IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM)
e-ISSN: 2278-487X, p-ISSN: 2319-7668. Volume 17, Issue 10 .Ver. II (Oct. 2015), PP 15-27
www.iosrjournals.org

Power of Private Label Brands- A Survey of Select Respondents

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Abstract: *Retail transformation is considered as one of the latest marketing milestones across the world and Indian scenario is no exception. Stiff competition is observed among different retail chain stores and operating Private Label Brands is one way of realizing profits. PLBs are products that are made and sold exclusively within the same outlets. They are often sold at lower price than manufacturer brands. In this context a survey was held to understand the perceptions of 275 select respondents towards these PLBs in comparison with Manufacturer brands in various product categories like Groceries, Food items, FMCGs, Sport utilities etc.,. The study employed Rank Correlation, Percentages and Averages to examine the data. The results reveal that high priority was given to PLBs in some product categories where as average and low ranking was given in some other product categories.*
Key words: *PLBs (Private Label Brands), Manufacturer Brands, Retail chain stores, FMCG*

I. Introduction:

Retailing has always played an integral part in economic development of any nation. Nations with strong retail activity have enjoyed greater Economic and Social progress. Retail activity provides a clear indication of the spending pattern of the consumers of a country. Retailing symbolizes consumerism. In India retailing has become one of the forces driving consumption of late, where new format stores such as Shoppers Stop, Big Bazaar, Crossword etc., have become places to see and be seen in. From the year 2000 onwards, the pace at which modern retailing is coming up in India is incredible. This is evident from the straggling shopping centers, multi- story malls and huge complexes that offer shopping, food, entertainment etc., under one roof. Along with the striking transformation in the demographics of the Indian population, the advent of large corporate houses and superior IT management are also being experienced. This sector has grown at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 11.2 % during the period 2007-09 with Food and Grocery accounting for the major share. During the same period, within this sector, the organized retailing revenues have increased at a CAGR of 19.5% with apparels and foot wear segments accounting for a major share. Compared to Manufacturing, Retailing is a complex business as there is a likelihood of exhausting the store's potential much faster. Growth or even existence of retail chain stores depend on repeat visits of the same customers. Customers' repeat visits to the stores depend upon various parameters like store design, reception, service and the variety of merchandise being offered. In this transaction; retailers are finding it hard to maintain their profitability and quality image in the market together. To achieve these twin objectives retailers have adopted to introduce their own brands called "Private Label" brands. The process of developing such products is known as "backward integration". In other words, when a retailer expands his operations to develop some products that he sells from his stores, such products are called as "Private Label" brands (PLBs). The PLBs are usually sold exclusively at the retailers' outlet only. These PLBs also are called as Retailers' brands and about two-thirds of consumers believe retailer brands are as good as or better than manufacturer brands.[i] According to a survey of US adults, 9 out of 10 shoppers are aware of PLBs, 8 out of 10 buy them regularly and 6 out of 10 say price has a major impact on the purchase of PLBs.[ii] In the past, PLBs were exclusively discount versions of mid-tier products.

Yet, today a new form of brand has emerged-the premium PLB. Safeway, Wal-Mart and others have realized that many consumers have the willingness and cash to pay extra for higher quality and they want to capture a share of that spending.[iii] Private brands can enable retailers to have channel control, improve competitive positioning and raise profit margins. With private brands, retailers can obtain loyalty for their own brands, convert brand loyalty to store loyalty and require that items be made to specifications. Despite the exciting possibilities, care must be taken by retailers in deciding how much emphasis to place on PLBs. There may be many consumers who are loyal to manufacturer brands and they may shop elsewhere if their variety is pruned for the sake of PLBs. [iv]

