

CAPABILITIES AND SKILL REQUIREMENTS FOR EMPLOYEES OF SELECT ORGANIZED FASHION RETAIL OUTLETS OF TEXTILE AND CLOTHING IN CHENNAI: A STUDY

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KEYWORDS: Retail industry; Fashion retail outlet; Capability and skills requirement; Textile and clothing industry; Retail outlet employees.

ABSTRACT

Retail sector organized and unorganized have gone through major transformation and witnessed tremendous growth during the past few years. Fashion and clothing is the largest segment of organized retailing in India. This study presents the skills and capabilities requirement of the employees in these organized sectors. The skills were ascertained based on technical, interpersonal and strategic & retail skills. 40 questionnaires were distributed to the employees one each of menswear, women swear, kids wear and all types of clothing of select organized Textile Retail Outlets in Chennai irrespective of their designation of which 37 (92.5%) were responded. The reliability test using Cronbachs alpha (α) indicates that all the variables thus taken up for the study were good and the value of the variables ranges between 0.846 and 0.958. Among the technical skills, 'knowledge of product and ability to communicate to customers', 'ability to handle difficult or demanding customer' and 'understanding the local market trend essential' are given predominance by the respondents. The same opinion can be seen among gender, years of experience, nature of the retail outlet and product category with change in order of preference. Among the interpersonal skills whenever they feel stressed, they distress themselves by optimistic approach, always wanted to update their knowledge' and rely on themselves for all their information needs. The study shows that there is no unique opinion between genders, years of experience, and nature of the retail outlet and product category on interpersonal skills. In the case of strategic & fashion retail skills, majority of them indicated energy, creative and humility as their order of preference. The correlation technique thus adopted for strategic & fashion retail skills indicated significant at 99% and 95% level. The hierarchical cluster analysis indicates three clusters. Factor analysis has also been employed to identify the number of components. There exist three factors whose, Eigen value is more than 1 and the factors are named as proactive, inquisitive and habitual employees. Among the 37 respondents, 12 each in proactive and inquisitive nature employees and 13 as habitual employees. Thus the study provides awareness on different types of skills required for the employees of organized fashion retail outlets of textile and clothing in Chennai.

INTRODUCTION

The Indian Retail sector has gone through major transformation over the last decade with a noticeable shift towards organized retailing. Retail industry has been broadly classified into two categories namely

- **Organized retail** Organised traders/retailers, who are licensed for trading activities and registered to pay taxes to the government.
- Unorganized retail It consists of unauthorized small shops conventional Kirana shops, general stores, corner shops among various other small retail outlets but remain as the radiating force of Indian retail industry.

In the past few years, Indian Retail sector has seen tremendous growth in the organized segment. Major domestic players have stepped into the retail arena with long term, ambitious plans to expand their business across verticals, cities and formats. Within retail, the emerging sectors would be food and grocery, apparel, electronics, e-commerce, fashion and lifestyle.

Clothing and textile, Footwear, consumer durables and Home appliances, Food & Grocery, and out of home food services are the major retail categories which account for 76% of the organized retail outlet.¹

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Fashion and clothing retailing were the largest segment of Organized Retailing in India, constituting 38% of the total Organized Retail. The penetration of Organized Retail in this category is around 23% from unorganized sectors. Major sub segments are based on Gender (Men & Women), Age (Kids, Infant), Use and occasion based (Formal, Casual, Bridal, Sportswear, Uniforms, etc). Most of the major sub segments have performed well on account of demographic, economic and social factors like high disposable incomes, more number of working women, young demography, etc.²

The retail industry employs over 35 million persons with the majority of the employment being in unorganized sector. The employment in the organized segment is about 0.3 million³.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Parasuraman et al. (1985)⁴ conducted an exploratory investigation in the attempt to define service quality and develop a model of service quality. The results showed that regardless of the type of service, consumers used basically the similar criteria in evaluating service quality. They labeled those 10 criteria as "service quality determinants". Since then, service quality was defined through 10 dimensions: Access, Communication, Competence, Courtesy, Credibility, Reliability, Responsibility, security, Tangibles and Understanding/ knowing the customer. Later, they were simplified into five dimensions including Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy.

Thenmozhi Raja, D. Dhanapal & P. Sathyapriya $(2011)^5$ explained that the most critical challenge for a business is the improvement of service and product quality. They also explained that perception of retail service quality varies across different cities, the retailers can meet the customer expectations based on the factors drive them.

The general skills identified as being important to employers included: Good communication and interpersonal skills ;A good level of numeracy and IT skills; Negotiation and persuading skills; Evidence of leadership and management skills; Drive and enthusiasm ;Good risk assessment skills; A well-developed commercial awareness ; A flair for creativity ;The ability to work well under pressure and to tight deadlines (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions).⁶

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study were

- To identify the technical skills required for employees of organized fashion retail outlets.
- To identify the interpersonal skills among the employees of these sectors.
- To enumerate the Fashion Retail skills and strategies required for the employees of these sector.
- To classify the employees based on the Fashion Retail skills and strategies and their demographic details.

HYPOTHESES

In order to identify the objectives the following hypotheses were formulated:

- There exist uniform opinion on the technical skill required by the employees of organized fashion outlet irrespective of gender, years of experience, nature of retail outlets and product category of the retail outlet.
- There exist identical opinions on interpersonal skill irrespective of demographic nature of the employees.
- There exist required skills and capable of employing the strategies in the fashion retail outlet employees.

