Clientele's Predisposition towards Phantom Brands - An Indian Perspective

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Today's highly competitive and dynamic environment that prevails in the Indian scenario has given opportunity for the emergence of Private Label Brands also termed as Phantom Brands. These brands are created and owned by powerful retailers and the power of such phantom brands largely depends on brand equity. This paper provides an insight into the various factors that influence clientele to have a favourable predisposition towards phantom brands and the influence of demographic variables towards the same. Special emphasis is also given to the growth drivers of phantom brands and the extent of clientele satisfaction towards service quality. The research design used for the study is descriptive and the sample size is restricted to 310 respondents who have a preference for phantom brands and convenience sampling is used to collect the responses. Data were analysed with the help of statistical tools using SPSS.

Keywords: Phantom Brands, Private Labels, Clientele

1. Introduction

Indian scenario currently is found to be highly competitive and dynamic mainly due to globalization which has given opportunity for the emergence of Private Label Brands also termed as Phantom Brands. These brands are created and owned by channel intermediaries and are predominantly owned by powerful retailers. The power of the retailer's brand is mainly dependent on the brand equity that retailers have developed. Much emphasis is given for in store promotions and promotion through local media and the cost involved in promoting such products is far more less when compared to that of manufacturers brands. Private labels are not only low priced but are also high on quality. Growth of organized retail chain has also facilitated the growth of private label brands in India. Consumers prefer to buy phantom brands not mainly due to its low price but because of their preference to buy products from large chain of retailers who offer a wide variety of products with better quality.

Phantom brands are commonly referred to as name brand, store brand, own label, retailer brand or generics. These are brands owned by the retailer rather than the producer or manufacturer. The power of such phantom brands largely depends on brand equity. Phantom brands have tremendous opportunities in India over the past few decades. Better margins and economies of scale have motivated India's big retailers to fill their shelves with their own labels by offering them at prices Indian shoppers are looking for, the value they seek in that price range and the trends they desire. India is a very different market. The predisposition that consumers have towards phantom brands is essential for the success of any retail organization as they are often designed to compete against branded products, offering customers a cheaper alternative to national brands. Initially phantom or private label brands were viewed by the public as low-cost imitations of branded products. Phantom brands have overcome this reputation and achieved significant growth in recent years. Special consideration is given in this study to know about the influence of the various growth drivers of phantom brands from the clientele's perspective .The extent of clientele satisfaction towards service quality is also considered to be vital to attract and retain customers.

Due to tremendous growth potential and opportunities that prevail in the Indian scenario big retailers have started to stock shelves with their own private labels also termed as Phantom brands. Better margins and economies of scale are found to be the motivating and driving factors for these Brick & Mortar retailers to have their own private labels. Phantom brands have an ability to satisfy value conscious consumers who consider both price and quality while making up the purchasing decision. Clientele, today are found to be highly demanding and are looking for more variety at lower prices. This does not mean that phantom brands are sub-standard alternatives as it was considered a few years back. Such brands perform exceedingly well across various product categories as they provide good quality and competitive pricing when compared with national brands. The growth and profit potential of phantom brands in India and clientele preference for such private brands has necessitated the need for carrying out this research.

2. Significance of the Study

Private label brands also termed as phantom brands are widely preferred in this scenario of economic downturn based on the fact that price gains more importance as consumers increasingly turn to money-saving strategies to manage budgets. As competition is becoming stiff, retailers are working on new marketing strategies to sustain in the market, one such strategy being private branding adopted by most of the retailers. Phantom brand or Private label is one of the strategic decisions for most of the retail organizations in recent years and hence many retailers have introduced varieties of private label in different categories like apparel, food and grocery, health care, personal care, consumer durables, lifestyle etc. Major driving force behind introducing store brand is to ensure the customer store loyalty. Retailers try to implement more and more innovative ideas to gain market share over national brands. Moreover their closeness to the clientele influence their capability to make

quick adjustments to products based on customer's changing preferences. The brand name of the retailer will have more weightage on private labels. Hence the success of phantom brands largely depends on the retailer. It is in this scenario the study has more significance in understanding the predisposition of clientele towards phantom brands