II. Review of Literature:

Earlier research done in these areas has been analyzed and is presented below-

1) Labeaga et al (2007) contend that private labels assist building loyalty by differentiating the retailer. Consumers who purchase private labels do not only become loyal to that particular brand but also to the retailer through which it is sold.[v]
2) Manyu Huang and Kevin E Voges (2011) demonstrate that customers with higher price sensitivity are more likely to purchase private brand groceries and commodities. The differences in perceived quality between private brands and manufacturer brands are small for consumers who purchase private brand commodities.[vi]
3) Swaroop Chandra Sahoo and Prakash Chandra Dash (2010) state that Indian consumers wish to get the best price for the products they buy. Indian consumers check and compare the best price for the products they buy.[vii]
4) Kumar (2007) notes that over use of promotions by manufacturer brands may condition consumers to become price sensitive and this may eventually result in a “trade down” to a private label item.[viii]
5) Hoch and Banerji (1993) conclude that one of the interesting phenomena concerning PLBs is the fact that their growth has been highly uneven across the product categories.[ix]
6) Nielsen Global (2014) survey reveals that consumers are seeking quality and value, and private labels deliver on both these attributes. 67% believe private label offers extremely good value for money and 62% say buying private labels make them feel like a smart shopper.[x]
7) Liesse, J, (1993) suggest that due to relatively lower price; consumer perceptions are negatively impacted. Private label brands are thus frequently seen as inferior quality alternatives.[xi]
8) Goyal et al (2009) concluded that the perception of customers towards PLBs will become positive gradually.[xii]
9) Beldona and Wysong (2007) tried to compare the brand personality traits of store and national brands and found that consumers perceive national brands to have stronger brand personality traits when compared with store brands.[xiii]
10) Kunal.S and Yoo B(2010) identify that there is a subtle interaction between price and quality; price and price deal in the minds of Indian consumers choosing PLBs.[xiv]

Objectives:

This work is undertaken with the following objectives-

1. To know about the evolution of Private Label Brands
2. To analyze the impact of Private Label Brands in comparison to Manufacturer Brands as far as purchase decision is concerned.
3. To offer pertinent suggestions and conclusions.

III. Methodology:

In order to achieve the intended objectives; statistical techniques like correlation with the help of SPSS tool has been used to sum up the ranks given by various respondents about the different factors. Additionally percentages, averages have been used for further analysis. A standard questionnaire has been adopted to collect data from select respondents about their back ground as well as about conceptual variables. Personal administration method has been chosen for data collection as it is widely used in surveys of this nature and it also helps in achieving the objectives of this paper. Convenience sampling has been employed to select 275 participants in this research.

Analysis:

The data thus collected has been analyzed as under:-

1) Profile of respondents:

Details of respondents like Gender, Income level, Occupation etc., have been collected and analyzed. The same is presented below-

Table 1

Profile of respondents (n=275)

Sl. no	Variable	Spread	Number of Respondents	%
1	Gender	Male	155	56.36
		Female	120	43.6

2	Income level	Below 1.5 lacs	110	40
		1.5 to 3.5 lacs	100	36.36
		3.5 – 5 lacs	35	12.7
		5 lacs above	30	10.9
3	Occupation	Employed	163	59
		Self employed	9	3.27
		Student	46	16.7
		Home maker	29	10.5
		Retired	29	10.5

Table reveals that there is an almost equal distribution of gender with male being 56.3% and female respondents being 43.6%. As far as Income is concerned maximum no. of respondents (40%) are in below 1.5 lacs per annum income level, followed by 36.36 % of them in the income bracket of 1.5 to 3.5 lacs per annum, 12.7% are in the income bracket of 3.5 to 5 lacs and the remaining 10.9% of the respondents from the income bracket of above 5 lacs per annum. Occupation details reveal that 62.27 % are employed, 16.7 % are students, 10.5% are retired personnel and 10.5% are home makers.

Basic information about the visit of the respondents to retail chain stores for the purchase of Groceries, Food Items etc., is presented below-

Table 2

Visit to retail chain stores (n=275)

Sl.no	Variable	No. of respondents	%
1	Always	140	50.9
2	Some times	130	47.2
3	Never	5	1.8

50.9% of the respondents informed that they always visit retail chain stores, 47.2% said that they visit retail chain stores sometimes where as 1.8 % informed that they have never visited them.

3) Purchase of Private Label Brands:

The respondents were asked to give data whether they have purchased PLBs at least once or not and it is presented below-

Table 3
Purchase of PLBs at least once (N=270)

Sl.no	VARIABLE	No. of respondents	%
1	YES	235	87.03
2	NO	35	12.96

The table indicates that 87.03% of the respondents purchased PLBs at least once and the remaining 12.96% of them have not purchased PLBs even once.

