

A STUDY ON WOMEN CONSUMER DECISION MAKING BEHAVIOR WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PURCHASE OF DURABLE GOODS IN UDUMALPET TOWN

Lakshmi G.¹ and Dr. P. Rengarajan²

¹Research Scholar, Vidyasagar College of Arts and Science, Udumalpet, India
Email: phugazhini555@gmail.com

²Associate Professor, Vidyasagar College of Arts and Science, Udumalpet, India
Email: trydrraj@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Consumer studies are an ongoing process and it is difficult to bring out an unified conclusion, this is because consumers vary by taste, design, colour, etc. Consumer behaviour reflects the totality of consumer's decisions with respect to acquisition, consumption and disposition of goods, services, time and idea by (human) decision making units (over time). An understanding of purchase behaviour of women towards durable goods is an essential as it reflects the influence of brands, price, quality, quantity, mode of purchase, etc. The success of the market or the failure depends on the purchase behaviour of consumers. Women are taking the lead roles as of today than the yester years. This is due to the outcome of education, employment, etc. Present, women are taking the lead in purchase decisions too.

Keywords: Women Consumer, Consumer behaviour, Durable goods, Purchase behaviour, Decision making.

INTRODUCTION

Consumer studies are an ongoing process and it is difficult to bring out an unified conclusion, this is because consumers vary by taste, design, colour, etc. Consumer behaviour reflects the totality of consumer's decisions with respect to acquisition, consumption and disposition of goods, services, time and idea by (human) decision making units (over time). It also includes whether, why, when, where, how, how much and how often and how long consumer will use or dispose of an offering. The Character, Behaviour and Attitude of consumer are the important dimensions in the decision making process. Durable goods like TV, Washing machine, Computer, Digital Camera, etc are the products used by the consumers. In the competitive market, the prospective buyer is prepared to choose the right brand based on their needs. All the purchases made by a consumer follow a certain decision making process. A consumer is one who does some physical activities and deliberates to take decisions concerning purchase and to dispose off on to evaluate products and services.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Review of existing consumer literature, the examination on decision-making can be categorized into three major approaches: the psychographic/lifestyle approach (e.g., Wells, 1974), the consumer typology approach (e.g., Kenson, 1999; Ownbey and Horridge, 1997; Shim and Kotsiopoulos, 1993) and the consumer characteristics approach (Sproles and Kendall, 1986; Sproles and Sproles, (1990). Among these three approaches, the consumer characteristics approach has been widely acknowledged by consumer researchers as the most explanatory and powerful construct because it focuses on a cognitive and affective aspect of consumer behavior. This approach deals with consumer's general predisposition towards the act of shopping and describing mental orientation of consumers in their decision making process (Lysonski et al., 1996). The genesis of characteristics approach began with several researchers who have been particularly interested in profiling consumer decision-making styles (Thorelli, Becker and Engledow, 1975). Based on examination of types of consumer decision-making styles in the previous literature, Sproles (1985) identified 50 items related to consumers' cognitive and affective orientation towards shopping and buying. The author believes that measuring consumers' general orientations toward shopping and buying can identify their decision making styles. Sproles and Kendall (1986) refined this inventory and accordingly developed a more parsimonious scale consisting of 40 items. The Consumer Style Inventory (CSI) that they have developed consists of eight decision-making styles. This construct is described as basic consumer personality and is analogous to the concept of personality in psychology. There are eight mental characteristics of consumer decision-making style in the CSI. They are namely; a) perfectionistic and high-quality conscious; b) brand conscious; c) novelty and fashion-conscious; d) recreational; e) price conscious; f) impulsive; g) confused by over choice and h) habitual and brand-loyal.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

An understanding of purchase behaviour of women towards durable goods is an essential as it reflects the influence of brands, price, quality, quantity, mode of purchase, etc. The success of the market or the failure depends on the purchase behaviour of consumers. Women are taking the lead roles as of today than the yester years. This is due to the outcome of education, employment, etc. Present, women are taking the lead in purchase decisions too. Hence, the present study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The specific objectives of the study are

1. To study women's purchasing behaviour.
2. To know the role of women in purchase decision making process.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Area of the study: The study was undertaken in Udumalpet town.

