



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Management

A STUDY ON CONSUMER BRAND PREFERENCE TO MODERN KITCHEN APPLIANCES IN TIRUVARUR

KEY WORDS: Brand, Consumer, Preference, Kitchen Appliances And Thiruvapur.

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ABSTRACT

Consumer research is essential in enlisting and employing marketing strategies. All the motives of the marketing activities and approaches are only to satisfy the consumers. Marketing in the modern era comprises the functions of sales, distribution, advertising, sales promotion, product planning and market research. Every manufacturer of kitchen appliances should know why consumer purchase as particular appliance or why they do not purchase others. A purchase is the result of many activities. The present study of consumer behaviour with reference to kitchen appliances is aimed at analyzing the role of consumers in the purchase and consumption. Every manufacturer aiming at increasing the sales must understand the behaviour of consumers so that the consumer wishes can be fully satisfied. It is true that the modern marketing starts and ends with consumers. Therefore it is necessary to know about the opinion of the consumers for survival and development. The potential consumers are ready to purchase a new product if the product is suitable to their expectations, even though their brand loyalty is very high and are price sensitive. Therefore the kitchen appliances market in the study area is very active and the consumers are very much interested in having kitchen appliances like refrigerator, mixies, microwave oven etc., There is adequate market demand for home appliances and the potential consumers are well aware of the necessity of such products. They want a new product at a cheaper price. Less priced and less noised technology are the ultimate requirements of the potential buyers. While launching a product it would be better for the company to follow penetration pricing policy to penetrate the market since potential buyers are price sensitive. As far as product technology is concerned it would be better for the company to follow 'trading down' policy so that lower income group can be covered to the maximum extent.

Introduction

Consumer research is essential in enlisting and employing marketing strategies. All the motives of the marketing activities and approaches are only to satisfy the consumers. Marketing in the modern era comprises the functions of sales, distribution, advertising, sales promotion, product planning and market research. It is the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying consumer requirements of course, achieving profit alongside. Marketing is the indispensable link between a company and its clientele. There is no point in creating a product which the consumers may not want or which remains unknown. The winning business culture in the current competitive context provides pride of place to the customer what the Japanese call 'customer delight'.

The consumers have such a wide variety of product from which to choose that the manufacturers cannot ignore the wishes of them. A satisfied consumer becomes a salesman of the consumers behave but also with why they behave as they do. One knows very little about that what actually goes on in the minds of consumers. The term "consumer" is often used to describe two different kinds of consuming entities, the personal consumer and the organizational consumer. Personal consumer is an individual who buys goods and services for his/her own use, or as a gift to others. In this context, individuals buy the goods for final use, are referred to as "End users" or "ultimate consumers".

The term "consumer Behaviour" can be defined as the Behaviour that consumers display in searching for purchasing, using, evaluating an disposing of products, services and ideas, which they expect will satisfy their needs. The study of consumer behaviour is the study of how individuals make decision to spend their available resources on consumption related items. It includes the study of what they buy and how often they buy it. Thus, the study of an individual consumption behaviour in the area of house hold articles include, which brand of household article he buys, why he buys it, how he buys it, when he buys it, where he buys it and how often he buys it?

Marketing develops as a society and its economy develops. The need for marketing arises and grows as a society moves from an economy of self – sufficiency to an economy built around divisions of labour, industrialization. Marketing thus has become the central theme of business. Marketing remained an infant during the last half of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth. Emphasis was on the growth of manufacturing enterprises because

the market demand generally exceeded the available supply of products. In the present day world, everyone recognizes the importance of marketing. A nation's ability to develop effective distribution systems depends largely on marketing in order to handle its raw materials as the amount of its agricultural and industrial output largely decides its economic growth.

Marketing is carried on within and outside the business sector in developed and developing countries. Marketing spread most rapidly in the order of consumer packaged goods companies, consumer durable companies and industrial equipment companies. In more structured terms the marketing functions are concerned with demand. The function marketing is, therefore the "eyes and ears" of business. It is responsible for keeping business in close contact with its environment and informs its events that can influence its operations.

Market means anybody or any person who is on ultimate relations with business and carries on extensive transactions in any commodity. Thus today's concept of marketing is nothing but a way of life in which all resources of an organization are mobilized to create, stimulate and satisfy the customer and earn a profit. In a competitive economy exclusively based on consumer choice, a consumer can satisfy his needs with a variety of items. There are innumerable varieties produced by various manufacturers and there are also various brands produced by a single manufacturer.