4) Distinction between PLB & Manufacturer brand:

The respondents were asked to inform whether they will make any distinction between PLBs and Manufacturer brands and the same is provided below-

Table 4 Distinction between PLB and Manufacturer brand (n=235)

Sl. No	Variable	No.of respondents	%
1	Yes	190	80.8
2	No	45	19.1

It can be concluded from the above table that a vast majority of 80.8 % of the respondents make a distinction between PLB and manufacturer before purchase and the remaining 19.1% said the opposite.

Frequency of PLBs purchase:

Data given by the respondents about their frequency of purchase of PLBs is given below-

Table 5

Frequency of PLBs Purchase (n=235)

Sl. No	Frequency	No. of respondents	%
1	Few times per year	120	51
2	Once a month	45	19.2
3	Few times a month	70	29.7

Data indicates that half of the respondents are purchasing PLBs few times a year followed by nearly one-third of them purchasing few times a month and the remaining 19% are however purchasing PLBs once a month.

6) Visit to a retail stores exclusively for PLBs:

Information was solicited from respondents whether they visit retail stores for an exclusive purchase of PLBs and the same is provided below-

Table 6 Visit to retail shop for PLBs exclusively (n=235)

Sl.no	Response	No. of respondents	%
1	Yes	35	14.7
2	No	200	85.3

Data indicates that few respondents (14.7%) are making an exclusive visit to retail stores for the sake of PLBs and a large population (85.3%) is not.

7) Preference to PLBs due to low Price:

In comparison with manufacturer brands; respondents were asked to opine whether they will choose PLBs due to low price ; keeping in view that all other parameters like quality, packing, taste etc., are same in both categories and the same is given below-

Table 7 Preference towards PLBs on price(n=235)

Sl no	Category	Yes	%	No	%
1	Groceries	55	23.40	180	76.6
2	FMCG products	35	14.89	200	85.1
3	Readyto eat items	40	17.02	195	82.97

Above data indicates that respondents prefer manufacturer brands to PLBs though the price of the later is low and all the other parameters like Quality, Packing, Taste etc., being same in both categories.

Preference of Respondents towards Private Label Brands:

Respondents were asked to extend their opinion about their preference towards purchase of Private Label Brands(PLBs) in different categories like Food, Beverages, Body care products, Home care products, Baby products, Clothing, Electronics, Sports & Leisure, Entertainment and Books etc.,

Preference for Private Label Brands – <u>FOOD</u>: The respondents have been asked to rank their preference towards purchase of Food items in PLBs and the same has been presented in the following table-

Table 8

FOOD (n=235)

Ranks for FOOD		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	170	72.3	72.3	72.3
	4	45	19.1	19.1	91.4
	6	10	4.3	4.3	95.7
	9	10	4.3	4.3	100.0
	Total	235	100.0	100.0	

From the table it is evident that out of 235 respondents 170(72.3%) have assigned rank one, 45(19.1) ranked 4, 10(4.3% ranked 6 and 10 (4.3%) ranked 9 respondents to food. This shows that food is given lot of importance by the respondents.

Table 9

BEVERAGES(n=235)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	30	12.8	12.8	12.8
	2	85	36.2	36.2	49.0
	3	25	10.6	10.6	59.6
	4	45	19.1	19.1	78.7
	6	15	6.4	6.4	85.1
	7	5	2.1	2.1	87.2
	9	30	12.8	12.8	100.0
	Total	235	100.0	100.0	

It is evident from the above that 85(36.2%) of the 235 respondents assigned 2nd rank for the purchase of beverages whereas 30(12.8%) gave 1st rank to the same category and the same number of respondents have given 9th rank.45 of the respondents (19.1%) assigned 4th rank followed by 25(10.6%) who have given 3rd rank. It is found that 15(6.4%) have given 6th rank to PLBs in the category of Beverages whereas 5(2.1%) have assigned 7th rank. Beverages from PLBs are given less priority.

Preference for Private Label Brands -Body Care: The assigned ranks for Body Care items that are tabulated as under indicate that 25(10.6%) have assigned 1st rank for PLBs in the category of Body Care, 14.9% of them have given 2nd rank followed by 27.7% of the respondents who have given 3rd rank. It is also evident that 30 out of 235 have given 4th rank **for** PLBs in the category of Body Care where as 25 have assigned 5th rank followed by 40 of them who have given 6th rank .It is also observed that 15(6.4%) have given 9th rank for PLBs while choosing Body Care items.

