



A STUDY ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS SELECTED WHITE GOODS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TIRUCHIRAPALLI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Consumer durables have emerged as one of the fastest growing industries in India. Once perceived as luxury items, consumer durables today have become as an indispensable tool of everyday use for the Indian middle class families. The largest contributing sector among durables is white goods, also known as consumer appliances, like air conditioners, refrigerators, mixer grinder, wet grinder and washing machines. Consumers' attitude and purchase preferences have been vastly changing all over the world for the past a few years particularly in the Indian white goods market due to the entry of foreign brands which create heavy competition as well as broad choice for buyers. Every marketer is constrained to find out factors for which buyers give much importance and how far they are satisfied with these factors. In this research examines the purchase behaviour and attitude of buyers towards selected white goods such as refrigerator, washing machine, mixer grinder, wet grinder and air conditioner. The research is descriptive in nature and data were collected through well-structured online and offline questionnaires with the sample size of 500. The study has been done in Tiruchirappalli district of Tamil Nadu state in India. The main objectives of the study are to find out factors which influence buyers for the purchase of white goods and the importance given for selection of retail outlet for their purchase. The satisfaction level of the consumers towards the

products, their experience in the retail outlet during the Purchase and after sales service seems to be optimistic.

Keywords: purchase behaviour; consumer; white goods; product; service;

INTRODUCTION

Consumers, their ways of taking purchase decisions and the principles they look for when taking such decisions are constantly evolving, and hence their study represents a subject of great interest to market researchers across the world. This is all the more true in the case of high involvement products such as white goods whose purchase is generally rational and is preceded by a long decision making process given that this type of product represents a high financial investment for households (Govind, 2012). In the course of this research, here it is present the white goods sector including its specifications and particularities, discuss the Kotler and Keller (2009) buying decision process and identify the criteria consumers look for when making a white goods purchase. This information will then be verified within the Indian context with the help of a consumer focus group, which will answer questions relating to the decision making process including: the identity of the principal decision maker, the motivations behind their purchase, the sources from where they get their information from as well as the principal criteria they base their choices on. White Goods and their Specificities Generally used to designate a wide range of domestic appliances which are chiefly for kitchen or laundry use, and which were historically factory-finished in white enamel,

white goods include: cooling appliances such as refrigerators, freezers and ice boxes, cooking appliances like microwave and electrical ovens, and home laundry and dishwashing appliances including washing machines and clothes dryers.

They are differentiated from what professionals refer to as “brown goods” such as TVs, video recorders, hi-fi systems, telephones, computers and cameras, since white goods are considered as “time saving goods” that increase individuals’ discretionary time, while the latter are referred to as “time using goods” as they increase the perceived quality of discretionary time. Furthermore, white goods are usually seen as privately consumed necessities that are consumed out of public view and that virtually everyone owns. Their purchase is heavily governed by the product’s attributes rather than by the influences other people exert. Certain traits characterize and are common to all white goods, they include: simplicity and scale-intensive production, product similarity, low exposure to technological advancements, limited research and development, and long product life expectancy.

The study of consumer behaviour focuses on how individuals make decisions to spend their available resources like time, money, effort on consumption-related items (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1997). The buying process is a combination of mental and physical activities that ends with an actual purchase almost daily. Thus it is interesting to study the connection within “what we buy” and “why we buy it”. In this scenario, brands play a leading role in customer decision making. The purchase of a product is both mental and physical activity. Sheth & Mittal 2004, These activities are called behaviours, and their result is a combination of variety determinate by the relation within the type of customer and his/her role.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Anand Thakur and Hundal (2008) suggested that both rural and urban consumers differed in their perception about washing machine as an item of necessity. The urban consumers were highly influenced by the washing machine compared to rural and preferred to put them in ‘necessity’ category.

Mumtaz Ali, Jing Fengjie and Naveed Akhtar Qureshi (2010) provided a

detailed view of the consumers’ way of thinking and investigated the degree of association of six factors like price, family structure, country of origin, age, culture and advertising on buying behaviour of goods and services. From the study it is understood that price becomes associated with product.

Minakshi Thaman and Priya Ahuja (2010) analysed the consumer behaviour in the purchase of television, refrigerator and food processor with reference to income level. Buying motives differed in various income categories.

Amutha and Nasrin Sulthana (2011) have said that the attitude of people in Chennai city has become changed due to various reasons such as updated technology, improved status and influence of reference group. Advertisement is nothing but an important sales promotion strategy. From the findings of the study among lower income groups: Price was a major consideration and in middle income group, brand reputation was one of the most important influencing factors. **Anil kumar and Jelsey Joseph (2012)** analysed the consumer purchase behaviour of urban and rural working women consumers towards durables and opined that the urban and rural markets significantly differed from each other in considering general and product-specific factors while making their purchase decisions for durables. The change of consumer attitude and preferences has been occurring over the world for the past a few years especially in the white goods market. The entry of foreign brands created a heavy competition. Every marketer is constrained to find out the factors for which the buyers are giving more importance and their satisfaction level also. Without such an understanding, marketers find it hard to meet the customer’s needs and wants.

