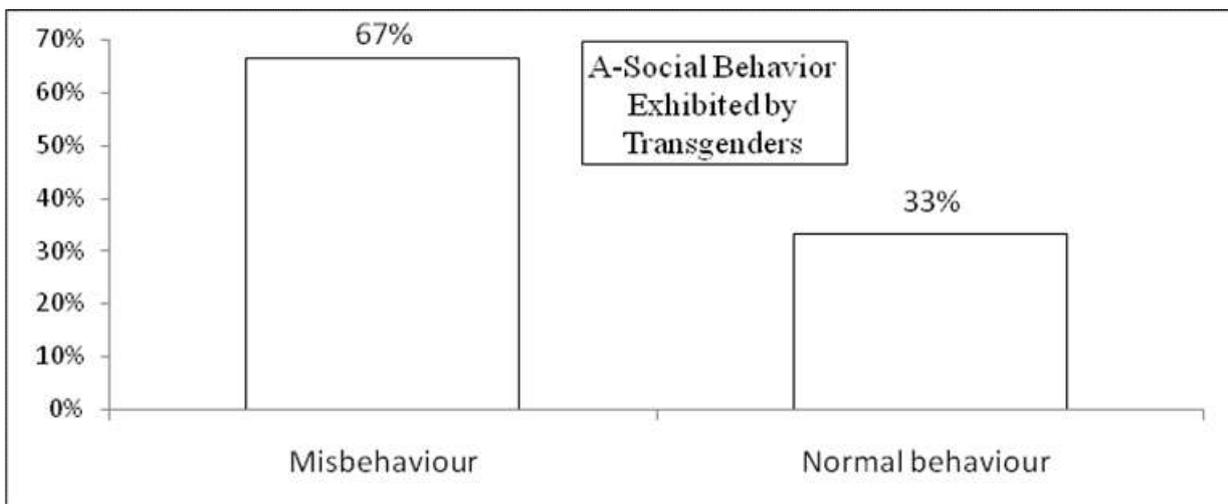


Figure 12. A-Social Behavior Exhibited by Transgenders

Figure 5 shows that 35% of the transgender respondents always or sometimes ended up buying more than they initially planned to buy and 13% rarely faced such a situation. 10% respondents never faced such a situation of extravagant shopping and 6% responded that they often faced such a situation. Figure 6.43.33% transgenders customers were reported to be return customers. While 56.66% of them were usually first time walk in customers as per the response given by the retail shop owners. Figure 7 shows 25.50% respondents said that transgender customers preferred to purchase traditional wear and 35.32% transgender customers purchased western wear. 21.58% transgender customers chose fusion wear whereas just 17.60% transgender customers purchased mixed kind of garments. Figure 8 48.04% transgender customers preferred to shop for casual wear clothing. While 51.96% of them liked to shop for party wear clothing as the response given by the retail shop owners. Figure 9. Shows 55% of the retail store owners treated the transgender customers as they treated other customers whereas 30% retail store owners treated Transgender customers with extra politeness. However, 15% respondents said they never hushed them away. Figure 10. Shows that 76.66% of the interviewed retailers never faced any difficulty while dealing with other customers in the presence of Transgender customers and 10% rarely faced any awkward situation. 6.66% of the retail store owners sometimes faced difficulty in dealing with customers in the presence of Transgender customers. 3.33% of the retailers always faced such a situation and 3.33% often found it difficult to deal with other customers in the presence of Transgender customers. Figure 11 shows that according to the retail store owners, 46.66% of the transgender customers visiting their stores had never asked for discounts or bargained with them. Whereas 20% said that Transgender customers always asked for discounts and 13.33% said that they rarely faced Transgender customers bargaining with them and 10% said they sometimes or often bargained for discounts respectively. Figure 12 shows the response of the retailers towards behaviour of transgender customers. 67% of the retailers said that transgender customers misbehaved with them while 33% said that they did not face any such misbehaviour by transgender customers.

Conclusion

The following conclusions were drawn based on the analysis of the data:

- It was seen that 54.83% of the transgenders preferred tailored or stitched garments. It was observed that comfort of the garment was a priority of 45% respondents and fitting was preferred by 42% of the respondents. These were the attributes kept in mind while shopping for apparels by the Transgenders.
- 42% transgenders strongly agreed that there should be exclusive apparel retail stores for them and 16.12% somewhat agreed to this fact
- 42% Transgender Respondents found shopping to be a fun activity and 10% considered it as a stress reliever. It was seen that 35% always and 35% sometimes (transgender respondents) ended up being extravagant and buying more than they initially planned, showing their impulsive shopping behaviour as male and female genders also do.

- 56.66% retail Store owners got more first time walk-in transgender customers as compared to 43.33% who were return customers
- When dealing with Transgender customers, 55% retail store owners treated them like any of their other customers while 30% spoke with extra politeness with their transgender customers. 15% of them said that they never hushed the transgender customer's away from their shops.
- Mostly preferred style of garments by Transgenders according to the retail store owners were observed to be 48.04% casual wear and 51.96% party wear clothes were preferred by transgender customers.
- 76.66% of the Retail Store owners never faced any difficulty in attending other customers in the presence of a Transgender customer and 46.66% respondents said that Transgenders never asked for discounts. 67% of the retail shop owners said that transgender customers exhibited A-Social behaviour in general while only 33% of them said that transgenders behaved normally like any other gender.

The above findings show that the transgenders shop like regular customers and exhibit impulsive buying behaviour like others. Shopping activity is a stress reliever for them. They prefer to buy party wear and casual wear clothing and like their clothes to be personally stitched and fitted for them by tailors. Comfort and fit is what they like in their clothing.

They would like to have exclusive store where transgenders alone can shop. It can be concluded that they exhibit buying behaviour like other male and female genders. However, they do feel excluded or want to be that way. Retail store owners also felt that transgender customers exhibit A-Social behaviour. This study remains open for further research.

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