3. Review of Literature

- **Katarina Valaskova, Jana Kliestikova (2018**) in their study on *Consumer Perception of Private Label Products* attempted to determine the factors and variables that significantly influence and shape the consumer's perception and attitude towards the purchase of private label products. The study attempted to find out which types of private label products are purchased by consumers taking into consideration the various demographic characteristics as well as by the reasons for their purchase.
- **Aja Ebeke Egele, Prince Obinna Ikechi (2017)** in their study on *Consumer Attitude on Private Label Brand Purchase Behaviour in Nigeria* identified that consumer purchase behaviour on any private label brand is determined by the consumer purchasing experience with the store offerings. The implication of the findings, is that stores must ensure that their marketing strategies achieves favourable consumer attitude to their store and they have to develop and implement consumer attitude modification strategy if they feel that consumers have an unfavourable attitude.
- **Komal Chopra, Shouvik Dasgupta (2017**) in their Study on *Consumer Buying Motives for Private Labels in India* has conveyed the fact that the awareness level of private label brands is high and people are aware of the existence of private labels. As per their study they also opined that there is a lot of scope for widening the market share in the Indian scenario as customers have become more and more quality and price conscious apart from preferring varieties and style.
- **Bindubasini.S, Shakila.M.K. (2017),** in their study on *Private Label Brands and Store Loyalty- A Study with reference to apparels* analysed the customers' perception with respect to private label brands with respect to price, quality and we could infer the relationship between these factors and their impact on the satisfaction level of the customers. The customers' satisfaction level with respect to the price and quality of the private label brands are found to be positively correlated with the satisfaction level and it is also found that gender doesn't have any influence over the satisfaction level with private label brands
- **Suresh Kumar(2016)** in his study on *Consumer's Perception on Private Label and its implication on repurchase intention in Indonesia* concluded that Price, Quality, and Risk perception have strong positive influence on Private Label Intention whereas Label Loyalty has no influence But repurchase Intention it is strongly influenced by Private Label Intention.
- **Sarah Nyengerai (2015)** made a study on The *Relationship between Gender, Product Category and the Constructs of Private Label Brand Perception in Zimbabwe* and concluded that private label brands can be driven by ensuring high quality of packaged products which in turn will contribute to overcoming uncertainties caused by unknown brand names. It is also found that product category has an effect on perception of private label brands and retailers should understand these changes and marketing strategies should be driven based on this.
- **Deepali Gala, Ramchandra D. Patil, (2013)**made a study *Consumer Attitude towards Private Labels in Comparison with National Brands* and concluded that retailers are following various practices to divert the customers from national brands to private label products. The view of customers towards any purchase is dependent on the price of the product, after which the quality and availability of the product takes in to account.
- **Prasanth.M.K, Balan.J, (2013)** in their study on *The Consumer Perception and Rating of Private Label in the Organized Retail Chains in Kerala* emphasised that brand awareness perceived quality, service level, store layout, price discounts, shelf display etc affect the consumer perception of private labels. The marketer while formulating marketing strategies can take into consideration these vital aspects which in turn will lead to potential purchase and re-purchase of store brands.
- **Dineshkumar , Vikkraman (2012**) in their study on *Customer preference for private label brands with reference to organized retail stores in Coimbatore city* opined that manufacturer brand product consumers give more importance to brand and quality, whereas private brand product consumers are more sensitive to Price and more open to trying new brands. It is also suggested that retailers should make an effort to retain the regular customers and acquire new customers by serving the upgraded private label products to them.
- **Justin Beneke(2010)** in their exploratory study on *Consumer perceptions of private label brands within the retail grocery sector of South Africa* investigated the perceptions of fast moving private label brands in the South African grocery food sector. Demographic variables were largely ineffective in determining an individual's propensity to buy private label brands. However, income was found to be the most prominent of all variables, revealing a direct relationship between income and affinity towards private label brands.