Table 10 BODYCARE(n=235)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	25	10.6	10.6	10.6
	2	35	14.9	14.9	25.5
	3	65	27.7	27.7	53.2
	4	30	12.8	12.8	66.0
	5	25	10.6	10.6	76.6
	6	40	17.0	17.0	93.6
	9	15	6.4	6.4	100.0
	Total	235	100.0	100.0	

Preference for Private Label Brands – Home Care: The assigned rankings of the respondents for their choice towards Home Care items from PLBs indicate that 5 out of 235 assigned 1st rank followed by 20 who have given 2nd rank. However 65 of them have given 3rdrank,40 gave 4th rank. It is found that 35 have assigned 5th rank, 25 assigned 6th rank and 15 have given 7th rank.10 out of 235 have assigned 8 th rank and 20 have given 9th rank to the purchase of Home Care items from PLBs. Respondents have given very less priority to PLBs while buying Homecare products.

Table 11 HOMECARE(n=235)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	5	2.1	2.1	2.1
	2	20	8.5	8.5	10.6
	3	65	27.7	27.7	38.3
	4	40	17.0	17.0	55.3
	5	35	14.9	14.9	70.2
	6	25	10.6	10.6	80.9
	7	15	6.4	6.4	87.2
	8	10	4.3	4.3	91.5
	9	20	8.5	8.5	100.0
	Total	235	100.0	100.0	

Preference for Private Label Brands- <u>Baby Products</u>: The Data about the preference of the respondents while choosing Baby products from PLBs is given below-

Table 12 BABYPRODUCTS(n=235)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	5	2.1	2.1	2.1
	2	10	4.3	4.3	6.4
	3	20	8.5	8.5	14.9
	4	10	4.3	4.3	19.2
	5	100	42.6	42.6	61.8
	6	30	12.8	12.8	74.6
	7	30	12.8	12.8	87.2
	8	20	8.5	8.5	95.9
	9	10	4.3	4.3	100.0
	Total	235	100.0	100.0	

Analysis of the above table indicates that 5 out of 235 respondents have assigned 1st rank followed by an equal no.of respondents giving ranks of 2 ,4 &9 .Twenty respondents have assigned 3rd & 8th rank in this context and thirty respondents assigned 6th& 7th ranks and the remaining 100 have given a rank of 5. Hence, it can be observed that the respondents have given very less priority to PLBs in the category of Baby products.

Preference for Private Label Brands –<u>Clothing</u>: Out of the 235 respondents no one has given 1st rank to PLBs as far as Clothing is concerned. An equal no.15 have chosen 2nd& 4th rank followed by 25 respondents who have assigned 3rd,5th and 6th ranks in this context.65 of them have assigned 7th rank whereas 35 of them have put them in 8th rank. Out of these 235 respondents 30 have given 9th rank. Hence, it can be drawn that PLBs in the category of Clothing are given the least preference by the respondents.

Table 13 CLOTHING(n=235)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
2	15	6.4	6.4	6.4
3	25	10.6	10.6	17.0
4	15	6.4	6.4	23.4
5	25	10.6	10.6	34.0
Valid 6	25	10.6	10.6	44.6
7	65	27.7	27.7	72.3
8	35	14.9	14.9	87.2
9	30	12.8	12.8	100.0
Total	235	100.0	100.0	

Preference for Private Label Brands -Electronics: Information that is generated from respondents about their preference of Electronic goods from PLBs is presented below-

Table 14
ELECTRONICS(n=235)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
2	5	2.1	2.1	2.1
3	10	4.3	4.3	6.4
4	20	8.5	8.5	14.9
5	20	8.5	8.5	23.4
Valid 6	20	8.5	8.5	31.9
7	50	21.3	21.3	53.2
8	60	25.5	25.5	78.7
9	50	21.3	21.3	100.0
Total	235	100.0	100.0	

While none of the respondents have given 1st rank to Electronics from PLBs; 5 assigned 2nd rank, 10 have assigned 3rd rank and an equal no. of 20 have assigned 4th, 5th & 6th ranks. An equal no. of 50 have chosen 7th& 9th ranks and 60 of them have given 8th rank to the purchase of Electronics being offered as PLBs. It is clear that respondents are not ready to buy Electronic PLBs.

