



Existing knowledge and associated problems of consumers before purchase of curtains and upholstery

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ABSTRACT

The present study was undertaken to analyse the existing knowledge and associated problems of consumers about curtains and upholstery purchase. A total of 400 respondents from different cities representing the multicultural groups including Faridabad, Panchkula, Panipat, Hisar and Karnal of Haryana state were selected purposively. Maximum number of consumers had low knowledge regarding curtains and upholstery purchase. Time scarcity for comparative judging was the main problem faced by the respondents before purchase of curtains and upholstery followed by the problems from where to get information about curtains and upholstery, from where to buy them, misleading advertisements, distance and transport and lack of variety and good quality of curtains and upholstery. Very few respondents faced the problems of lack of money.

Khippal, Anita and Singh, Saroj S. Jeet (2011). Existing knowledge and associated problems of consumers before purchase of curtains and upholstery. *Agric. Update*, 6(1): 125-128.

INTRODUCTION

Introduction of a wide variety or range of fabrics to the market makes it difficult for a consumer to make buying decisions, which in general are among the most difficult decisions a consumer has to make and he comes across a wide variety and faces a bewildering textile products. In addition, the consumer is becoming aware of the scientific advancements, which in turn helps in improving the quality of life and his right to certain facilities, provided at a little extra cost.

Our leaders have assured us that food, clothing and shelter would be within the reach of every citizen of India. That dream was never realized. On the contrary, not only did these items become expensive, their quality itself becomes doubtful.

It is believed that the "consumer is the king." (Chopra, 2005). In spite of these words given by great leaders of India, the manufacturers are cheating the consumers again. Every manufacturer tries to get ahead of others by employing various means to tempt and force the consumers to buy his company products. With this spirit, they some times use unfair means such as misleading advertisement to get maximum profit. There is no commonly recognizable standardization mark in the case

of textiles as in case of food items, so a consumer can be easily cheated in the market. Considering these facts, the study was carried out to know the problems of consumers regarding purchase of curtains and upholstery..

METHODOLOGY

The different cities representing the multicultural groups including Faridabad, Panchkula, Panipat, Hisar and Karnal were selected purposively. Efforts were made to take different colonies of different cities of Haryana so that the sample could be true representation of the population.

The respondents for the study were both men and women as both are usually involved equally in purchase decision. Hence, both need to be educated about curtains and upholstery to be able to make the wise purchase. A total of 400 respondents were selected belonging to upper middle and higher income groups because they use and change curtains and upholstery more frequently. All the respondents selected were graduates as this is considered important criterion since education gives better comprehension, better understanding and awareness. The sample was comprised of those who were constructing and setting up new homes or have set up their homes for the

Key words :

Knowledge,
Problems,
Consumers,
Purchase,
Curtains,
Upholstery

Received:
December, 2010;
Accepted :
January, 2011

last one year.

A knowledge inventory was prepared to study the existing knowledge level of consumers about curtains and upholstery and their purchase. For construction of knowledge inventory information available on labels and literature collected from Manak Bhawan (Bureau of Indian Standards), books and journals was utilized. Knowledge statements for all the domains were developed separately. The content of knowledge statements composed of questions called items which were compiled in consultation with specialists. Due care was taken to include all the pertinent information about different domains. After pretest, necessary additions and deletions were made. The respondents were asked to answer each item in dichotomized categories of Yes/No or correct/incorrect and the score was assigned 1 and 0 respectively. The inventory was administered by personal interview method.

An interview schedule was prepared to gather information from consumers regarding problems faced by consumers in curtains and upholstery purchase.

For construction of interview schedule, information available from labels, literature from Manak Bhawan (BIS), books, journals and previous studies was utilized. Necessary additions and deletions were made after pretest. The schedule was administered by personal interview method. The respondents were asked to answer each item as always, seldom, never and score assigned were 2, 1 and 0, respectively.

Knowledge regarding curtains and upholstery purchase was operationalized as the amount of information possessed by consumers regarding curtains and upholstery including information regarding usefulness of labels, terms used on labels, information available on labels, methods of assessing quality of curtains and upholstery, standard sizes of different curtains and upholstery, places of purchase and qualities of curtains and upholstery made up of different fibres.

On the basis of scores obtained in knowledge inventory, the consumers were divided into three categories as low, medium and high:

Knowledge level Scores
(consumers)

Low	Below 110 ($<x - \frac{1}{2}\sigma$)
Medium	110- 145 ($x - \frac{1}{2}\sigma$ to $x + \frac{1}{2}\sigma$)
High	Above 145 ($>x + \frac{1}{2}\sigma$)

(where x stands for mean of the data and σ stands for standard deviation)

The collected data were analysed in the light of information collected from various sources. It was then compiled and tabulated to draw the meaningful inferences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study have been presented under following heads:

Knowledge regarding curtains and upholstery purchase:

Existing knowledge level of consumers regarding curtains and upholstery purchase:

The data presented in Table 1 clearly reveal that 38.8 per cent consumers in Karnal had low knowledge regarding curtains and upholstery followed by 36.2 per cent consumers who had medium knowledge level. Only one fourth of them had high knowledge level. Similar trend was observed in Faridabad also.

