



Impact of Brand and Residential Environment on Consumer Behaviour – A Study on Inhabitants of North and South Zone of Kolkata City

KEYWORDS

Impact of brand, Residential environment and Consumer behaviour

Dr. Swaha Bhattacharya

Associate Professor, Department of Applied Psychology, University of Calcutta

ABSTRACT Consumer refers to the casual user in contrast to the professional user. Brands are the determinants of purchasing behaviour of consumer. Different aspects of brand consider the selling behaviour as well as facilitate the objectives of marketing. On the other hand, family is the most important consumer-buying organization in society. Different family settings give different views about the brand. Individual members of families often serve different roles in decisions that ultimately drawn on shared family resources. Family members as well as consumers use certain brand according to the image, name and personality of a brand. The aim of the present investigation is to study the impact of brand and also the impact residential environment on consumer behaviour as expressed by the inhabitants belonging to North and South zone of Kolkata City. Accordingly, a group of 240 (120 from North and 120 from South zone) inhabitants of three categories, viz., young singles, married without children and married with children were selected as sample in this investigation. General Information Schedule, Perceived Impact of Brand on Consumer Behaviour Questionnaire and Perceived Impact of Residential Environment Questionnaire were used as tools in this investigation. The findings reveal that impact of brand and also impact of residential environment on consumer behaviour differ significantly between the inhabitants belonging to North and South zone of Kolkata City. Considering the findings of the study, adequate measures may be taken to create better impact of brand on consumer behaviour in comparison to the existing scenario.

INTRODUCTION

Consumer psychology is the study of the interaction between consumers and organizations that produce consumer products. Consumer psychologists are interested in how well shoppers reorganize, identify or recall specific product brands. Personal factors that affect consumer behaviour include the standard biographical variables – age, sex, educational levels and socio-economic status – along with cognitive variables such as perceived time available for shopping, attitude towards shopping, purpose of shopping and shopper's mood and personality. Besides this, other aspects of consumer behaviour of interest to psychologists are to give emphasis on habits, loyalty and the effect of product pricing. Consumer research has focused on branding phenomena on the side of customers. An extensive body of literature refers to individual consumers' cognitive concepts that develop in response to marketing activities (Aaker et al., 2004; Keller, 2003; Tybout and Carpenter, 2001). Authors emphasize the social character of brands as symbols used by consumers for the purpose of social interaction (Ahuvia, 2005; Elliot and Wattanasuwan, 1998; Belk, 1988). Consumer behaviour is influenced by individual's personality, motivation, knowledge, attitude, beliefs and feelings. Brand meaning is often reflected in a specific person or a group of people who may be members of the brand interest group (Sherry et al., 2007). Brand manifestation continually stimulate social interaction and thereby the reproduction of brand meaning. It is not only the company, which plays an active part in this process by providing substantive as well as communicative staging (Arnold, 2007). Consumers make choices under the influence of two main factors – (a) purpose, need or desire and (b) behavioural pattern. The majority of research on family purchase decision-making has been preoccupied with who makes decisions rather than how they are made (Thomson, 2003). Krishna (1992) develops a model that incorporates consumer preferences and price expectations for multiple brands as determinants of normative consumer purchase behaviour. Changes in family composition and life style suggest that a re-examination of the traditional family life cycle is necessary. Another research seeks to disaggregate family influences on behaviours into separate parent and sibling components (Cotte et al., 2004). Besides this, people's immediate social environment has a great influence on choices. A number of environmental problems threatening our habitat

are to a greater or lesser extent caused by present consumer life-styles can not be obtained without marked changes in consumer attitudes and consumer behaviour (Olander et al., 2006). Theme, concept, attractive associations etc. are the significant factors of advertisement which increase the purchasing behaviour of consumer. Experience is the reality check that sets the limit between what the brand is saying and who the brand is and what the brand is really delivering. The family is the most important consumer buying organization in society. Considering the above the present investigation has been designed to study the impact of brand and residential environment on consumer behaviour as expressed by the inhabitants belonging to North and South zone of Kolkata City.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the impact of brand on consumer behaviour as expressed by the inhabitants belonging to North and South zone of Kolkata City.
2. To study the impact residential environment on consumer behaviour as expressed by the inhabitants belonging to North and South zone of Kolkata City.
3. To study the impact of brand on consumer behaviour as expressed by the inhabitants belonging to North and South zone of Kolkata City in connection with duration of stay in the same environment.

HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis – I : Impact of brand on consumer behaviour as expressed by the inhabitants belonging to North and South zone of Kolkata City differ significantly.

Hypothesis – II : Impact of residential environment on consumer behaviour as expressed by the inhabitants belonging to North and South zone of Kolkata City differ significantly.

Hypothesis – III : Impact of brand on consumer behaviour as expressed by the inhabitants belonging to North zone of Kolkata City is differentially associated with duration of stay in the same environment.

Hypothesis – IV : Impact of brand on consumer behaviour as expressed by the inhabitants belonging to South zone of Kolkata City is differentially associated with duration of stay in the same environment.

STUDY AREA AND SAMPLE

In order to carryout the present investigation a group of 240 inhabitants belonging to North and South zone of Kolkata City were selected as sample in this investigation. The pertinent characteristics of the subjects are as follows :

- a) Group A : Young singles (21 – 30 years)
- b) Group B : Married without children (25 – 50 years)
- c) Group C : Married with children (25 – 50 years)
- d) Gender : Both male and female
- e) Education : At least Madhyamik

TOOLS USED

1. **General Information Schedule** : It consists of items like name, address, age, gender, education, occupation, duration of stay in the same environment, family settings etc.
2. **Impact of Brand on Consumer Behaviour Questionnaire**: It consists of 50 statistically significant items answerable in a five point scale, viz., Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) where high score indicates high impact of brand on consumer behaviour and vice-versa. Odd-even split-half reliability is 0.82.
3. **Impact of Residential Environment on Consumer Behaviour Questionnaire**: It consists of 25 statistically significant items answerable in a five point scale, viz., Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) where high score indicates high impact of residential environment on consumer behaviour and vice-versa. Odd-even split-half reliability is 0.79

ADMINISTRATION, SCORING AND STATISTICAL TREATMENT

In order to carry out the present investigation, the three questionnaires were administered to a group of subjects by giving proper instruction. Data were collected and properly scrutinized. Scoring was done with the help of standard scoring key. Tabulation was done for each group and for each test separately. Frequency and percentages were calculated for general information schedule. Mean and S.D. were calculated for other two questionnaires. Comparisons were made by applying t-test.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

The general characteristics data inserted in Table – 1A and Table – 1B reveal the characteristic features of the subjects belonging to North and South zone of Kolkata City

Table – 1A : General characteristic features of the subjects belonging to North zone of Kolkata City, under study

General characteristics	Young Singles (N = 40)	Married Without Children (N=40)	Married With Children (N=40)
Age (mode value)	24 years	36 years	40 years
Education (%)			
a) Madhyamik	2.50	0.00	2.50
b) Higher secondary	12.50	7.50	5.00
c) Graduate	57.50	65.00	67.50
d) Post - graduate	27.50	27.50	25.00
Duration of stay (%)			
a) Below 15 years	50.00	50.00	50.00
b) Above 15 years	50.00	50.00	50.00

Table – 1B : General characteristic features of the subjects belonging to South zone of Kolkata City, under study

General characteristics	Young Singles (N = 40)	Married Without Children (N=40)	Married With Children (N=40)
Age (mode value)	23 years	40 years	37 years
Education (%)			
a) Madhyamik	5.00	0.00	2.50

b) Higher secondary	22.50	12.50	5.00
c) Graduate	52.50	72.50	57.50
d) Post - graduate	20.00	15.00	35.00
Duration of stay (%)			
a) Below 15 years	50.00	50.00	50.00
b) Above 15 years	50.00	50.00	50.00