Preference for Private Label Brands –Sports: The data thus collected indicates that no one has assigned 1st rank to the Sports goods from the category of PLBs.70 of them have given 8th rank followed by 45 who have assigned 6th rank.40 of them have given 9th rank followed by 25 who have opted for 2 nd rank. Out of the remaining 35 respondents 15 chose 4th rank followed by another 15 who have chosen 5th rank and 5 have assigned 3rd position to the purchase of Sports goods from PLB category.

Table 15 SPORTS(n=235)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
2	25	10.6	10.6	10.6
3	5	2.1	2.1	12.7
4	15	6.4	6.4	19.1
5	15	6.4	6.4	25.5
Valid 6	45	19.1	19.1	44.6
7	20	8.5	8.5	53.1
8	70	29.8	29.8	83.0
9	40	17.0	17.0	100.0

Total	235	100.0	100.0	

Preference for Private Label Brands – Entertainment: Respondents were asked to extend their opinion about PLBs in Entertainment category and the same is presented below-

Table 16 ENTERTAINMENT(n=235)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2	40	17.0	17.0	17.0
	3	20	8.5	8.5	25.5
	4	15	6.4	6.4	31.9
	5	15	6.4	6.4	38.3
	6	25	10.6	10.6	48.9
	7	50	21.3	21.3	70.2
	8	40	17.0	17.0	87.2
	9	30	12.8	12.8	100.0
	Total	235	100.0	100.0	

It is pertinent to note that even form this category no one has assigned 1st rank. Whereas 40(17%) of them assigned 2nd rank.15 each have assigned 4th& 5th rank and 25 have put 6th rank. While 50 assigned 7th rank, 40 of them have put 8th rank. The remaining 30 assigned 9th rank to PLBs while deciding to buy Entertainment items.

9) Preference of Respondents towards Branded items:

Respondents were asked to extend their opinion about their preference towards purchase of Branded items in different categories like Food, Beverages, Body care products, Home care products, Baby products, Clothing, Electronics, Sports & Leisure, Entertainment and Books etc.,

Preference for Branded Items – FOOD: The respondents have been asked to rank their preference towards purchase of Food products from Branded items and the same has been presented in the following table-

Table 17 FOOD(n=235)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	90	38.3	38.3	38.3
	2	55	23.4	23.4	61.7
	3	50	21.3	21.3	83.0
	4	30	12.8	12.8	95.8
	5	5	2.1	2.1	97.9
	6	5	2.1	2.1	100.0
	Total	235	100.0	100.0	

Out of 235 respondents 90 (38.3%) have assigned 1st rank for branded food items. An equal number of 5(2.1%) respondents' assigned 5th& 6th ranks. It can be said that respondents gave high priority for food items.

Preference for Branded Items -Beverages: The preference of respondents towards branded Beverages is presented below-

Table 18 BEVERAGES(n=235)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	5	2.1	2.1	2.1
	2	60	25.5	25.5	27.6
	3	55	23.4	23.4	51.0
	4	25	10.6	10.6	61.6
	5	30	12.8	12.8	74.4
	6	25	10.6	10.6	85.0
	7	25	10.6	10.6	95.6
	9	10	4.3	4.3	100.0

Total	235	100.0	100.0	

A least percent of 2.1% respondents' assigned 1st rank whereas the highest percent of 25.5% have put the 2nd rank. The overall analysis of the table indicates that very less respondents prefer Branded beverages.

Preference for Branded Items -<u>Body care products</u>: Data about the preference of respondents about Body care products from Branded items is presented below-

Table 19 BODYCARE(n=235)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	10	4.3	4.3	4.3
	3	55	21.3	21.3	25.6
	4	30	12.8	12.8	38.5
	5	40	17.1	17.1	57.6
	6	25	10.6	10.6	68.2
	7	35	14.8	14.8	83.0
	8	30	12.8	12.8	95.8
	9	10	4.3	4.3	100.0
	Total	235	100.0	100.0	

4.3% of the respondents gave a rank of one and nine and 21.3% of them have given 3rd rank for Body Care items from branded category. Based on the data it can be observed that respondents are not unanimous in their opinion about the ranking of Body care items from branded category.