SAMPLE

40 questionnaires were distributed to the employees one each of menswear, women swear, kids wear and all types of clothing of select organized Textile Retail Outlets in Chennai irrespective of their designation were distributed of which 37 were responded. The response rate is 92.5%. The data thus were collected and analyzed using various statistical tools.



DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis had been carried out in three tasks viz. *technical skills*, *inter personal skills* and *strategic & fashion retail skills* required in textile retail outlets. Before the detailed analysis the demographic details of the respondents were identified and similarly the reliability test has been administrated to identify the reliability of the variables.

Demographic details of the respondents

The demographic details of the respondents were shown in table 1.

Tuble 1. Demographic Details of the Respondents											
S. NO	DESCRIPTION	FREQUENCY (N=37)	PERCENTAGE (%)								
Gende	r										
1	Male	13	35.1								
2	Female	24	64.9								
Years	of Experience										
1	Below 5 years	14	37.8								
2	Between 6 and 10 years	16	43.2								
3	Between 11 and 15 years	7	18.9								
Nature	e of Retail Outlet										
1	Multi Brand Outlet	21	56.8								
2	Exclusive Brand Outlet	9	24.3								
3	Others	7	18.9								
Produ	ct Category										
1	Mens Wear	5	13.5								
2	Womens Wear	16	43.2								
3	Kids Wear	4	10.8								
4	All	12	32.4								

Table 1. Demographic Details of the Respondents

The demographic details of the respondents based on the gender, years of experience, nature of the retail outlet where they were employed and the product category in which the work was assigned were calculated. It is seen from the *table 1* that, 64.9% of the respondents belongs to female category and 43.2% are having the experience between 6 and 10 years. More than 50% of the respondents employed in multi brand outlets and they were assigned to work in the women's wear category (43.2%).

Reliability Test

To ensure that the research produces reliable findings and results, a reliable tool would need to be employed. Moreover, the exploratory nature of this study necessitated the need to conduct some form of test to check whether items used in the measures are tapping into the same construct (variables) or not. Such test was accomplished through the use of factor analysis. According to Coakes and Steed (2003)⁷, factor analysis is a data reduction technique used to reduce a large number of variables to a smaller set of underlying factors that summarize the essential information contained in the variables. Two widely used methods in factor analysis are Principal Components and Principal Axis Factoring. However, this study adopted the former and applied it to all variables that employed multi-items measures.

Reliability is concerned with consistency of a variable. There are two identifiable aspects of this issue: external and internal reliability. Nowadays, the most common method of estimating internal reliability is Cronbachs alpha (α). The

formula used is
$$\alpha = \frac{K}{K-1} \left(1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{K} \sigma_{Y_i}^2}{\sigma_X^2} \right)$$

A commonly accepted rules for describing internal consistency using Cronbachs alpha (Cronbach, Lee and Shavelson $2004)^8$ are **α≥0.9** (Excellent), $0.9>\alpha \ge 0.8$ (Good), $0.8>\alpha \ge 0.7$ (Acceptable), $0.7>\alpha \ge 0.6$ (Questionable), $0.6>\alpha \ge 0.5$ (Poor) and $0.5>\alpha$ (Unacceptable). The concepts taken up for the study, variables and the Cronbach alpha value are shown in *table 2*.

	Table 2. Reliability Test											
S. NO	DESCRIPTION	NO. OF VARIABLES	CRONBACH'S ALPHA VALUE									
1	Technical Skills	8	0.846									
2	Inter Personal Skills	7	0.875									
3	Strategies and fashion retail Skills	16	0.958									

The reliability test using Cronbachs alpha (α) indicates that all the 31 variables under three categories thus taken up for the study were good and the value of the variables ranges between 0.846 and 0.958.

Technical Skills

Technical skills of the respondents were ascertained based on eight variables in a five point scale such as 'not at all', 'to some extent', 'to moderate', 'to large extent' and 'to very large extent'. The opinions were shown in table 3 and the ranks were ascertained based on mean and standard deviation values.

	1	I	Table 3. T	echnical Sl	kills				
S. NO.	TECHNICAL SKILLS	NOT AT ALL	TO SOME EXTEN T	TO MODE RATE	TO LAR GE EXTE NT	TO VERY LARG E EXTE NT	ME AN	STD.	RAN K
1	Understanding customer service essential	4 (10.8)	17 (45.9)	5 (13.5)	6 (16.2)	5 (13.5)	2.76	1.256	8
2	Suggest or device the sales promotion programs	2 (5.4)	14 (37.8)	12 (32.4)	5 (13.5)	4 (10.8)	2.86	1.084	7
3	Understanding the local market trend essential	2 (5.4)	10 (27.0)	7 (18.9)	10 (27.0)	8 (21.6)	3.32	1.248	3
4	Product knowledge essential in sales promotion	7 (18.9)	8 (21.6)	1 (2.70)	11 (29.7)	10 (27.0)	3.24	1.535	5
5	Knowledge of product and ability to communicate to customers	2 (5.4)	2 (5.4)	14 (37.8)	12 (32.4)	7 (18.9)	3.54	1.043	1
6	Ability to handle difficult or demanding customer	1 (2.7)	7 (18.9)	10 (27.0)	12 (32.4)	7 (18.9)	3.46	1.095	2
7	Essential to know the day to day activities of the store	4 (10.8)	7 (18.9)	11 (29.7)	12 (32.4)	3 (8.1)	3.08	1.140	6
8	Incentive given by the management motivates to promote sales	6 (16.2)	4 (10.8)	8 (21.6)	13 (35.1)	6 (16.2)	3.24	1.321	4