4. Research Objectives

- To study the influence of the various demographic variables on clientele preference towards Phantom brands
- To identify the various motivating factors that influence clientele to have a positive predisposition towards phantom brands
- To analyse the extent of retailer empowerment as a growth driver of phantom brands from the perspective of clientele
- To know about out the clientele's predisposition towards the service quality dimensions of phantom brands

5. Research Hypotheses

- **H01:** There is no significant difference between male and female in their preference towards phantom brands.
- **H02:** Clientele's preference towards phantom brands are the same irrespective of their age groups.
- **H03:** There is no significant relationship between clientele's shopping frequency of phantom brands and their income
- **H04:** There is no significant difference between the predominant motivating factors in influencing clientele to have a positive predisposition towards phantom brands
- **H05:** Retailer's Empowerment in promoting phantom brands follow a normal distribution
- **H06:** There is no significant association between availability of varieties in phantom brands and clientele need satisfaction
- **H07:** There is no significant difference between clientele predisposition towards service quality of phantom brands
- **H08:** There is no significant difference between the service quality dimensions of reliability and customer responsiveness from the clientele's perspective

6. Research Methodology

The research design that is used in this study is descriptive as it mainly focuses on the description of the state of affairs, as it exists at present. The data for this study are both primary and secondary in nature. Sampling technique used for the study is convenience sampling which is a non - probability sampling technique. The sample size is determined as 320 through pilot study and a structured questionnaire was used to collect the response from clientele of phantom brands from prominent retail outlets. But response was only from 314 out of which 4 were found to be incomplete. Hence the sample size was restricted to 310. The questionnaire involved the usage of rating scales where Likert's five point scale was used, ranking and dichotomous questions. Both Descriptive and Inferential statistics were used for analysis. Statistical tools that were used in this study are Chi-Square Test, One Way ANOVA, Pearson's Correlation, Independent sample 't' test, Kolmogrov - Smirnov test, Wilcoxon's Signed rank test, Friedman's test, Percentage method etc. Data were analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

7. Analysis and Interpretation

The study emphasises on various demographic variables and of the total sample size of 310 respondents it is found that 62.3 % of them are male and 37.7% of the respondents are female.

Table 1 *Gender of the Respondents*

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Men	193	62.3	62.1
Women	118	37.7	100.0
Total	310	100.0	

It can therefore be inferred that majority of the respondents taken for the study are male.

Earlier research studies reveal the fact that gender has an impact on clientele perception towards phantom brands and it is also found that females perceive phantom brands to be relatively of less quality and displayed higher bias towards them. But based on this study it has been revealed that there is no significant difference between male and female in their preference towards phantom brands which is made evident through the analysis below

- **H01: There is no significant difference between male and female in their preference towards Phantom Brands**
- **HA1: There is significant difference between male and female in their preference towards Phantom Brands**

Table 2 *Predisposition towards Phantom Brands Based On Gender (Independent Sample 'T' Test)*

Variable	Mean	't' value	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Male	3.37	-.109	308	.911
Female	3.38			

From the above table it can be inferred that the probability value of .911 not significant as it is greater than 0.05 alpha value and **therefore H01 is accepted**. It is therefore concluded that there is no significant difference between male and female in their preference towards phantom brands which is implied from the mean values of preference of male (3.37) and female (3.38).

Table 3 *Age of the Respondents*

Age (in years)	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
21-30	117	37.7	37.7
31-40	117	37.7	75.5
>40	76	24.5	100.0
Total	310	100.0	

Age and profession were also found to affect the preference pattern and satisfaction level of respondents in respect of private label brands in different categories of products. Based on the age of the respondents in their preference towards phantom brands it is found that the distribution does not have that much of deviation which is evident from the table given below.

In the age group of 21-30 and 31-40 clientele are found to have the same extent of preference with 37.7% each and clientele more than 40 years are relatively found to have less preference.

Table 4 *Clientele's Preference towards Phantom Brands and Manufacturer's Brands*

Clientele's Preference	Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Mostly Phantom Brands	231	74.5	74.5
Mostly Manufacturer's Brands	37	11.9	86.5
Equally Preferred	42	13.5	100.0
Total	310	100.0	

From the above table it is implied that majority of the respondents taken for the study have a positive predisposition towards phantom brands (ie) 75% while 12% of the respondents are found to have preference for mostly manufacturer's brands and around 14% of the respondents have an equal consideration for both the brands.

- **H02: Clientele's preference towards phantom brands are the same irrespective of their age groups.**
- **HA2: Clientele's preference towards phantom brands are different based on their age groups.**

Table 5 *Influence of Age on Clientele Predisposition towards Phantom Brands (One Way Anova)*

Age(in years)	N	Mean	F value	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
21-30	117	3.31			
31-40	117	3.54	1.653	2	.193
>40	76	3.22			

It can be inferred from the above table that the probability value of .193 is not significant as it is greater than .05 alpha value and hence H0 is accepted. It is therefore concluded that there is no significant difference between the various age categories of the clientele in their preference towards phantom brands. Based on Duncan's Post hoc analysis the fact is quite evident from the mean values of the various age groups of the clientele (i.e) 21-30 years (3.31), 31-40 years (3.54) and more than 40 years (3.22)

With growing levels of disposable income, clientele's attitude have gone for a change and they are far more open to experimentation than ever before. With the advent of modern technology, the perceptions about shopping have changed.

