

External and internal influences on consumer buying decisions

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ABSTRACT

Consumers live in a complex environment. Their decision-process behaviour is influenced by external and internal factors. To know the opinion of urban consumers regarding the factors influencing on buying decisions, 150 women consumers were randomly selected who were participating in household purchases. Information was elicited by questionnaire cum interview method. All the respondents were educated and 50 % of the samples were working in various fields. From the study it was noticed that the respondents were aware of the different external factors such as culture, social class, personal influence, family and situation which influenced their buying behaviour. They also listed the internal factors such as knowledge, attitude, personality, lifestyle and values, which influence their behaviour and buying decisions.

Key words : Consumer behaviour, Buying decision.

Our society is a study in diversity. There is diversity among consumers, marketers, customs, and nations and even among consumer behaviours theoretical perspectives. In spite of prevailing diversity in our society, there also are many similarities. The study of consumer behaviors enables the marketers to understand and predict consumer behaviours in the market place. Consumer behaviour is the behaviour that consumers display in searching for purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products services and ideas that they expect will satisfy their needs. Consumer behaviour is not only concerned with what consumer buy but with why, when, where, how and how often they buy it. The individuals specific behaviour in the market place is affected by internal factors such as needs, motives, perception attitudes as well as by external factors or environmental influences such as the family, social groups, culture etc.

In order to achieve a better understanding of the consumer behaviour, there is a need to study the opinion of consumer in external and internal influences on buying decisions. Hence, the study was conducted to understand the consumer buying behaviour process and to explore the opinion of respondents on the factors influencing their behaviour.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Bhubaneswar the capital city of Orissa. The sample consisted of 150 women consumers (randomly selected) who were actively participating in household purchases. Fifty per cent of the samples were working women in different fields such as educational institute, private and Govt. sectors, Banks, L.I.C., hospitals etc. Direct personal interview method

were followed using the interview schedule as a tool. Data were analyzed with the help of statistical tools like percentage, rank, order etc.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic profile of the respondents:

Working women consisted of fifty per cent of the total sample and the rest were exclusively homemakers. All the respondents were married women. Fifty two per cent respondents belonged to the age group of 35 to 45 years, 24.6 % were in the age group of 25 to 35 years and the rest belonged to the age 45 years and above (23.3 %). Majority of the respondents (46.6 %) were postgraduates, followed by graduates (36 %) and technical education (17.3 %). The respondents were a well-educated group of women. Majority of them belonged to nuclear family. Monthly income of the family was more than Rs.20, 000/-.

Consumer buying behaviour process:

The first stage is the growing consciousness of a need in which the potential consumer becomes aware of a want, which can be satisfied through the marketing system. After aware of a want, the consumer looks for something, which may satisfy it.

Pre-purchase planning and decision making:

Decision-making includes both the act of choosing and the conditions of choice. Purchase process stage itself involves selecting a course of action based on the preceding evaluation process. Some of the elements of the purchasing process are presented in Table 1. Around 64 % consumers had certain evaluative store criteria

Table 1 : Elements of purchasing process

Elements	No. of respondents	percentage
Choice of store	96	64
Non store purchasing process	25	16.6
Impulse purchase	58	38.6

established in their minds as compared these with their perceptions of store characteristics. As a result of this, stores are categorized according to acceptability and hence will be patronized. Decision-making process is exercised here influenced by store attributes such as store location, physical facilities, merchandise, advertising and sales promotion, customer service etc. Chadha (1995) in his study revealed the changing profile of urban homemaker in a shopping behaviour. The findings showed a very clean shift towards super bazaars and cooperative store as a place for buying cereals and oils at the expense of Kirana shops in metro towns. Merchandising techniques have an important influence on consumer decision-making behaviour inside the store. 86.6 % respondents opined that store layout, product shelving, pricing strategies, packaging, brand choice play an important role at this juncture. Through all the respondents were aware of the non-store purchasing process which includes ordering via direct response to T.V., direct mail, online shopping, door to door selling etc. Only 16.6% of them obtained product information and often made purchases with much less effort than through other distribution channel. Majority of the respondents said that even with the information available, some uncertainty about product quality is likely to linger. Impulse or unplanned purchasing was another consumer-purchasing pattern based on emotional drive, which was finding in 38.6 % respondents.