Preference for Branded Items -<u>Home care products</u>: Data collected from respondents about Home care products from branded category is given below-

Table 20 HOMECARE

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	35	14.9	14.9	14.9
	2	15	6.4	6.4	21.3
	3	10	4.3	4.3	25.6
	4	25	10.6	10.6	36.2
	5	55	23.4	23.4	59.6
	6	5	2.1	2.1	61.7
	7	50	21.3	21.3	83.0
	8	25	10.6	10.6	93.6
	9	15	6.4	6.4	100.0
	Total	235	100.0	100.0	

55 out of 235 respondents have assigned a rank of 5 whereas 5 of them have assigned 6th rank. Accordingly, it can be seen that respondents are showing average interest on Branded items with reference to Home care products.

Preference for Branded Items- <u>Baby products</u>: The view point of the respondents about their preference of Branded Baby products is presented in the following table-

Table 21 BABYPRODUCTS(n=235)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	15	6.4	6.4	6.4
	2	20	8.5	8.5	14.9
	3	20	8.5	8.5	23.4
	4	15	6.4	6.4	29.8
	5	30	12.8	12.8	42.6
	6	55	23.4	23.4	66.0
	7	15	6.4	6.4	72.4
	8	15	6.4	6.4	78.8
	9	50	21.3	21.3	100.0
	Total	235	100.0	100.0	

The response of the select respondents indicates that 55 out of 235 have given 6th rank and an equal number of 15 people have given 1st, 4th, 7th& 8th ranks. Data shows varied interest levels of the respondents in choosing Baby products from Branded items.

Preference for Branded Items- <u>Clothing</u>: Data presented below provides the view point of the respondents about their preference of branded items in the category of clothing.

Table 22 CLOTHING(n=235)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	30	12.8	12.8	12.8
	2	5	2.1	2.1	14.9
	3	10	4.3	4.3	19.2
	4	40	17.0	17.0	36.2
	5	30	12.8	12.8	49
	6	40	17.0	17.0	66
	7	55	23.4	23.4	89.4
	8	5	2.1	2.1	91.5
	9	20	8.5	8.5	100.0
	Total	235	100.0	100.0	

As far as the ranking of the respondents in the category of branded clothing is concerned it can be observed that 7th rank was given by a maximum number of respondents i.e., 55 followed by 40 respondents who have given 4th rank. It can also be observed that an equal no. of 30 people each have put 1st and 5th ranks.

Preference for Branded Items- <u>Electronics</u>: Information given by the respondents about their preference of branded electronics is presented below-

Table 23 NELECTRONICS(n=235)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	20	8.5	8.5	8.5
	2	10	4.3	4.3	12.8
	3	5	2.1	2.1	14.9
	4	25	10.6	10.6	25.5
	5	10	4.3	4.3	29.8
	6	35	14.9	14.9	44.7
	7	35	14.9	14.9	59.6
	8	50	21.3	21.3	80.9
	9	45	19.1	19.1	100.0
	Total	235	100.0	100.0	

Table reveals that out of 235 respondents 50 put 8th rank as far as their preference for branded electronics followed by 45 of them giving 9th rank. An equal no. of 35 respondents gave 7th and 8th ranks. The overall data indicates that by and large respondents are not ranking branded electronics high.

Preference for Branded Items- Sports: Opinions expressed by the respondents regarding their choice rank of branded sports items is presented below-

Table 24 SPORTS(n=235)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	1	5	2.1	2.1	2.1
	2	10	4.3	4.3	6.4
	4	25	10.6	10.6	17.0
	5	25	10.6	10.6	27.6
Valid	6	35	14.9	14.9	42.5
	7	15	6.4	6.4	48.9
	8	80	34.0	34.0	82.9
	9	40	17.0	17.0	100.0
	Total	235	100.0	100.0	

Respondents' population of 34% has given 8th rank to branded sports items followed by 17 % opting to give 9th rank for branded sports items. It is pertinent to note that only 2% of them have given 1st rank. Looking at the data it can be drawn that respondents have given low ranking for branded sports products.