Table 6 *Income of the Respondents*

Income Level	Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
<15,000	67	21.6	21.6
16,000-25,000	176	56.8	78.4
26,000-35,000	16	5.2	83.5
36,000-45,000	28	9.0	92.6
>45,000	23	7.4	100.0
Total	310	100.0	

When the influence of income on clientele preference towards phantom brands is analysed it is found that phantom brands are more preferred in the income range of 16,000-25,000 and clientele in the income level of 26,000-35,000 is found to have the least preference.

Clientele's shopping frequency in terms of once in a week, once in a fortnight, once in a month, once in six months, once in a year is analysed in terms of the various income levels. Based on chi-square test of independence attempts were made to test the relationship between the two variables.

- **H03:** There is no significant relationship between clientele's shopping frequency of phantom brands and their income
- **HA3:** There is significant relationship between clientele's shopping frequency of phantom brands and their income

Table 7 *Shopping Frequency of Clientele of Phantom Brands Based on Income*

Shopping Frequency	Income					Total
	<15,000	16,000-25,000	26,000-35,000	36,000-45,000	>45,000	
Once in a week	7	15	6	6	5	39
Once in a Fortnight	20	34	6	5	6	71
Once in a Month	13	46	6	10	6	81
Once in six months	15	42	5	8	8	78
Once in a year	5	20	6	5	5	41
Total	60	157	29	34	30	310

Results of Chi-Square Tests

	Calculated Value	df	Sig.Value
Pearson chi-square	13.483	16	.637

It is evident that the chi-square value of 13.483 with 16 degrees of freedom is not significant. The probability value of .637 is greater than .05 level of significance and therefore H03 is accepted. It is therefore concluded that there is no significant relationship between clientele's shopping frequency of phantom brands and their income.

Occupation of the respondents are also found to have a significant influence in their preference towards phantom brands. Full time salaried households are found to have more preference towards phantom brands when compared to that of other categories.

Table 8 *Occupation of the Respondents*

Occupation	Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Self Employed	17	5.5	5.5
Part Time Salaried	38	12.3	17.7
Full Time Salaried	213	68.7	86.5
Others	42	13.5	100.0
Total	310	100.0	

It is found from the above table that the least preference is from respondents who are self employed with 5.5% and nearly 69% of the respondents who are full time salaried individuals prefer to have phantom brands.

Special attention has been given in this study to identify the motivating factors that influence the clientele to purchase phantom brands. The various factors that have been identified through earlier researches in this regard are quality, price, variety of products available under private labels, pre-sales counselling given to the clientele, perception of clientele towards private labels as need satisfiers, discounts given, credibility the retailer's brand enjoys in the minds of the clientele etc. Respondents in the study are asked to rank the various motivating factors as per their order of preference .Hypothesis in this perspective has been tested using Friedman's test.

- **H04: There is no significant difference between the predominant motivating factors in influencing clientele to have a positive predisposition towards phantom brands**
- **HA4: There is significant difference between the predominant motivating factors in influencing clientele to have a positive predisposition towards phantom brands**

Table 9 *Influence of Motivating Factors in Clientele's Predisposition towards Phantom Brands*

N	310
Chi-Square	39.184
df	6
Asp.Sig.	.000

From the above table it can be inferred that the probability value of .000 is highly significant since it is less than 0.05 level of significance and therefore null hypothesis is rejected. It is therefore concluded that there is significant difference between the predominant motivating factors in influencing clientele to have a positive predisposition towards phantom brands.

Table 10 *Retailer's Empowerment in Promoting Phantom Brands*

Motivating Factors	Mean	Rank
Quality	4.05	IV
Price	3.46	VII
Variety	3.82	VI
Pre- Sales	4.31	II
Need Satisfier	4.37	I
Discounts	4.12	III
Credibility	3.87	V

Among the various factors that are analysed it is evident that majority of the respondents prefer phantom brands mainly because of the fact that they are found to have a larger impact as need satisfiers followed by Pre-sales counselling which

occupies the second position. Discounts, Quality, Credibility, Variety of Products under private labels occupy 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th position respectively. Price is not found be the major influencing factor as it occupies the last position.