Post purchased behaviour:

This refers to consumer behaviours on product set up and use. Consumer satisfaction at this stage is utmost important which may lead to repeat buying repeat sales etc. From this study it is evident that about 21.3 % respondent expressed their satisfaction about the product had purchased. A majority of the respondent (78.7. %) faced problem while purchasing consumable as well as durable goods. An effort was also made to study the measures adopted by the respondents for seeking redresses regarding their purchase related problem.

Data in Table 2 indicate that a large majority of respondent (78.7 %) had sought justice from shop keepers by getting the goods exchanged whereas a small number of respondents (10.0 %) sought justice from manufacturers. These findings are in tune with the findings of Kaur (2005) but contrary to those of Goel (1997) who

Table 2 : Distribution of respondents according to justice sought for deficient goods and services (n=150)

Sr. No.	Durable goods	No.	Percentage
1.	Shop keeper	118	78.7
2.	Manufacturer	15	10
3.	Consumer court	4	2.6
4.	Do not take any step	32	21.3

reported that very few respondents contacted only the shopkeepers in case of any defective products. But it was quite disheartening to note that only 4 out of 150 respondents (2.6 %) had utilized the service of consumer court to seek redresses for their grievances. It is high time that though they were aware of their rights and redressed but not exercising it.

Factors influencing on consumer behaviour:

Consumers live in a complex environment. Their decision process behaviour is influenced by external and internal factors.

External influences:

It is clear from Table 3 that in 90 % respondents, the social status influences where and how they should make shopping. Culture affects the individual decision making as opined by 80 % of respondents. According to them, it gives meaning to goods and service. Consumers place more weight on some product attributes than others when they choose between competing brands. The cause for such weight is often the culture to which the individuals belong.

Table 3 : Opinion of respondents regarding external influences on consumer behaviour

External influences	No. of respondents	Rank
Culture	120 (80 %)	II
Social stratus	135 (90 %)	I
Family	77 (51.3 %)	IV
Influencer	48 (32 %)	VI
Situation	65 (43.3 %)	V
Environment	105 (70)	III

The family, very often was the primary decision making unit with a complex and varying pattern of roles and functions as said by 51.3 % respondents. When an individual makes purchases, other members of the family may heavily influence the buying decision of the individual. Thirty two per cent respondents expressed that influencer whose opinions were sought concerning criteria, the family used in purchases and which products or brands most likely fit. Behaviour changes as situation changes, said 43.3 % respondents. Majority of the respondents

opined that the information environment such as the availability, amount and form of information, can affect decision making. Hence, according to the study, the external factors are culture, social status, family, influencer, situation and environment among which the social status ranked I and next to it was culture (rank-II)

Internal influences:

According to the respondents, the various internal factors influencing the consumer behaviour are resources, involvement and motivation, knowledge, personal value and life style. Among these, consumer resources ranked I, because buying is affected greatly by consumer's income (Table 4).

Table 4 : Opinion of respondents regarding internal influences on consumer behaviour

Factors	Respondents	Rank
Consumer resources	125 (83.3 %)	I
Involvement & motivation	72 (48 %)	IV
Knowledge	65 (43.3 %)	V
Personal value	85 (56.6 %)	III
Life style	90 (60 %)	II

Life style is the result of the total array of economic, cultural and social life forces that contribute to a person's human qualities, hence it was in the 2nd rank as per the respondents opinion. Personal values explain the individual differences among consumers. Respondents stated the

importance of personal value which was ranked III. Knowledge, Involvement and motivation were also internal influence that affect the behaviour of the consumer.

Conclusion:

From the study, it can be concluded that the educated women consumer are not only aware of their rights and responsibility but also the various internal and external factors, which influence their behaviour. Time has now come where they should assert their rights and become empowered. If the goal of empowerment of women as consumer is achieved, they will not only clinch justice for them but also have a bearing on market economy, availability of goods, generation of competition and even stability of prices.

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