It is seen from *table 3* that the first preference was given to 'knowledge of product and ability to communicate to customers' followed by 'ability to handle difficult or demanding customer' and 'understanding the local market trend essential'. The least preferences were given to 'suggest or device the sales promotion programs' and 'understanding customer service essential'. The mean value ranges between 2.89 and 3.59 which indicate that the variables lies between 'to moderate' and 'to large extent'. The standard deviation ranges between 1.040 and 1.433 in a five point scale which shows that there is no much deviation in the opinion of the respondents.

The study has further extended to gender wise. The mean and standard deviation were calculated and the ranks were assigned which were shown in *table 4*.

	TECHNICAL	MALE			FEMALE			
S. NO.	SKILLS	MEAN	STD.	RANK	MEAN	STD.	RANK	
1	Understanding customer service essential	2.77	1.013	8	2.75	1.391	7	
2	Suggest or device the sales promotion programs	3.15	1.144	6	2.71	1.042	8	
3	Understanding the local market trend essential	3.54	.967	4	3.21	1.382	3	
4	Product knowledge essential in sales promotion	3.46	1.450	5	3.13	1.597	4	
5	Knowledge of product and ability to communicate to customers	3.92	.760	1	3.33	1.129	2	
6	Ability to handle difficult or demanding customer	3.62	.870	3	3.38	1.209	1	
7	Essential to know the day to day activities of the store	3.15	.987	6	3.04	1.233	5	
8	Incentive given by the management motivates to promote sales	3.77	.725	2	2.96	1.488	6	

Table 4. Technical Skills Vs Gender

Table 4 shows that the order of preferences in the male category were 'knowledge of product and ability to communicate to customers', 'understanding the local market trend essential' and 'incentive given by the management motivates to promote sales'. The least preferences were 'product knowledge essential in sales promotion' and 'understanding customer service essential'. The standard deviation ranges between 0.760 and 1.013 which indicates that there is no significant deviation in their opinion and the mean value shows that the variables were between 'to moderate' and 'to large extent" (2.77 and 3.92). However the preference of the female employees were different comparing to male. The order of preferences were 'ability to handle difficult or demanding customer', 'product knowledge essential in sales promotion' and 'knowledge of product and ability to communicate to customers'. The

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least preferences were 'suggest or device the sales promotion programs' and 'incentive given by the management motivates to promote sales'.

The study has further been extended to years of experiences. The mean, standard deviation and rank were shown in *table 5*.

S. NO.	TECHNICAL	BELOW	5 YEAR	S	BETWE YEARS	EN 6 A	AND 10	BETWEEN 11 AND 15 YEARS		
5.110.	SKILLS	MEAN	STD.	RANK	MEAN	STD.	RANK	MEAN	STD.	RANK
1	Understanding customer service essential	2.71	1.204	7	3.13	1.360	8	2.00	.816	8
2	Suggest or device the sales promotion programs	2.57	.514	8	3.25	1.438	4	2.57	.787	6
3	Understanding the local market trend essential	3.50	1.092	2	3.56	1.209	3	2.43	1.397	7
4	Product knowledge essential in sales promotion	3.07	1.639	4	3.19	1.601	7	3.71	1.254	1
5	Knowledge of product and ability to communicate to customers	3.43	1.158	3	3.81	.750	1	3.14	1.345	4
6	Ability to handle difficult or demanding customer	3.71	1.204	1	3.19	1.047	5	3.57	.976	2
7	Essential to know the day to day activities of the store	2.79	1.188	6	3.19	.911	5	3.43	1.512	3
8	Incentive given by the management motivates to promote sales	2.93	1.385	5	3.69	1.195	2	2.86	1.345	5

Table 5. Technical Skills Vs. Years of Experience

Table 5 indicates that the first preference of the employees based on the years of experience varies and the respondents who have below 5 years of experience gave top preference to 'ability to handle difficult or demanding customer', where the respondents with experience between 6 and 10 years chose 'knowledge of product and ability to communicate to customers' and those who have experience between 11 and 15 years prefer 'product knowledge essential in sales promotion'.

The least preferences of all the respondents are more or less same and the least preferences are 'suggest or device the sales promotion programs' and 'understanding customer service essential'. The mean value of employees ranges between 2.57 and 3.71 which indicates that all the variables ranges towards "agree" and the deviation ranges between 0.514 and 1.639 which indicates that there is no significant deviation in their opinion.

The study has further been extended to the nature of retail outlet. The mean, standard deviation and rank were shown in *table* 6.