NEED OF THE STUDY

In modern days, more households have two working adults (husband and wife) who do more or less their household tasks at night after work. So, both refrigerator and washing machine have become an inseparable part of every household. In a hot climate country like India, air conditioning has become a need of modern day life in contrast to its earlier perception as a luxury product. The purchase of these household products needs high involvement and has a great influence on buyer behaviour and their way of living. This study helps marketers understand the decision making at the choice of the buyers and

develop appropriate marketing programmes in order to captivate the consumers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- 1.To study the buying behaviour for selected white goods
2. To identify the factors that influences the buyers during the purchase of white goods.
3. Based on the results recommendations will be given to the marketers.

ABOUT THE STUDY

This is a deep study of consumer behaviour for consumer’s choice brand to purchase a white goods through consumer survey. The research is exploratory in nature and is hence descriptive. The aim of study consists of consumer sowning the durable or white goods under study (mobile, refrigerator and air-conditioners) living in Tiruchirappalli city only. The total sample of consumers is 700 planned. Total 500 consumers are taken as a sample for study.

To study the specific products mobile, refrigerator, washing machine, mixer grinder, wet grinder and air-conditioners are selected. Selection of above products due to widely used in consumers who belongs to the middle class family. The middle class families can afford to purchase the above products in easy way and many of middle class families can purchase at same price range.

The other reason for choosing these products in particular are:

- i) The product is widely used in all categories of family
- ii) Consumer is alert to purchase a branded product to maintain their lifestyle
- iii) An indication of advertisement appeals that develop brand preferences based on psychological concept of the consumer must be present.

For data collection, questionnaire is a primary and used as a tool for investigation which was divided into two parts. The part of questionnaire was aimed at getting basic information of the consumers such as age, education, marital status, occupation, monthly income, etc., and in the second part of the study the detailed information for the product, i.e. Washing machine, wet grinder, mixer grinder, refrigerator, and air-conditioners under the study has been included.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current scenario on white goods is analyzed and therefore the present study comes under descriptive research. The sample size of the study is 500. Primary data have been collected from the respondents by using a well-structured, non-disguised questionnaire. Secondary data for the study were collected from books, journals, research articles, magazines, reports, newspapers and websites.

PRODUCT SELECTION

To identify the products for the present study, the products used for the study were

- Air Conditioner
- Refrigerator
- Washing Machine
- Mixer Grinder
- Wet Grinder

SAMPLE DESIGN

A sample is a representative part of the population. The Probability method of Systematic Random sampling method was followed for study to choose the sample respondents. The researcher has decided to select a sample size of 500 household respondents for different brands of product preferred by consumers. 100 respondents have been selected from the major area of Tiruchirappalli district.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table :1 Details of Respondents

S. No	Demographic Variables		No .of Respondents	%
1	Age	Upto20	80	16
		21-30	250	50
		31-40	70	14
		Above 40	100	20
2	Sex	Male	260	52
		Female	240	48
3	Educational Qualification	Illiterate	40	8
		10 th	40	8
		12 th	40	8
		Graduate	210	42
		P.G	170	34
		Professional	160	32
		Home maker	100	20

4	Occupation	Employees	170	34
		Business	70	14
5	Monthly Income	Below 20000	220	44
		20,001-40000	150	30
		40,001-60000	70	14
		60,001-80000	40	8
		Above 80000	20	4
6	Marital status	Married	270	54
		Unmarried	230	46
7	Family size	2-3	120	24
		4-5	230	46
		Above 5	150	30
8	Residential Areas	Rural	250	50
		Semi-urban	110	22
		Urban	140	28

From Table 1, it shows that 50% of the respondents belonged to the age group of 21 - 30 years, 52% of the respondents were male, 42% of the respondents were graduates, 34% of the respondents were employees, 44% of the respondents family monthly income was less than Rs. 20,000, 54% of the respondents were married, 46% of the respondents belong to medium size family. 50% of the respondents belong to rural area.

Table:2 Products Demented by the Respondents

Products	No		Yes	
	N	%	N	%
Air conditioner	370	74	130	26
Refrigerator	130	26	370	74
Washing machine	150	30	350	70
Mixer grinder	10	2	490	98
Wet grinder	50	10	450	90

Table 2 specifies that 98% of the respondents own Mixer grinder, 90% of the respondents own Grinder, 74% of the respondents own Refrigerator, 70% of the respondents own Washing Machines, 26% of the respondents own Air conditioner.

MEDIA OF ADVERTISEMENT

Advertising aims to promote the sales of a product or service and also to notify the masses about its structures. It is an current means of communicating the value of a product or service with people at large. It uses different types of appeals to connect to consumers spread across the globe. The advertising industry provides a platform for the business entities to spread awareness about the products and services offered by them.