Preference for Branded Items -Entertainment: The preference of respondents about branded entertainment goods is presented below-

Table 25 ENTERTAINMENT(n=235)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	1	25	10.6	10.6	10.6
	2	60	25.5	25.5	36.1
	3	30	12.8	12.8	48.9
	4	20	8.5	8.5	57.4
	5	15	6.4	6.4	63.8
Valid	6	5	2.1	2.1	65.9
	7	5	2.1	2.1	68
	8	35	14.9	14.9	82.9
	9	40	17.0	17.0	100.0
	Total	235	100.0	100.0	

A large no. of 60 have put a rank of 2 for branded entertainment goods followed by 35 who have put 8th rank. It can be observed that the ranks are well spread and respondents did not give much weight age for branded entertainment goods.

10) Frequency of Manufacturer brands' purchase: Frequency of purchase of Manufacturer brands' purchase by the respondents has been solicited and the same is given below-

Table 26 Frequency of Manufacturer brands' Purchase (n=235)

Sl.no	Frequency	No. of respondents	%
1	Few times per year	70	29.7
2	Once a month	90	38.3
3	Few times a month	75	31.9

Table indicates that more than one-third of respondents (38.3%) are purchasing manufacturer brands once a month followed by near one- third of them (31.9%) making a frequency of few times a month purchase. Remaining 30% of them are purchasing manufacturer brands at a frequency of few times per year.

IV. Findings:

The following are the findings of the study-

1. Out of the approached 275 respondents; it was found that 5 have never visited any retail chain stores and hence they were not considered for further data collection.
2. Out of the remaining 270 respondents 35 have informed that they have "Never Purchased" any PLBs. It should be noted that 13% of the customers of retail chain stores are not at all purchasing PLBs. Hence, they were not considered for further research and the respondents number became 235
3. It is found out that preference percentage of respondents towards PLBs (based on low price alone) is more in Groceries followed by Ready to Eat items like Tomato ketchup followed by FMCG products.
4. 85 % of respondents informed that they are not visiting retail chain stores exclusively for the purchase of PLBs.
5. As far as the preference of respondents for PLBs is concerned; it was found that High Priority was given to Food, Mixed priority was given for Baby care items, Sports & Electronics, Less priority was given to Home care and Baby care products, Least preference was given to Clothing and Entertainment.
6. Respondents gave high priority for branded food items. They gave average ranking for branded Beverages. The ranking of respondents towards branded baby products was varied. They gave less ranking to branded clothing and the ranking was least for branded electronics goods and sports items.
7. Frequency of purchase of manufacturer brands indicate that an equal number of respondents (70 & 75) are making few times a year and few times a month purchase and the remaining (90) are maintaining a frequency of once a month.

Suggestions:

The following suggestions are offered based on findings and personal observations-

1) Retail chain stores must make efforts to increase the awareness levels of their customers without clashing the interest of manufacturer brands.
2) PLBs to be placed in strategic locations in an attractive manner and the store staff must be trained well to encourage the customer to choose PLBs whenever they are in dilemma with Manufacturer brands.
3) Retailers are suggested to introduce Premium Private Label Brand whose quality matches or even exceeds that of Manufacturer brands while still selling for a slightly lower price.
4) Retailers to give high priority to Groceries in PLBs category.
5) Retailers are also suggested to increase their focus on Food items, Ready to eat items in PLBs as respondents have given high ranking to these items from PLBs.
6) Suggestion is offered to retailers to shift their focus from FMCG items as respondents have given high ranking to such items from Manufacturer brands.
7) Customer Relationship Management must be adopted in a professional manner. They must collect data from consumers about various aspects like Socio- Cultural, Income levels of the consumers, Choice of items etc.,
8) Top management should show constant interest in CRM and must encourage their staff through various incentives for a smooth collection of data base of consumers.
9) Retailers are suggested to be wise in offering the right mix of Manufacturer brands and PLBs.

V. Conclusion:

The study has given information about the different details of the purchase pattern of consumers; whether they are visiting retail chain stores or not; if so how often they are visiting and whether they are preferring PLBs or Manufacturer brands. It has shown a direction to the retail chain stores personnel about the various aspects of store management like merchandise assortment, training of the staff, product mix etc.,

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