C NO	NATURE OF THE	MULTI (MBO)	BRAND (OUTLET	C EXCLUSIVE BRAND OUTLET (EBO)			OTHERS			
5. NO.	RETAIL OUTLET	MEAN	STD.	RANK	MEAN	STD.	RANK	MEAN	STD.	RANK	
1	Understanding customer service essential	2.71	1.231	8	2.33	.707	7	3.43	1.718	4	
2	Suggest or device the sales promotion programs	2.81	.873	7	2.67	1.118	6	3.29	1.604	6	
3	Understanding the local market trend essential	3.48	1.250	4	2.67	1.000	5	3.71	1.380	3	
4	Product knowledge essential in sales promotion	3.67	1.317	2	2.22	1.394	8	3.29	1.890	6	
5	Knowledge of product and ability to communicate to customers	3.48	1.209	3	3.44	.527	1	3.86	1.069	2	
6	Ability to handle difficult or demanding customer	3.71	1.056	1	3.22	.972	2	3.00	1.291	8	
7	Essential to know the day to day activities of the store	3.10	1.179	5	2.78	1.093	4	3.43	1.134	5	
8	Incentive given by the management motivates to promote sales	3.05	1.244	6	3.11	1.616	3	4.00	1.000	1	

Table 6. Technical Skills Vs Nature of the Retail Outlet

It is seen from *table 6* that the employees of MBO, order of preferences given by the respondents are 'ability to handle difficult or demanding customer', 'product knowledge essential in sales promotion' and 'knowledge of product and ability to communicate to customers'. The least preferences were 'understanding customer service essential' and 'suggest or device the sales promotion programs'. The mean value of employees of MBO ranges between 2.71 and 3.71 which indicate that all the variables range towards "agree" and the deviation ranges between 0.873 and 1.317 indicates that there is no significant deviation in their opinion.

However the orders of preferences of the respondents from EBO were different comparing to MBO. The mean value ranges between 2.22 and 3.44 confirms that the variables were towards 'agree' and the standard deviation values lies between 0.527 and 1.616 which indicates that there is no significant deviation in their opinion.

The respondents of other than the MBO and EBO, the first preference of the respondents is the last preference of the respondents from other outlets. The order of first three preferences of other outlets were 'knowledge of product and ability to communicate to customers', 'incentive given by the management motivates to promote sales' and 'understanding the local market trend essential'. The least preferences were given for 'Ability to handle difficult or



demanding customer' and 'Suggest or device the sales promotion programs'. The mean value of employees of other outlets ranges between 3.0 and 4.00 which indicates that all the variables range towards "agrees". The deviation ranges between 1.00 and 1.89 which indicates that there is no significant deviation in their opinion.

The study has further been extended to Product category. The mean, standard deviation and rank were shown in *table* 7.

	Table 7: Technical Skills Vs Product Category												
S.	TECHNICAL	MENS V	VEAR		WOME	NS WE	AR	KIDS W	EAR		ALL		
NO.	SKILLS	MEAN	STD.	RANK	MEAN	STD.	RANK	MEAN	STD.	RANK	MEAN	STD.	RANK
1	Understanding customer service essential	2.50	1.378	7	2.81	1.601	6	2.00	.000	6	3.73	1.191	4
2	Suggest or device the sales promotion programs	2.33	.516	8	2.75	.856	7	2.00	1.155	7	3.73	1.191	4
3	Understanding the local market trend essential	3.17	.983	3	3.44	1.209	1	1.50	.577	8	4.36	.809	1
4	Product knowledge essential in sales promotion	2.83	1.329	5	3.38	1.258	2	2.50	1.732	5	4.09	1.136	2
5	Knowledge of product and ability to communicate to customers	3.67	.816	2	3.31	1.250	4	4.00	.000	3	3.82	.982	3
6	Ability to handle difficult or demanding customer	4.17	.408	1	3.38	1.455	3	2.50	.577	4	3.64	.809	6
7	Essential to know the day to day activities of the store	2.50	1.049	6	2.81	.834	5	4.50	.577	1	3.64	.924	8
8	Incentive given by the management motivates to promote sales	3.00	1.265	4	2.56	1.153	8	4.50	.577	1	3.64	.809	7

Table 7 shows that the first preference 'ability to handle difficult or demanding customer' chosen by the respondents from men's wear category is differ with the first preference 'understanding the local market trend essential' of women's wear and all category respondents whereas the kids wear category respondents gave equal preference to two variables such as 'essential to know the day to day activities of the store' and 'incentive given by the management motivates to promote sales' based on the mean and standard deviation values. The least preferences are differ from category to category. In general, all the variables irrespective of the categories, the mean value is between 1.50 and

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4.50 which indicate that all the variables range towards "agree" and the standard deviation ranges between 0.000 and 1.732 which indicates that there is no significant deviation in their opinion.

Inter Personal Skills

Inter personal Skills of the respondents were ascertained based on seven variables on a five point scale such as 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'no opinion', 'agree' and ' strongly agree'. The opinions were shown in table 8. Based on the opinion, the mean and standard deviation were calculated and the same is shown in table. The ranks were ascertained based on mean and standard deviation.