Sample size: A total of 125 respondents residing in the Udumalpet town form the sample.

Research Tool Sampling Technique: A structured questionnaire was given to the consumers who have visited the Durable Market in Udumalpet. Convenience sampling method was followed for collecting response from the respondents.

Sources of data: The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected by using questionnaire and the secondary data has been collected from books, manuals and Internet.

Tools for analysis The statistical tools used for the purpose of analysis of this study are simple percentage technique, pie diagram and bar diagram. Exhibits are also used in appropriate places. After the collection of data through the questionnaire, editing was done carefully. Based on the responses of the samples, tables were prepared. The data collected were analysed and interpreted. Weighted Average scaling technique and ranking technique has also been used for analysis and interpretation of data.

Table 1. Factors Influencing Purchase Behaviour

S. No	Influencing factors	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Convenience	13	10
2	Quality	89	71
3	Quantity	3	2
4	Cost	5	4
5	Service	7	6
6	Customer relation	1	1
7	Brand	7	6
	Total	125	100

Table 2.

PRE-PURCHASE PROBLEMS			
S. No.		No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Unavailability of Request Brand	15	12
2	Showing other Brands	33	27
3	Compulsion to Purchase	39	31
4	Clarity of Explanation of the Product Features	12	10
5	Do not reveal the Truth of the Product	23	18
6	Billing, and others	3	2
	Total	125	100
POST-PURCHASE PROBLEMS			
1	Follow-up service	27	21
2	Towards complaints	29	23
3	Transportation Problems	57	46
4	Customer Care	12	10
	Total	125	100

Weighted Average Score Analysis

Weighted Average technique was used to find out the weighted average for each category of respondents, over several study factors to know their level of satisfaction towards the quality, price, availability, service, size & design of the products. For this purpose the qualitative

information was converted into numerical one using five point scaling technique. In using five point scales, score 5 was given to Highly satisfied. 4 was given to Satisfied 3 was given to Moderate 2 was given to Dissatisfied 1 was given to Highly Dissatisfied.

Table 3. Age & Factors Considered For Product Satisfaction

Sl. No	AGE	18-30 years	31-40 years	41-50 years	Above 50 years
1	Quality	4.45	4.37	3.94	5.00
2	Price	3.90	3.79	3.61	4.00
3	Availability	3.87	4.00	3.78	4.00
4	Service	3.91	3.84	3.83	4.00
5	Size	3.73	3.21	3.28	4.00
6	Design	3.97	3.95	3.94	4.00

Table 4. Educational Qualification & Factors Considered For Product Satisfaction

Sl.No	Educational Qualification	School Level	Graduate	PG	Diploma	Professionals
1	Quality	4.19	4.46	4.18	4.75	4.00
2	Price	3.57	3.92	3.45	3.75	4.17
3	Availability	3.90	3.92	3.55	4.00	3.83
4	Service Rendered	3.57	3.93	3.73	4.75	4.17
5	Size	3.43	3.69	4.27	3.75	3.17
6	Design	3.86	4.00	4.00	3.75	4.17

Table 5. Income & Factors Considered For Product Satisfaction

Sl.No.	Income	Below Rs. 15,000	Rs.15000 – Rs. 20,000	Rs. 20,000 – Rs. 25,000	Above Rs.25,000
1	Quality	4.38	4.38	4.17	4.71
2	Price	3.90	3.87	3.50	3.71
3	Availability	3.90	3.80	3.92	4.14
4	Service Rendered	3.69	4.38	3.83	4.43
5	Size	3.61	3.64	3.92	4.00
6	Design	3.92	3.84	3.83	4.43

Table 6. Nature of Family & Factors Considered For Product Satisfaction

Sl.No	Nature of family	Nuclear	Joint
1	Quality	4.40	4.32
2	Price	3.79	3.95
3	Availability	3.88	3.88
4	Service Rendered	4.08	3.49
5	Size	3.61	3.80
6	Design	3.98	3.98

It is inferred that irrespective of the age, education, employment, marital status, nature of family and family size, majority of the respondents are highly satisfied with product quality.