Data inserted in Table – 2 reveals the impact of brand on consumer behaviour as expressed by the inhabitants belonging to North and South zone of Kolkata City. From the mean score it can be said that there is more impact of brand on consumer behaviour as expressed by the inhabitants belonging to three different types of family settings, viz., young singles, married without children and married with children of North zone of Kolkata city than that of the South zone of Kolkata City. Analysis of data reveals that name of the brand, quality of the brand, emotional as well as symbolic meaning, price level and brand loyalty are the reasons for the difference of opinion between the two group of inhabitants belonging to North and South zone of Kolkata City. When comparison was made between the two groups of inhabitants, significant difference was observed for young singles and married without children but no significant difference was observed for married with children. Thus the **Hypothesis – I** which postulates, **“Impact of brand on consumer behaviour as expressed by the inhabitants belonging to North and South zone of Kolkata City differ significantly” – is accepted for young singles and married without children and is rejected for married with children.**

Table – 2 : Comparison between the inhabitants belonging to three different types of family settings of North and South zone of Kolkata City in terms of impact of brand on consumer behaviour

Category	North Zone			South Zone			t-value
	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	
Young singles	40	165.25	13.45	40	157.70	9.20	2.93**
Married without children	40	161.18	9.40	40	155.94	4.66	3.16**
Married with children	40	164.70	11.68	40	162.54	7.80	0.97*

Score range : 50 – 250

High score indicates high impact of brand on consumer behaviour and vice-versa.

* Difference is insignificant ** p < 0.01

When comparison was made between the two groups of inhabitants of different family settings belonging to North and South zone of Kolkata City in terms of impact of residential environment on consumer behaviour, significant difference was observed for young singles and married without children, but no significant difference was observed for married with children. From the mean score it can be said that maximum impact of residential environment was upon the inhabitants who are under the category of married without children. Analysis of data reveals that the easy mode of transportation towards market, availability of cheap product in the locality, opinion suggested by friends and neighbours are the main reasons behind the difference of opinion between the two groups of inhabitants in terms of impact of residential environment on consumer behaviour. Thus, the **Hypothesis – II** which postulates, **“Impact of residential environment on consumer behaviour as expressed by the inhabitants belonging to North and South zone of Kolkata City differ significantly” – is accepted for young singles and married without children and is rejected for married with children.**

Table – 3 : Comparison between the inhabitants belonging to three different types of family settings of North and South zone of Kolkata City in terms of impact of residential environment on consumer behaviour

Category	North Zone			South Zone			t-value
	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	
Young singles	40	88.42	7.36	40	83.94	4.36	3.32**
Married without children	40	97.75	10.05	40	83.71	3.96	8.21**
Married with children	40	79.00	11.05	40	79.70	11.04	0.28*

Score range : 25 - 125

High score indicates high impact of residential environment on consumer behaviour and vice-versa.

* Difference is insignificant ** p < 0.01

Comparison was also made between the two groups of inhabitants whose duration of stay in the same environment is below and above 15 years in the same environment of North zone of Kolkata city in terms of impact of brand on consumer behaviour (data inserted in Table – 4). Comparative picture reveals significant difference between the two groups. Findings reveal that the more the duration of stay in the same environment, the more is the impact of brand on consumer behaviour. It can further be said that proper product knowledge and availability of the advertised product in the locality are the main reasons behind this. The **Hypothesis – III** which postulates, **“Impact of brand on consumer behaviour as expressed by the inhabitants belonging to North zone of Kolkata City is differentially associated with duration of stay in the same environment”** – is accepted in this investigation.

Table – 4 : Comparison between the inhabitants whose duration of stay is below and above 15 years in the North zone of Kolkata city in terms of impact of brand on consumer behaviour

Zone	Below fifteen years			Above fifteen years			t-value
	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	
North	60	159.25	6.23	60	174.90	12.89	8.62*

*p < 0.01

Data inserted in Table – 5 reveals the comparative picture between the two groups of inhabitants whose duration of stay in the same environment is below and above 15 years belonging to South zone of Kolkata City. Here also, comparative picture reveals significant difference between the two groups. Analysis of data reveals that the more the duration of stay in the same environment, the more is the impact of brand on consumer behaviour. Familiar local stores, easy mode of transportation and adequate information about the products are the reasons behind this. The **Hypothesis – IV** which states, **“Impact of brand on consumer behaviour as expressed by the inhabitants belonging to South zone of**

Kolkata City is differentially associated with duration of stay in the same environment” – is accepted in this investigation.