Table: 3 Different media of advertisement

Media	1		2		3		4		5		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Print	40	8	10	2	10	2	10	2	10	2	50	10
Radio	50	10	15	3	10	2	9	1	10	2	50	10
TV	25	5	16	3	40	8	30	6	20	4	50	10
Hoardings & banners	40	8	20	4	10	2	10	2	10	2	50	10
Displays & exhibits	20	4	8	1	10	2	10	3	10	2	50	10

From the above table it is clear that 250 respondents have given first rank to television, 150 respondents have given second rank to radio, 130 respondents have considered print as third rank, 170 respondents have marked four to displays/exhibitions and 120 respondents have given rank five to hoardings and banners.

RESPONDENTS INFLUENCED BY OTHERS OPINIONS

People believe another individual to be credible for a variety of reasons, such as perceived experience, attractiveness, knowledge, etc. Those with access to the media may use this access in an attempt to influence the public. An attempt was made to find out if the respondents are influenced by others opinion.

Table:4 Influence by other people

s.no	Influenced Opinion	No.of Respondents	%
1	Yes	480	96
2.	No	20	4
	Total	500	100

From the above table it infers that 96% of the respondents were influenced by others opinion about white goods and the remaining 4% of the respondents were not influenced by others opinion.

SOURCES OF INFLUENCE IN PURCHASING WHITE GOODS

People’s opinions or behaviours can be changed as a result of social influences from a multitude of resources and individuals. The following table provides that sources of influence in purchasing white goods.

Table:5 Sources of influences in purchasing white goods

s.no	Sources of Influence	No.of. respondents	%
1	Spouse	70	14
2	Family members	270	54
3.	Friends	120	24
4.	Relatives	40	8
	Total	500	100

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PURCHASE DECISION OF CONSUMER WHITE GOODS

The marketing group must facilitate the consumers to act on their purchase intention. The organization can use a variety of techniques to achieve this. The relevant internal psychological process that is associated with purchase decision is integration. Once the integration is achieved, the organization can influence the purchase

decisions much more easily. Consumer goods are normally more valued, high priced products and not frequently purchased products. The following table presents the opinion of the respondents about the factors influencing the purchase decision of consumer white goods.

Table: 6 Factors influencing purchasing decision

facto rs	SDA		DA		NN		A		SA		total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Price	30	6	7	1	8	1	2	4	1	2	5	1
Colo ur	20	4	4	8	1	2	2	4	1	2	5	1
Bran d Pref.	30	6	7	1	1	2	1	3	1	2	5	1
Offer disco unts	10	2	8	1	1	2	2	4	1	2	5	1
Tech nical featu res	20	4	5	2	1	2	2	4	1	2	5	1
Qual ity	20	4	4	8	1	2	2	4	8	1	5	1
Shap e& size	30	6	6	1	1	2	1	3	1	2	5	1
Bran d imag e	30	6	7	1	8	1	2	4	1	2	5	1
mod el& desig n	30	6	5	1	1	2	2	4	1	2	5	1
Cele brity	10	2	3	6	1	2	1	3	1	3	5	1

From the above table it is clear that majority 44% of the respondents are agreed with the factor of “Price” and “Quality”, 42% of the respondents are agreed with the factor of “Offers/Discounts”

and “Brand Image”, 40% of the respondents are agreed with the factor of “Colour”, “Technical Features” and “Model / Design”. 36% of the respondents are agreed with the factor of “Brand Preference” and “Celebrity”

SUGGESTIONS

Demand for consumer white goods is more volatile since it moves rapidly or disperses quickly in relation to business conditions. Marketers separate the current demand for white goods in terms of replacement old products and expansion of the total stock demand for such goods.

□ Consumers prefer high valued consumer white goods of well established brands. The marketers and manufacturers of the consumer goods must try to convert the brand consciousness into brand loyalty for their well established brands. The consumer behaviour in this direction should properly be exploited by the manufacturers and dealers to maximize their sales.

□ The buyers of consumer goods have largely shown their preference to make extensive enquiry from the dealers of different brands of the products. This trait should be matched with all the buyers in order to avoid post purchase dissatisfaction about the quality and performance of the products.

□ The buyers of the consumer goods should insist that all the technical information are revealed on the use of durable products to enable them to use the products without any technical fault leading to frequent repairs, free servicing of the durables by dealers during the guarantee period insisted upon the buyers.

CONCLUSION

The market for consumer goods is becoming more competitive now a days. Therefore, the producer of white goods products should understand consumer interest much to find higher sale of their products. Marketers communicate with consumers and try to convince through every possible media. Highly inevitable to produce goods as preferred by the customer, as he is the kingpin around whom the entire marketing activity revolves. Thus, a marketer who understands the behaviour of the consumers and plan his marketing strategies to suit the needs and aspirations of the target market will definitely have an advantage over his competitors.

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