

Identifying segment of individuals who are having belief on vastu shastra for promoting vastu flats – An empirical study



Management

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Introduction

Over the years, people have really grown to use Vastu Shastra for better life. They have started to appreciate the concept a lot. What is the reason behind people using and appreciating Vastu Shastra so much? What makes this tradition so intriguing or so successful? Well, a lot of things. Vastu Shastra can really help to make a person's life better. It is aimed towards drawing and concentrating positive cosmic energy in people's lives so that they actually manage to succeed in whatever they choose to do. Vastu Shastra is an ancient science which helps one to get the natural benefits freely offered by the five basic elements of the universe in which we all live. These basic elements are Akash (SKY), Prithvi (EARTH), Paani (WATER), Agni (FIRE), and Vayu (WIND) (Reeta Gupta, 2016). Vastu Shastra can be applied by keeping in harmony with these basic five elements of nature. One sometimes feels that in spite of having all the required resources for achieving success in the work field one is not getting the desired and deserved result and it should not be a surprise to oneself that it could be due to the fact that either one's office or factory is not planned according to the science of Vastu Shastra. Similarly, one might feel that the wheel of family life is not moving smoothly and there is lack of peace, harmony, affection and well being in one's family. One should get the architecture of his house examined and if need be modified as per Vastu Shastra, one is bound to expect good results and well being gradually and steadily. They sincerely hope that Vastu Shastra one day will end all miseries and sorrows and bring joy and happiness in everybody's life. Thus, as one of the flat promoter; it is foremost important to give priority to the people's expectation and their needs because every individual have certain beliefs and attitudes towards products or its features on which their purchase decisions rests. Belief is the state of mind in which a person thinks something to be the case, with or without there being empirical evidence to prove that something is the case with factual certainty. Another way of defining belief sees it as a mental representation of an attitude positively oriented towards the likelihood of something being true (Eric, 2006) and this belief has the purpose of guiding action rather than indicating truth (Jonathan, 2008). These beliefs are the tendency to respond to a given product in a particular way, and these make up the brand image that influences the consumer buying behavior. Thus, the marketers try to understand the attitudes and beliefs of the individuals and modify these through several marketing campaigns. In this regard in recent days flat promoters gives priority to vastu while constructing the home or flats. An important challenge for flat promoters is to identify which individuals are having belief on vastu and whom the vastu flats have to be marketed. It is apparent that an enhanced knowledge of the profile of this segment of consumers would be extremely useful. The closer we move to an understanding of the segment of individuals who buy vastu flats, the better the promoters will be able to develop strategies specifically targeted at these consumers. In this tact the purpose of this study was of twofold:

- (1) To validate the tool for measuring the individuals' belief on vastu.
- (2) To identify a profile of individuals who are likely to have vastu belief.

Methodology

Our research is exploratory in nature because, as far as we know, no study ever investigated demographic factors of consumers' who are having belief on vastu.

Measures

A structured non-disguised questionnaire was designed to gather the data required for this research. Prior to sending the survey, a pre-test was done and minor modifications were made. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part measured Measure of the endogenous variable vastu belief. In order to measure the magnitude of individuals' vastu belief, the 18 statements were framed considering the benefits of vastu and consumers' expectation on vastu flats. Each question was measured on a nine-point Likert scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree). Validity of the scale developed is most important because it need to measure what it intended to measure. Face validity is agreement among professionals that a scale logically reflects the concept being measured. Content validity refers to the degree to which a measure covers the domain of interest (Neuman, 2010). The face and content validity were judgemental and that was ensured with the consultation of seven experts. They were four vastu experts and three experts of psychology. They were requested to go through the given statements and they were asked to give their opinion as important/ unimportant to measure the individual belief on vastu. Based on the responses the content validity ratio (CVR) was calculated and that is used to ensure the validity of the tool developed to study individual belief on vastu.

The formula for calculating CVR is as below (Lawsche, 1975)

$$CVR = \frac{Ne - N/2}{N/2}$$

Where, N is the number of experts consulted
Ne is the number of experts opined as important for every statement.

The CVR was calculated for all the statements. The statements having less than 0.60 were removed from the tool. After getting the opinion from expert, 18 statements were then reduced to 6 statements those are having CVR greater than 0.60. In this part, already validated six questions were used to measure respondents' belief on vastu (Table I). Based on these six questions, we divided our sample into three groups:

- (1) Consumers who are having belief on vastu
- (2) Consumers who are not having belief on vastu
- (3) Undecided consumers.

To be admissible in the first group, respondents had to answer to all six questions with a score of "nine" or "eight". Respondents were included in the second group if they answered to all six questions with a score of "one" or "two." Remaining lies under group three.

The second part dealt about the following demographic characteristics: gender, marital status, age, income, family type, home ownership, education, religion, and employment status

Pilot study

A pilot study has been conducted among 220 respondents who approached specific flat promoters to buy flats in Chennai. Reliability and validity for these statements were also tested. Reliability and validity, which are important in establishing the credibility of the research is mainly measured for the quality of a survey (Zikmund et al., 2010). Cornbach alpha Reliability test was conducted and some items were modified when necessary. Factor

analyses were also conducted to evaluate the ability of the items to measure the construct. This analysis was performed using the maximum likelihood method to extract the factors and the oblimin rotation to enable a better interpretation of these statements (shown in table 1).