Phantom brands have become more effective than classic brands and the retailers currently have plenty of opportunities to innovate and grow in ways that their previously esteemed and well established rivals cannot. These private labels can also be much more profitable, flexible and value-creating for their owners, the retailers. This is because much attention is focused on the needs of the target consumer thereby leveraging the intelligence of their business loyalty cards and transactional data to understand consumer behaviours and preferences. Retailer's brand are also more promoted in tangible and innovative ways, enhancing the relevance, the value and reputation of the retailer. Moreover private label brands have undergone more transformation in recent years and they are found to be much more relevant to the current scenario besides being human and engaging.

The respondents' predisposition towards retailer's empowerment in promoting phantom brands has been analysed using kolmogrov-Smirnov test and the hypothesis have been formulated as follows:
- **H05:** Retailer's Empowerment in promoting phantom brands follow a normal distribution
- **HA5:** Retailer's Empowerment in promoting phantom brands does not follow a normal distribution

One Sample Kolmogrov-Smirnov Test

Retailer Empowerment	
N	310
Mean	3.15
Std.Deviation	1.268
Test Statistic(K-S Test)	2.909
Asp.Sig(2-tailed)	.000

From the above table it can be inferred that the probability value of .000 is highly significant as it is less than the 0.05 level of significance and hence null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. It can therefore be concluded that retailer's empowerment in promoting phantom brands does not follow a normal distribution.
- **H06: There is no significant association between availability of varieties in phantom brands and clientele need satisfaction**
- **HA6: There is significant association between availability of varieties in phantom brands and clientele need satisfaction**

Karl Pearson's Correlation Analysis

Table 11 *Association between Availability of Varieties in Phantom Brands and Clientele Need Satisfaction*

	Varieties in Phantom Brands	Clientele Need Satisfaction
Varieties in Phantom Brands	1	.000** (.999)
Clientele Need Satisfaction	.000** (.999)	1

Note: Values in bracket indicate Probability value

From the above it can be inferred that the probability value of correlation is .999 which is greater than .05 level of significance and therefore null hypothesis is accepted. It can therefore be concluded that there is no significant association between varieties available in phantom brands and clientele need satisfaction. Further the correlation value of .000 indicates that there is no correlation between the two variables.

Special efforts are taken to understand the clientele's predisposition towards service quality and the various attributes that are analysed in this regard are:
- **Tangibles** - Physical facilities of outlets, personnel, and communication materials
- **Reliability**-Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately
- **Responsiveness**-Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service
- **Assurance**-Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence
- **Empathy**-Caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers

Analysis is done on the basis of Friedman's Test and the following assumptions were formulated in this regard.

H07: There is no significant difference between clientele predisposition towards service quality of phantom brands
HA7: There is significant difference between clientele predisposition towards service quality of phantom brands

Friedman's Test

From the above table it can be inferred that the probability value of .003 is significant since it is less than 0.05 level of significance and therefore null hypothesis is rejected. It is therefore concluded that there is significant difference between

clientele predisposition towards service quality of phantom brands.

Table 12 *Clientele Predisposition towards Service Quality of Phantom Brands*

N	310
Chi-Square	**15.785**
df	**4**
Asymp. Sig	**.003**

Dimensions of Service Quality	Mean	Rank
Tangibility	2.96	IV
Reliability	3.21	I
Responsiveness	3.06	II
Assurance	2.79	V
Empathy	2.98	III

Among the various dimensions of service quality pertaining to phantom brands it is evident that majority of the respondents prefer phantom brands mainly because of its reliability with a mean score of 3.21 followed by customer responsiveness with a mean score of 3.06. Empathy and tangibility occupy the 3rd and 4th position respectively. Assurance occupies the last position.

To find out whether there is any significant differences between the clientele towards the reliability that clientele have in using phantom brands and their predisposition towards customer responsiveness of retailers Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test is used and the following hypotheses are tested.