	Table 8. Inter Personal Skills										
S.NO	DESCRIPTION	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	MEAN	STD	RANK		
1	I periodically interact with professional colleagues	4 (10.8)	5 (13.5)	8 (21.6)	16 (43.2)	4 (10.8)	3.30	1.175	6		
2	I always wanted to update my knowledge	3 (8.1)	3 (8.1)	10 (27.0)	3 (8.1)	18 (48.6)	3.81	1.351	2		
3	I would like to rely on myself for all my information needs	2 (5.4)	3 (8.1)	4 (10.80	23 (62.2)	5 (13.5)	3.70	0.996	3		
4	I get along with others and be demonstrative	0 (0.0)	5 (13.5)	8 (21.6)	18 (48.6)	6 (16.2)	3.68	0.915	4		
5	Conduct regular meetings at regular intervals to get their views and ideas	7 (18.9)	3 (8.1)	12 (32.4)	8 (21.6)	7 (18.9)	3.14	1.357	7		
6	I get hurt or disappointed I motivate myself	3 (8.1)	3 (8.1)	16 (43.2)	4 (10.8)	11 (29.7)	3.46	1.238	5		
7	When I feel stressed, I will distress myself by optimistic approach	0 (0.00	2 (5.4)	7 (18.9)	22 (59.5)	6 (16.2)	3.86	0.751	1		

It is seen from *table* 8 that more than 50% of the respondents are in "agree" in nature of all the variables. Based on the mean value, the variable 'when I feel stressed, I will distress myself by optimistic approach' ranks first followed by 'I always wanted to update my knowledge' and 'I would like to rely on myself for all my information needs'. The least preference given by the respondents is 'conduct regular meetings at regular intervals to get their views and ideas'.

Further, the ranks of the interpersonal skills were found based on the mean value and the standard deviation viz. gender, years of experience, nature of the outlet and product category which are shown in tables 9 to 12.

S NO	INTED DEDSONAL SKILLS	MALE			FEMALE		
5.110.	INTERTERSONAL SKILLS	MEAN	STD.	RANK	MEAN	STD.	RANK
1	I periodically interact with professional colleagues	3.08	0.954	6	3.42	1.283	6
2	I always wanted to update my knowledge	3.62	0.961	3	3.92	1.530	2
3	I would like to rely on myself for all my information needs	3.85	0.555	1	3.63	1.173	4
4	I get along with others and be demonstrative	3.77	0.439	2	3.63	1.096	4
5	Conduct regular meetings at regular intervals to get their views and ideas	3.15	1.405	5	3.13	1.361	7

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6	I get hurt or disappointed I motivate myself	2.77	1.013	7	3.83	1.204	3
7	When I feel stressed, I will distress me self by optimistic approach	3.46	0.776	4	4.08	.654	1

S. NO.	INTER PERSONAL SKILLS	BELOW 5 YEARS			BETWEEN 6 AND 10 YEARS			BETWEEN 11 AND 15 YEARS		
		MEAN	STD.	RANK	MEAN	STD.	RANK	MEAN	STD.	RANK
1	I periodically interact with professional colleagues	3.21	1.051	5	3.50	1.033	7	3.00	1.732	6
2	I always wanted to update my knowledge	3.14	1.351	6	4.44	0.892	1	3.71	1.704	2
3	I would like to rely on myself for all my information needs	3.64	1.151	1	3.94	0.574	4	3.29	1.380	4
4	I get along with others and be demonstrative	3.43	1.089	4	4.00	0.516	3	3.43	1.134	3
5	Conduct regular meetings at regular intervals to get their views and ideas	2.50	1.225	7	3.81	1.047	5	2.86	1.676	7
6	I get hurt or disappointed I motivate myself	3.64	0.929	2	3.50	1.549	6	3.00	1.000	5
7	When I feel stressed, I will distress me self by optimistic approach	3.57	1.016	3	4.13	0.342	2	3.86	.690	1

Table 10. Inter Personal Skills Vs Years of Experience

Table 11. Inter Personal Skills Vs Nature of the outlet

S. NO.	INTER PERSONAL SKILLS	MULTI OUTLE	BRAND Γ		EXCLUSIVE BRAND OUTLET			OTHERS		
		MEAN	STD.	RANK	MEAN	STD.	RANK	MEAN	STD.	RANK
1	I periodically interact with professional colleagues	3.24	1.300	6	3.44	.726	6	3.29	1.380	7
2	I always wanted to update my knowledge	3.48	1.365	3	4.33	1.000	1	4.14	1.574	1
3	I would like to rely on myself for all my information needs	3.67	1.065	2	4.00	0.866	3	3.43	0.976	5
4	I get along with others and be demonstrative	3.38	0.973	5	4.33	0.707	1	3.71	0.488	3
5	Conduct regular meetings at regular intervals to get their views and ideas	2.86	1.459	7	3.44	0.726	6	3.57	1.618	4
6	I get hurt or disappointed I motivate myself	3.38	1.071	4	3.67	1.414	4	3.43	1.618	6
7	When I feel stressed, I will distress me self by optimistic approach	3.90	0.625	1	3.67	1.118	4	4.00	0.577	2



a No	INTER	MENS WEAR			WOMENS WEAR			KIDS WEAR			ALL		
S. NO.	PERSONAL SKILLS	MEAN	STD.	RANK	MEAN	STD.	RANK	MEAN	STD.	RANK	MEAN	STD.	RANK
1	I periodically interact with professional colleagues	3.40	0.548	3	3.25	1.483	6	4.00	1.155	2	3.08	0.900	6
2	I always wanted to update my knowledge	3.60	1.342	2	3.75	1.612	4	5.00	0.000	1	3.58	1.084	3
3	I would like to rely on myself for all my information needs	3.80	0.447	1	3.56	1.413	5	4.00	0.000	2	3.75	0.622	1
4	I get along with others and be demonstrative	3.40	0.894	3	3.88	1.147	3	3.50	.577	5	3.58	0.669	3
5	Conduct regular meetings at regular intervals to get their views and ideas	3.40	0.894	3	3.06	1.436	7	3.50	1.732	5	3.00	1.414	7
6	I get hurt or disappointed I motivate myself	2.80	1.095	7	4.19	1.047	1	2.50	.577	7	3.08	1.240	5
7	When I feel stressed, I will distress me self by optimistic approach	3.20	1.095	6	4.13	0.806	2	4.00	0.000	2	3.75	0.452	2