Factor Analysis

Factors considered by the respondents were analysed by ranking method. For which respondents were asked to assign the rank of the factors which given in the schedule. As per this technique, the number of respondents multiplies the rank assigned by the respondents. The preference is taken as total score assigned to a factor. The factor scoring the least value is the most important rank was determined with ascending order. By using this technique, it was decided to analyse the factors by ranking for some preference.

Table 7. Ranking Analysis For Age Group With Order Of Preference For Purchase

Particulars	Age	18-30 years		31-40 years		41-50 years		Above 50 years	
		Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
Quality		3.51	I	4.21	I	4.22	I	4.50	I
Performance		3.31	II	3.00	II	2.39	V	1.50	V
Cost		2.91	III	2.89	IV	2.50	III	4.00	II
Service		2.63	V	2.00	V	2.44	IV	2.00	IV
Brand		2.78	IV	2.95	III	2.83	II	3.00	III

Most of the respondents under various educational levels are giving highest preference to product quality and least preference to the service rendered.

Table 8. Ranking Analysis for Occupation with Order of Preference for Purchase

Particulars	Occupation	Professionals		Business		Service		Agriculture		Others	
		Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
Quality		3.67	I	3.83	I	3.89	I	4.00	I	3.57	I
Performance		2.67	IV	3.17	II	3.15	III	2.58	IV	3.22	II
Cost		2.50	V	2.58	IV	3.37	II	2.42	V	2.88	IV
Service		2.83	III	2.42	V	2.52	IV	3.17	II	2.31	V
Brand		3.00	II	3.04	III	2.33	V	2.83	III	2.93	III

Table 9. Ranking Analysis for Marital Status with Order of Preference for Purchase

Particulars	Marital Status	Married		Unmarried	
		Score	Rank	Score	Rank
Quality		4.17	I	3.47	I
Performance		2.98	II	3.18	II
Cost		2.83	III	2.88	III
Service		2.23	V	2.64	V
Brand		2.81	IV	2.83	IV

Table 10. Ranking Analysis for Family Size with Order of Preference for Purchase

Particulars	Size of the Family	2		3		4		Above 4	
		Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
Quality		5.00	I	3.93	I	3.76	I	3.67	I
Performance		3.00	III	2.79	IV	3.08	II	3.18	II
Cost		4.00	II	2.29	V	2.88	IV	2.98	III
Service		1.00	V	3.07	II	2.29	V	2.57	V
Brand		2.00	IV	2.86	III	3.00	III	2.61	IV

FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS & CONCLUSIONS

1. The distinctive feature of the higher income group respondents is that, they shop as and when they like. Similarly, the housewives shop almost weekly but the career going women do shop; only when need arises.
2. Education also plays a key role in shopping behaviour, in the sense that, compared to the respondents with no formal education, respondents having a good educational background shop more of ten.
3. Majority of the respondents are students belonging to the age group of 18 to 30 years and an analysis of the level of education, it is found that, they have attained graduation status. Most of the respondents belong to nuclear family and number of members in the family ranges 4 or above 4.
4. In majority of the respondents family, women plays a major role in purchase decision and they prefer to prepare item list before purchasing. The involvement each one has on the family matters, influences their behaviour to a greater extent. The main aim of the study being to understand the behaviour of individuals in the process of decision making, information gathering and need identification.
5. In the selected sample, respondents gather information from both internal and external sources. Majority of the sample respondents give importance to their friends and relatives opinions and suggestions and thus adhere to the advice given by them as per their earlier purchase behaviour of course advertisements do have a better say with lower and middle income respondents.
6. Majority of the respondents prefer to purchase products from departmental stores rather than other types of shops, as they feel it is economical and products are of good quality.
7. The sample respondents adopt bargaining method of purchase, some do not follow this method because of their confidence in buying.
8. Some respondents are ready to purchase new products offered in order to make a test purchase and some respondents are not ready for test purchase.
9. The respondents are not conforming to the purchase list for the reason that they have forgotten to add some items in purchase list.