In Panipat, 37.5 per cent consumers had low knowledge regarding curtains and upholstery, whereas, equal number of consumers (31.3%) had medium or high knowledge level (Table 1).

Equal number of consumers (37.5%) had low or medium knowledge level regarding curtains and upholstery in Hisar, whereas, one fourth of them had high knowledge level (Table 1).

Table 1 indicates that equal number of consumers (35%) in Panchkula had low or high knowledge level, whereas, 30 per cent consumers had medium knowledge level.

Out of total respondents (400), 37 per cent consumers had low knowledge regarding curtains and upholstery followed by 33.5 per cent consumers who had medium knowledge level. Only 29.5 per cent of them had high knowledge level.

Table 1: Existing knowledge level of consumers regarding curtains and upholstery

Knowledge level	Karnal (n=80)	Panipat (n=80)	Hisar (n=80)	Faridabad (n=80)	Panchkula (n=80)	Total (n=400)
Low (< 110)	31(38.8)	30(37.5)	30(37.5)	29(36.3)	28(35.0)	148(37.0)
Medium (110-145)	29(36.2)	25(31.3)	30(37.5)	26(32.5)	24(30)	134(33.5)
High (> 145)	20(25.0)	25(31.3)	20(25.0)	25(31.3)	28(35)	118(29.5)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

Table 2: Problems faced by consumers before purchase of curtains and upholstery

Problems faced	Karnal (n=80)		Panipat (n=80)		Hisar (n=80)		Faridabad (n=80)		Panchkula (n=80)		Total (n=400)	
	WS	R	WS	R	WS	R	WS	R	WS	R	WS	R
Lack of time for comparative judging	118	1	120	1	114	1	134	1	130	1	616	1
Lack of money	12	7	-	7	-	7	-	7	-	7	12	7
Lack of variety and good quality	58	5	8	6	20	6	11	6	12	6	109	6
Misleading advertisements	52	6	58	4	62	4	99	5	79	5	350	4
Distance and transport	65	4	18	5	30	5	119	2	87	4	319	5
From where to buy	112	2	60	3	76	3	106	3	93	3	447	3
From where to get information	110	3	106	2	110	2	104	4	111	2	541	2

W- Weighted score R- Rank

It can be concluded from the data that maximum number of consumers had low knowledge regarding curtains and upholstery.

Problems faced by consumers:

Problems faced by consumers before purchase of curtains and upholstery:

Main problem faced by the respondents of Karnal was time scarcity for comparative judging (rank 1) followed by the problems, from where to buy and from where to get information about curtains and upholstery (ranks 2 and 3, respectively). Some respondents faced the problems of distance and transport, lack of variety and good quality and misleading advertisements (ranks 4, 5 and 6, respectively). Very few respondents faced the problems of lack of money (Table 2).

The data depicted in Table 2 clearly point out that the main problem faced by the respondents of Panipat was time scarcity for comparative judging (rank 1) followed by the problems, from where to get information about curtains and upholstery and from where to buy them (ranks 2 and 3, respectively). Misleading advertisements, distance and transport and lack of variety and good quality of curtains and upholstery were ranked 4th, 5th and 6th respectively. None of the respondents faced the problem of lack of money. Similar problems were faced by the respondents of Hisar also.

Table 2 clearly reveals that the main problem faced by the respondents of Faridabad was time scarcity for comparative judging (rank 1) followed by the problems, distance and transport, from where to buy and from where to get information about curtains and upholstery (ranks 2, 3 and 4, respectively). The problem of misleading advertisements was ranked 5th. Very few respondents faced the problems of lack of variety and good quality. (rank 6). None of the respondents faced the problem of lack of money. Almost similar problems were faced by

the respondents of Panchkula also.

Among all the respondents, main problem faced was time scarcity for comparative judging (rank 1) followed by the problems, from where to get information about curtains and upholstery and from where to buy them (ranks 2 and 3, respectively). Misleading advertisements, distance and transport and lack of variety and good quality of curtains and upholstery were ranked 4th, 5th and 6th, respectively. Very few respondents faced the problems of lack of money.

It can be concluded from the data that time scarcity for comparative judging was the main problem faced by the respondents followed by the problems, from where to get information about curtains and upholstery and from where to buy them. Very few respondents faced the problems of lack of money. Almost similar results were also reported by Kairon (1991), Pankaj (1998), Parashar (1999) and Khippal (2007).

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