Table 12: Inter Personal Skills Vs Product Category

It is seen between the *tables 9 and 12* that the first preference given by the respondents for the variable 'I would like to rely on myself for all my information needs' by male who have work experience of below 5 years placed in mens wear as well as in all category. The female respondents given top preference to 'when I feel stressed, I will distress me self by optimistic approach'. This factor had been placed within three top three preference irrespective of the years of experience, nature of the outlet as well as in the product category. Overall the mean value ranges between 2.50 and 4.44 which indicates that the variables range towards 'agree' and the standard deviation is between 0.555 and 1.732 which shows that there is no much deviation between the values.

Strategies and Fashion Retail Skills

In order to find the preference of the strategies and fashion retail skills, the variables were ranked based on the five point scale such as 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'no opinion', 'agree' and 'strongly agree'. The ranks were assigned based on the mean and standard deviation which is shown in *table 13*.



Table 13. Strategies and Fashion Retail Skills										
S.NO	DESCRIPTION	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	MEAN	STD	RANK	
1	Objective oriented approach	6 (16.2)	2 (5.4)	10 (27.0)	14 (37.8)	5 (13.5)	3.27	1.262	16	
2	Motivated colleagues	4 (10.8)	6 (16.2)	5 (13.5)	19 (51.4)	3 (8.1)	3.30	1.175	15	
3	Inspired subordinates	0 (0.0)	6 (16.2)	1 (2.7)	28 (75.7)	2 (5.4)	3.70	.812	10	
4	Rigid and strictness	1 (2.7)	5 (13.5)	12 (32.4)	17 (45.9)	2 (5.4)	3.38	.893	14	
5	Intellectual ability	3 (8.1)	5 (13.5)	6 (16.2)	9 (24.3)	14 (37.8)	3.70	1.331	11	
6	Participative	2 (5.4)	5 (13.5)	0 (0.0)	17 (45.9)	13 (35.1)	3.92	1.187	4	
7	Informal	1 (2.7)	8 (21.6)	13 (35.1)	4 (10.8)	11 (29.7)	3.43	1.214	13	
8	Humorous	3 (8.1)	2 (5.4)	5 (13.5)	17 (45.9)	10 (27.0)	3.78	1.158	8	
9	Composure	2 (5.4)	2 (5.4)	7 (18.9)	18 (48.6)	8 (21.6)	3.76	1.038	9	
10	Empathy	4 (10.8)	2 (5.4)	6 (16.2)	17 (45.9)	8 (21.6)	3.62	1.210	12	
11	Energy	4 (10.8)	0 (0.0)	4 (10.8)	7 (18.9)	22 (59.5)	4.16	1.302	1	
12	Confidence	5 (13.5)	7 (18.9)	0 (0.0)	2 (5.4)	23 (62.2)	3.84	1.625	7	
13	Creative	2 (5.4)	7 (18.9)	0 (0.0)	3 (8.1)	25 (67.6)	4.14	1.398	2	
14	Action focused	2 (5.4)	7 (18.9)	3 (8.1)	6 (16.2)	19 (51.4)	3.89	1.370	6	
15	Flexible	5 (13.5)	0 (0.0)	6 (16.2)	8 (21.6)	18 (48.6)	3.92	1.382	5	
16	Humility	4 (10.8)	1 (2.7)	1 (2.7)	13 (35.1)	18 (48.6)	4.08	1.278	3	

It is seen from *table 13* that more than 60% of the respondents were 'agree' and 'strongly agree' in nature. The factor 'energy' as the first preference in strategies and fashion retail skills among the respondents followed by 'creative' and 'humility'. Among the 16 factors, the variable 'objective oriented approach' was given least preference followed with 'motivated colleagues' and 'rigid & strictness'. The mean value for the above factors ranges between 3.27 and 4.16 and the standard deviation value lies between 0.812 and 1.398 which indicates that there is no deviation among the variables.

In order to identify the relation between variables, Pearson correlation with two tailed significance test were administrated and the values were shown in *table 14*.