10. Most of the respondents are aware of the quality marks and they carry the products in their own vehicle or by bus and some avail the benefit of door delivery.
11. The sample respondents prefer cash payment rather than credit payment. The result from the respondents says that most of them are facing various problems like harassment, adulteration, no follow up service, poor quality, etc during and after purchase.
12. The post purchase behaviour of the sample respondents reveal the fact that, the decision process is not a satisfactory affair. The pressure of negative attitudes mount up in certain families and is overcome by convincing, compromising, augmenting, etc. To overcome such an attitude, either they get convinced or as observed in the study, the way for getting rid of the product and not to buy it again is a better option.
13. Most of the respondents are interested in recommending the product purchased by them to others and are satisfied with salesmen service.
14. This clearly indicates that in family purchase decisions, inspite of an individual's age, income, level of education, status, family size, etc, the interactive they have with each other leads the way for best 'buy'. Ultimately greater the interaction, better the involvement and may be a satisfactory purchase.
15. Most of the respondents under various personal factors have given highest preference to product quality.
16. Most of the respondents were satisfied with all the factors like price, quality, availability, service, size and design and no one is dissatisfied with the above mentioned facts.

SUGGESTIONS

Purchase decision process which is characterized as more complex in its nature, has been subject to research often, only recently. This study is an attempt to explore the purchase decision process within a family with special reference in women's purchasing behaviour and their role in purchase decision. To the Marketers: 'Family' influence in the purchase decision process is to be considered more seriously than the influence of any other factor, for the simple and the most importance reason, that, it is the family that decides the consumption pattern, choice of products, brands, stores and other product related aspects. The marketing strategy to be adopted under conditions where purchase decisions are husband dominated has to necessarily differ when such decisions are wife dominated or even syncretic decisions. In order to reach the prospective buyer without any complications, the Marketer's prime responsibility is to identify the person dominating the decision making process and he / she is to be influenced further towards the desired action. It is believed that, such an approach will serve the purpose more effectively than a generalized approach often practiced by Indian Marketers towards the family purchase activity. Consumer behaviour research is an effective tool in Marketing for all types of organization. It provides clues as how to reach and serve the consumers more effectively. In order to achieve success in the market, the companies may adopt this methodology.

To the Public- Women should be aware of the new products introduced in the market and of its special features, price, quality, etc. They should be capable of identifying duplicate

products and should avoid purchasing unnecessary items. Purchase is to be made on the basis of the quality, income and according to the budget. Women must know the standard shop which sell products at reasonable prices with excellent service. They should give importance to the package date, manufacturing date, ISI marks, expiry date, brand etc while purchasing. They should bargain and should clarify their doubts regarding the product, they buy. Proper planning is essential before going for purchasing and should know the credit facilities, offers, discounts, etc available for the products in the market. To conclude, in order to bring about lasting happiness in purchase, decision should be 'Joint Decision'.

CONCLUSION

Successful companies now-a-days take an inside – out view of their business. They recognize the importance of continuous monitoring and adopting to the environment. They also spend more time with customers and watching competitors because changes in environment pose good opportunities for the marketers to still flourish. The modern market is highly competitive and transitional. The prominence gained by individual consumer in marketing decision making compels the marketer to look at and organize the component of marketing mix through the customer's eyes. Hence consume behaviour research has come into existence. First, a company must decide what it can sell, how much it can sell, to whom it can sell and what approaches must be made to attract the targeted customers. The customer do not accept any product, which does not give them complete satisfaction with regard to both mental and physical satisfaction. So it can be said that the modern market is consumer oriented and any products success or failure is determined only by the consumers. A company must decide what it can sell, how much it can sell, to whom it can sell and what approaches must be made to attract the targeted customers. The customer does not accept any products which does not give them complete satisfaction with regard to both mental and physical satisfaction. So it can be said that the modern market is consumer oriented and any product success or failure is determined only by the consumers. Thus, to achieve success in the market, it has become highly inevitable to produce goods in such a manner as preferred by the customer, as he is the king around whom the entire marketing activity revolves. In present era, women plays vital role in all field. To conclude, women plays a major role in taking purchase decision for durables.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- Comparative analysis of the buying behaviour of rural and urban consumers – A study.
- Consumers brand preference for durable goods.
- Recent trends in advertisements and their impact on women consumers decision towards durable goods.

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