H08: There is no significant difference between clientele predisposition towards the service quality dimensions of reliability and customer responsiveness

HA8: There is significant difference between clientele predisposition towards the service quality dimensions of reliability and customer responsiveness

Wilcox on Signed Rank Test

Service Quality Dimensions	Mean	Z	Asp.Sig.(2-tailed)
Reliability	3.66	-1.130	.259
Customer Responsiveness	3.60		

From the above table it can be inferred that the probability value of .259 is greater than 0.05 level of significance. Hence H08 is accepted which is a clear indication that there is no significant difference between clientele predisposition towards the service quality dimensions of reliability and customer responsiveness. The results are also authenticated from the mean values of these service quality dimensions which is more or less the same.

Hypotheses Testing – Results
H01: Accepted
H02: Accepted
H03: Accepted
H04: Rejected
H05: Rejected
H06: Accepted
H07: Rejected
H08: Accepted

8. Results and Discussion

- There is no significant difference between male and female in their preference towards phantom brands which is implied from the mean values of preference of male (3.37) and female (3.38).
- Clientele are found to have more or less similar predisposition towards phantom brands irrespective of their age groups. Though Age has got a significant impact in influencing the buying behaviour of clientele the study has clearly revealed that phantom brands enjoy more or less similar popularity across all age groups. The study clearly revealed that there is no significant difference between the various age categories of the clientele in their preference towards phantom brands.
- Majority of the respondents taken for the study have a positive predisposition towards phantom brands (ie) 75%. With the advent of modern technology, the perceptions about shopping have changed. Trust, familiarity and perceived economic situation influence customers to a very great extent to prefer phantom brands.

- Phantom brands are found to be more preferred in the income range of 16,000-25,000 and clientele in the income level of 26,000-35,000 is found to have the least preference. Private labels are a booming concept in the Indian retail market. It is the largest industry in India which contributes around 15percent of India's GDP. Due to change in per capita income and spending with growth in income, changing lifestyle etc. it is expected to grow 25 % yearly. There is no significant relationship between clientele's shopping frequency of phantom brands and their income. It is revealed in the study that 69% of the respondents who are full time salaried individuals have a strong preference towards phantom brands.
- There is significant difference between the predominant motivating factors in influencing clientele to have a positive predisposition towards phantom brands. Phantom brands are doing exceedingly well across various product categories as they provide good quality and competitive pricing when compared with national brands. There is a lot of potential for private labels to become more broad-based in the coming years.as per the results of the study Clientele prefer phantom brands mainly because of the fact that they are found to have a larger impact as need satisfiers which is ranked 1st followed by Pre-sales counselling which occupies the second position.
- Retailer's empowerment in promoting phantom brands does not follow a normal distribution.
- There is no significant association between varieties available in phantom brands and clientele need satisfaction and the correlation value is 0
- There is significant difference between clientele predispositions towards service quality of phantom brands. Majority of the respondents prefer phantom brands mainly because of the reliability they have in using phantom brands which is evident from the mean score of 3.21 and it is ranked 1st followed by customer responsiveness with a mean score of 3.06.There is no significant difference between clientele predisposition towards service quality dimensions of reliability and customer responsiveness.

9. Conclusion

The agile nature of phantom brands also termed as private labels , has created lot of opportunities for Indian retailers by helping them to tap the market potential by understand the needs of the clientele that arise from emerging trends. Retailers today have recognized that profit margins on products designed and sourced by them are significantly higher than on branded products. Once phantom brands were perceived as cheaper and 'me-too' products. But their growth is considered to be relatively more tremendous over the recent years. They stand in par with that of renowned manufacturer's brands in terms of quality, variety, discounts, need satisfying capability etc. Retail outlets, today have the unique advantage of constant, live interaction with its consumers and therefore enable it to gather instant feedback and understand what drives consumers towards a brand/product in a particular region or country. Since more focus and attention is given to the clientele by means of offering the private labels in the way that is preferred by the customers, phantoms brands in the current scenario is found to have an edge over their competitive counterparts. Phantom brands today are viewed as good quality, value-for-money choices and retailers have well understood the monetary benefits of creating private labels since they are well aware of the Indian customer's taste, preferences, economic background and other crucial factors that determine the buying behaviour. Phantom brands in India are not perceived as cheap or low-quality alternatives. Besides better margins and higher returns on shelf space, phantom brands have enhanced the overall brand equity of retail stores.

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