ISSN 2349-4506 Impact Factor: 2.265

Global Journal of Engineering Science and Research Management

Table 14. Correlation analysis on Strategies and Fashion Retail Skills

S.No	Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1	Objective	1															
	approach	1															
2	Motivated colleagues	.750 (**)	1														
3	Inspired subordinates	.732 (**)	.590 (**)	1													
4	Rigid and strictness	.499 (**)	.340(*)	.581(**)	1												
5	Intellectual ability	.562 (**)	.644(**)	.430(**)	.471(**)	1											
6	Participative	.812 (**)	.754(**)	.579(**)	.632(**)	.723(**)	1										
7	Informal	.139	.433(**)	.303	.306	.168	.160	1									
8	Humorous	.555 (**)	.579(**)	.816(**)	.592(**)	.498(**)	.613(**)	.463(**)	1								
9	Composure	.751 (**)	.380(*)	.802(**)	.611(**)	.409(*)	.502(**)	.130	.717(**)	1							
10	Empathy	.742 (**)	.765 (**)	.618(**)	.445(**)	.756(**)	.867(**)	.133	.674(**)	.500(**)	1						
11	Energy	.666 (**)	.766 (**)	.625(**)	.567(**)	.702(**)	.853(**)	.200	.650(**)	.420(**)	.869(**)	1					
12	Confidence	.645 (**)	.811 (**)	.615(**)	.388(*)	.851(**)	.814(**)	.290	.704(**)	.404(*)	.901(**)	.814(**)	1				
13	Creative	.562 (**)	.702 (**)	.501(**)	.448(**)	.784(**)	.860(**)	.226	.585(**)	.253	.820(**)	.812(**)	.891 (**)	1			
14	Action focused	.676 (**)	.814 (**)	.495(**)	.284	.729(**)	.848(**)	.246	.615(**)	.352(*)	.829(**)	.742(**)	.890 (**)	.864(**)	1		
15	Flexible	.571 (**)	.734 (**)	.448(**)	.408(*)	.681(**)	.842(**)	.286	.596(**)	.238	.828(**)	.795(**)	.860 (**)	.897 (**)	.876(**)	1	
16	Humility	.348 (*)	.594 (**)	.372(*)	.094	.407(*)	.407(*)	.371(*)	.575(**)	.246	.631(**)	.409(*)	.649 (**)	.414(*)	.624(**)	.665 (**)	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

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The test indicated that the correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed). Their exist exception that the variable Reasoning ability and job satisfaction. Similarly, the Reasoning ability and team spirit.

The correlation value always lies between -1 and 1. In this study the correlation value ranges between 0.094 and 0.901. All the variables have a positive correlation and majority of the variables are significant in nature. Moreover, majority of the variables are highly correlated i.e the correlation are more than 0.5. The variables 'informal vs composure, empathy, energy, confidence, creative and action focused' are positively correlated but indicated as not significant.

Hierarchical Cluster Analysis

Further to the Pearson correlation, the factors assigned for strategies and fashion retail skills were tested through hierarchical cluster analysis using average linkage is shown in *figure 1*.

* * * * HIERARCHICAL CLUSTER ANALYSIS* * * *

Dendrogram using Average Linkage (Between Groups)



Rescaled Distance Cluster Combine

Fig 1: Cluster analysis on Strategies and Fashion Retail Skills

It is seen from *fig 1* that there exist three clusters at 60% level. Cluster one "primary level skills and strategies" consists of six variables such as "Objective oriented approach", 'Motivated colleagues", "Inspired subordinates", "Rigid and strategies" consists of eight variables such as "Intellectual ability", "Participative", "Empathy", "Energy", "Confidence", "Creative", 'Action

focused" and "Flexible". The third cluster "optional level skills and strategies" has two variables such as "Informal" and "Humility".

Among the 16 factors, Creative, Action focused and Flexible are the top 3 preferences by the respondents. Rigid & strictness and Humility were given least preferences. Rotated component matrix were calculated to identify the groups and the same is shown in *Table 15*.

S.NO.	DESCRIPTION	PROACTIVE	INQUISITIVE	HABITUAL
13	Creative	0.905	0.202	0.103
14	Action focused	0.893	0.181	0.245
15	Flexible	0.893	0.131	0.279
12	Confidence	0.879	0.273	0.285
10	Empathy	0.857	0.376	0.132
6	Participative	0.836	0.462	-0.002
11	Energy	0.796	0.420	0.081
5	Intellectual ability	0.789	0.284	0.033
2	Motivated colleagues	0.737	0.292	0.383
9	Composure	0.132	0.926	0.075
3	Inspired subordinates	0.313	0.816	0.277
1	Objective oriented approach	0.564	0.673	0.008
8	Humorous	0.400	0.659	0.505
7	Informal	0.030	0.162	0.857
4	Rigid and strictness	0.240	0.040	0.759
16	Humility	0.517	0.023	0.664
Eigen v	alues	7.340	3.877	1.916
Cumula	tive Variance ratio	45.876	70.110	82.086

Table 15: Rotated Component Matrix for Strategies and Fashion Retail Skills required

As it can be seen from the *table 15*, the variables are grouped into three categories namely proactive, inquisitive and habitual. Eigen values were calculated for the same variables. The three factors have Eigen values greater than 1. "1" was the criterion for retention of a factor, which indicates that only the three factors are to be extracted. It can be seen that the variances were evenly distributed in the rotated sum of the squared loading (45.876%, 70.110% and 82.086% respectively), which shows that the nine factors are interpretable. The nine components were extracted and named as "proactive", the next four factors were extracted and named as "inquisitive". Three factors namely informal, rigid & strictness and humility are named as "habitual".

Further, the type of employees in gender, experience, nature of the retail outlet where they are employed and the product category where they are working were analyzed and presented in *tables 16 and 17*.