Table – 5 : Comparison between the inhabitants whose duration of stay is below and above fifteen years in the South zone of Kolkata city in terms of impact of brand on consumer behaviour

Zone	Below fifteen years			Above fifteen years			t-value
	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	
South	60	159.31	7.27	60	176.20	13.23	8.46*

*p < 0.01

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY ARE AS FOLLOWS

- Impact of brand on consumer behaviour as expressed by the inhabitants belonging to North and South zone of Kolkata city differ significantly for young singles and married without children. But no significant difference was observed for married with children.
- Name of the brand, quality of the brand, emotional as well as symbolic meaning, price level and brand loyalty are the reasons for the difference of opinion between the two group of inhabitants belonging to North and South zone of Kolkata City.
- Impact of brand on residential environment as expressed by the inhabitants belonging to North and South zone of Kolkata city differ significantly for young singles and married without children. Here also, no significant difference was observed for married with children.
- Easy mode of transportation towards market, availability of cheap product in the locality, opinion suggested by friends and neighbours are the main reasons behind the difference between the two groups of inhabitants belonging to North and South zone of Kolkata city.
- The more the duration of stay in the same environment the more is the impact of brand on consumer behaviour as expressed by the inhabitants belonging to North and South zone of Kolkata city.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Consumer behaviour is the study of when, why, how and where people do and do not buy products. Family is the most important consumer-buying organization in society. Besides this, people’s immediate residential environment has a great influence on choices. A decision involves a choice between two or more alternative actions or behaviours. Consumer’s decisions regarding products may be made with price in mind. The choices depend on how economical a product is within their purchasing power. Both male and female consumers are involved in buying process. Consumer behaviour is influenced by individual’s personality, motivation, knowledge, attitude, beliefs and feelings. In this investigation, zone of the Kolkata city, family type, residential environment and duration of stay in the same environment create impact of brand on consumer behaviour. Considering the findings of the study it can be said that emotional attachment as well as symbolic meaning of the commodities, price level and brand loyalty, name and quality of the brand, local market facilities should be considered for maintaining good impact of brand on consumer behaviour in the near future.

REFERENCE

Aaker, J.L., Fourniew, S. and Brasel, S.A. (2004). When good brands do bad? *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31, 1-17. | Ahuvia, A.C. (2005). Beyond the extended self : loved objects and consumers’ identity narratives, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32, 171 – 184. | Arnold, E. (2007). Consuming experience – Retrospects and Prospects. In Caru, A. and Cova, B. (Eds.) *Consuming Experience*, New York: Routledge, 185 – 194. | Belk, R. (1988). Possessions and the extended self, *Journal of consumer Research*, 15, 139 – 168. | Cotte, J. and Wood, S.L. (2004). Families and innovative consumer behaviour : A Triadic analysis of sibling and parental influence, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31(1), 78 – 86. | Elliot, R. and Wattanasuan, K. (1998). Brands as symbolic resources for the construction of identity, *International Journal of Advertising*, 17, 131 -144. | Keller, K.L. (2003). Brand synthesis : The multidimensionality of brand knowledge, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29 (4), 595 – 600. | Krishna, A. (1992). The normative impact of consumer price expectations for multiple brands on consumer purchase behaviour, *Marketing Science*, 11 (3), 226 – 286. | Olander, F. and Thogerson, J. (2006). Understanding Consumer Behaviour as a Prerequisite for Environmental Protection, www.springerlink.com | Sherry, J.F., Kozinets, R.V. and Borghini, S. (2007). Agents in Paradise. In Caru, A. and Cova, B. (Eds.) *Consuming Experience*, New York : Routledge, 17 – 33. | Thomson, E. (2003). Look who’s talking : family communications during purchase decisions, *Young Consumers*, 5 (1), 23 -33. | Tybout, A.M. and Carpenter, G.S. (2001). Creating and managing brands. In D. Iacobucci (Ed.), *Kellogg and Marketing*, 74 – 102, New York : Wiley.