Sampling procedures and data collection

The population targeted for this study consisted of subjects residing in a large Indian metropolitan city namely Chennai. The data collection was confined to a selected number of persons living in this city and its surrounding areas and who approached 15 specific flat promoters in Chennai to make investigation about flats. The researcher made sure whether particulars about vastu were advertised properly by each flat promoters. This was necessary to avoid biased or unrealistic answers from respondents. Within the population, the numbers of samples or respondents were picked at random. The questionnaires were administered door to door after collecting the address from flat promoters. Data collection was done mostly on weekends and evenings when respondents were more likely to be at home. Respondents willing to participate in the survey were given a prepaid envelope to be filled in at their own convenience and mailed directly to the researchers. A total of 558 questionnaires were distributed and 524 usable questionnaires were returned, which represented a very satisfactory return rate of more than 90 percent.

Results and discussion

Questions ^a	Factors	Alpha(α)
1. It is worth to buy vastu flats rather than non vastu flats for well being	.856	
2. For my inner satisfaction, it is acceptable and worth being to pay nominal premium amount for vastu flats	.831	
3. I believe that vastu flats facilitates more ease of access	.804	.84
4. It is acceptable that persons living in vastu flats enjoy many good things in family and life	.797	
5. I trust that vastu flats provides the peace of mind for persons who living in it	.776	
6. I accept that vastu flats are more beautiful, attractive, and convenient	.743	

Table I. Questions used to measure individuals vastu belief

Results of these reliability test and factor analyses are presented in Table I. Results show that with the Cronbach alpha value of 0.84 the questionnaire shown higher reliability and which is satisfactory for an exploratory study (Hair *et al.*, 1998). Results of factor analysis with factors value ranging from 0.743 to 0.856 shows the ability of the items to measure the construct. Furthermore, the percentage of cases correctly classified, calculated from the validation sample, is 78.2 percent, which is much higher than the proportional chance criterion of 50.1 percent shows the validity of the construct.

A preliminary analysis of the data

Among the 524 respondents in the sample, 238 are considered as individuals having vastu belief and 122 are classified as the opposite. Therefore, we will qualify the 164 others respondents (524 - 238 - 122 = 164) as being "undecided." In order to identify factors that influence individuals' vastu belief, the researcher only has to analyze the first two groups. A preliminary analysis of the data reveals that our sample is composed of a majority of male respondents (54 percent), currently married (78 percent), nuclear family (58 percent), are university graduates (44 percent), hindus(60), employed (41), home-owners (70 percent), have a monthly household income of at least rs.1,00,000 (70 percent) and Nearly half of our sample is aged between 40 and 59 years (48 percent), and employed (49 percent). The researchers conducted crosstabs analyses on the ten demographic variables to determine which ones differentiate the most the two groups of respondents. Statistical assumptions concerning the validity of these analyses (e.g. normality, frequency and presence of outliers) were verified. Among the nine demographic variables

studied, only "gender", "marital status" and "Respondents' Family type" differentiated the two segments. The details of these tests are presented in Tables III-V.

TABLE III

Respondents' Gender	Frequency		Percentage	
	Having vastu belief	Not having vastu belief	Having vastu belief	Not having vastu belief
Male	136	58	71	29
Female	102	64	61	39
Total	238	122		
χ^2 of Pearson = 5.91		(p = 0.015)		V of Cramer = 0.15

Respondents' gender and their vastu belief

TABLE IV

Respondents' Marital Status	Frequency		Percentage	
	Having vastu belief	Not having vastu belief	Having vastu belief	Not having vastu belief
Single, Separated or Divorced	44	36	55	45
Married	194	86	69	31
Total	238	122		
χ^2 of Pearson = 5.34		(p = 0.025)		V of Cramer = 0.14

Respondents' marital status and their vastu belief

TABLE V

Respondents' Marital Status	Frequency		Percentage	
	Having vastu belief	Not having vastu belief	Having vastu belief	Not having vastu belief
Nuclear family	130	81	62	38
Joint family	108	41	73	27
Total	238	122		
χ^2 of Pearson = 3.71		(p = 0.037)		V of Cramer = 0.13

Respondents' Family type and their vastu belief

Gender somehow influences individuals vastu belief statistically significant way ($\chi^2 = 5.91, p = 0.015$). Table III indicates that 71 percent of males are having vastu belief, while this percentage is only 61 percent for females. As expected, individuals who are married (69 percent) and from joint family (73 percent) are having more belief on vastu. It may be suggested that these individuals are more inclined to think on purchasing vastu flats for their and their family members betterment and future.

The other variables used to define the consumers' demographic profile did not differentiate individuals those who are having vastu belief from their counterpart. In other words, the age of the respondent ($p = 0.97$), his level of education ($p = 0.97$), his household income ($p = 0.76$), his religion ($p = .68$), the fact that he is a home owner or not ($p = 0.32$) and employment ($p = 0.25$) do not influence vastu belief in a statistically significant way.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the major contributions of this study were the investigation of the profile of individuals having vastu belief and the subsequent discussion of the implications for marketers. This research being exploratory, the results are only a spring-board for future research in a domain growing in theoretical and practical importance. The increase in the identification of linkage of this variable individual's vastu belief with other variables such as willingness to buy flats, consumer attitude, and so on will bring more useful findings and suggestions for the flat promoters.

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