S.NO	ТҮРЕ	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUMULATIVE PERCENT
1	Proactive	12	32.4	32.4
2	Inquisitive	12	32.4	64.9
3	Habitual	13	35.1	100.0
Total		37	100.0	

Table 16. Type of Employee

S.NO	DESCRIPTION	PROACTIVE	INQUISITIVE	HABITUAL	TOTAL
Gender					
1	Mala	3	3	7	13
1	Male	(8.1)	(8.1)	(18.9)	(35.1)
2	El-	9	9	6	24
	remaie	(24.3)	(24.3)	(16.2)	(64.9)
Experience					
1	Deleve 5 veens	2	7	5	14
1	Below 5 years	(5.4)	(18.9)	(13.5)	(37.8)
2	Determent Care d 10 menue	8	2	6	16
	Between 6 and 10 years	(21.6)	(5.4)	(16.2)	(43.2)
2	Detwoon 11 and 15 years	2	3	2	7
3	Between 11 and 15 years	(5.4)	(8.1)	(5.4)	(18.9)
Nature of th	ne Retail Outlet				
1	Marlei Daran di Oratilat	4	6	11	21
1	Multi Brand Outlet	(10.8)	(16.2)	(29.7)	(56.8)
2	Evaluative Brand Outlat	4	5	0	9
2	Exclusive Braild Outlet	(10.8)	(13.5)	(0.0)	(24.3)
2	Othors	4	1	2	7
3	Others	(10.8)	(2.7)	(5.4)	(18.9)
Product Cat	egory				
1	Mong Woon	2	3	0	5
1	iviens wear	(5.4)	(8.1)	(0.0)	(13.5)

 Table 17. Demographic Nature based on Type of Employee

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2	Womana Waar	6	4	6	16
	womens wear	(16.2)	(10.8)	(16.2)	(43.2)
3	Kida Waar	0	4	0	4
	Klus wear	(0.0)	(10.8)	(0.0)	(10.8)
4	All	4	1	7	12
		(10.8)	(2.7)	(18.9)	(32.4)
Total		12	12	13	37
		(32.4)	(32.4)	(35.1)	(100.0)

It can be seen from the *table 16 and 17* that the female employees were edge over the male employees in proactive and inquisitive category whereas the male employees are marginal edge over than the female category. Further the three categories were analyzed based on the experience. It is interesting to note that the employees having experience between 6 and 10 years are in proactive in nature (21.6%) when compare to the other experience holders either in the lesser experience or higher experience. More than 50% of the employees belonging to all the three categories are from multi brand outlet and 43.2% of the employees represents in the women's wear category.

FINDINGS

- 1. The skills were ascertained based on technical, interpersonal and strategic & retail skills.
- 2. 40 questionnaires were distributed and 37 were responded. The response rate is 92.5%.
- 3. The reliability test using Cronbachs alpha (α) indicates that all the 31 variables under three categories thus taken up for the study were good and the value of the variables ranges between 0.846 and 0.958.
- 4. 64.9% of the respondents belongs to female category and 43.2% are having the experience between 6 and 10 years. More than 50% of the respondents employed in multi brand outlets and they were assigned to work in the women's wear category (43.2%).
- 5. Among the technical skills, 'knowledge of product and ability to communicate to customers', 'ability to handle difficult or demanding customer' and 'understanding the local market trend essential' are given predominance by the respondents. The least preferences were given to 'suggest or device the sales promotion programs' and 'understanding customer service essential'
- 6. The respondents of other than the MBO and EBO, the first preference of the respondents is the last preference of the respondents from other outlets. The order of first three preferences of other outlets were 'knowledge of product and ability to communicate to customers', 'incentive given by the management motivates to promote sales' and 'understanding the local market trend essential'. The least preferences were given for 'Ability to handle difficult or demanding customer' and 'Suggest or device the sales promotion programs'.
- 7. Among the interpersonal skills whenever they feel stressed, they distress themselves by optimistic approach, always wanted to update their knowledge' and rely on themselves for all their information needs. The study

shows that there is no unique opinion between genders, years of experience, and nature of the retail outlet and product category on interpersonal skills.

- 8. In the case of strategic & fashion retail skills, majority of them indicated energy, creative and humility as their order of preference. The correlation technique thus adopted for strategic & fashion retail skills indicated significant at 99% and 95% level. The hierarchical cluster analysis indicates three clusters. Factor analysis has also been employed to identify the number of components.
- 9. There exist three factors whose, Eigen value is more than 1 and the factors are named as proactive, inquisitive and habitual employees.
- 10. Among the 37 respondents, 12 each in proactive and inquisitive nature employees and 13 as habitual employees.
- 11. The female employees were edge over the male employees in proactive and inquisitive category whereas the male employees are marginal edge over than the female category

CONCLUSION

The retailer's growth depends on the talent, skills and capabilities of the employees especially in the organized outlets. It is essential to create the talent pool among the employees. Moreover consumers are demanding seamless omnichannel shopping experiences. Therefore the retailers must comply the customer's requisite. Despite the confidence, it is essential to fulfill the customers' requirements purely depend upon the employees of these retail outlets especially in fashion retail outlets because of heavy competition seen in this domain. The retailers operations in this digital age has been revising as like that off "ship to home and return to store"; "order on line and pick up in store"; "same day deliveries and even providing any time anywhere access of the trend". Therefore it is essential to equip the skills and capabilities of the employees especially in fashion retail outlets. The current challenges are to provide effective services with the reduced cost. The capabilities and performance is to a large extent built on skills refining the traditional retail skills such as customer service must build over ever growing customer demand. Thus the study provides awareness on different types of skills required for the employees of organized fashion retail outlets of textile and clothing in Chennai.

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