Importance of the study

Every manufacturer of kitchen appliances should know why consumer purchase as particular appliance or why they do not purchase others. A purchase is the result of many activities. The present study of consumer behaviour with reference to kitchen appliances is aimed at analyzing the role of consumers in the purchase and consumption. Every manufacturer aiming at increasing the sales must understand the behaviour of consumers so that the consumer wishes can be fully satisfied.

Objectives of the study

- To study demographic profile of the consumers in the study area.
- To identify the factors influencing to purchase the kitchen appliances.
- To analyze the sources of knowledge of the brands of the kitchen appliances.
- To offer suitable suggestions and conclusion.

Methodology

Under Convenience sampling method 60 sample respondents were selected in Tiruvarur Town. Relevant data for this dissertation was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were collected through interview schedule. The secondary data were collected from journals and magazines.

Area of the study

The study was conducted in Tiruvarur town, the headquarter of Tiruvarur district

Limitations

Due to constraints of time and money the observation and survey was limited to the length and limits. The inference and findings have been confined to the study of Tiruvarur town only. The findings of the study may vary, and as such they may not be applicable to other areas.

Review of Literature

Janaki, and Shanthy, (2013) in their study entitled, "Marketing Stimuli in Purchase of Home Appliances From Customer Perspectives", explains that marketing strategy is the game plan which the firms must adhere to, in order to outdo the competitor or the plans to achieve the desired objective. The people consume things of daily use, and buy these products according to their needs, preferences and buying power. The objectives of the study are to study the purchase decision behaviour relating to home appliances and to analyze customer response to the marketing stimuli of home appliances. The study was carried out with the sample size of 200 respondents selected based on proportionate random sampling with in Coimbatore city. The data were collected with interview schedule and were analyzed using percentage weighted average score analysis of variances. The findings of the study included that education and income of the respondents are the two socioeconomic variables which have significant association in all the stages which the buyers undergo while purchasing home appliances.

Shahram Jenabi, Seyed Yahya Seyed Danesh and Minoo Yousefi (2013) made a study titled, "Examining the effect of Brand dimension (trademark) on home appliances consumers' behavior Case study: LG brand in Rasht city", tells that one of the most important and valuable assets of a company is its trademark. The more valuable is a trademark for consumers more profit the company achieves. The present paper aims to identify the effect of brand dimension on home appliances consumers' behavior. To achieve this goal the relationship between reputation, identity, image, meaning, age and brand advertisement with consumer behavior was tested based on the conceptual research model. Required data were collected using questionnaire, randomly, from the population of LG brand consumers from agents of this company in Rasht city.

Senthil Kumar, M.J and Sadeesh Kumar, K and Nagarajan, N.R (2013) in their study entitled, "A Study on Consumer's Attitudes towards Washing Machine", which explains that in the modern technological world many innovations and new apparatus are invented by the man for reducing the work burden of the layman. Especially a lot of home appliances are introduced to save the valuable time of the working women. Because in the hurry busy world both husband and wife are working. So the modern women are not having sufficient time to do domestic work like washing their dresses. In this situation washing machine becomes an integral part of their home. The washing machine is not only to reduce their physical work but also it gives quality washing. In a competitive world many well reputed companies manufacture various brands of washing machine with varying features to cater to the diverse needs of consumer. The consumers are not in a position to identify the good brand of a washing machine because of its technical features. Consumer's opinion about the washing machine is paramount importance, so a study of this kind helps the customer to know the features available with the various brands.

Rajarajan, M and Priyanga, T (2013) have written a paper on,

"Consumer Behaviour Towards Selected Household Appliances in Ramanathapuram District", the study revealed that lifestyle characteristics have a great impact on the purchase behavior of the clusters. In a consumption environment, a person chooses a product or a brand, which seems to possess a maximum possibility of the definition or elaboration of his life style identity. Alternatively, a person makes a choice in a consumption environment in order to define or actualize his life style, identify it through the products or brands chosen. This paper highlights that, life style determinants of consumer purchase behaviour towards durable products in Ramanathapuram district. This study concluded that, the consumer behavior have a great impact on the household appliances of the clusters. In a consumption environment, a person chooses a product or a brand, which seems to possess a maximum possibility of the definition or elaboration of his life style identity. Alternatively, a person makes a choice in a consumption environment in order to define or actualize his life style, identify it through the products or brands chosen. It can be assumed that the individual's consumption behavior can be predicted from an understanding of how he represents his world to himself, if the details of his life style system are known. The household appliances like Electrical cooker, Electrical induction stove, Micro oven, Multipurpose mixer, Refrigerator, Wet grinder were once considered as life purchase but now people become more open to the idea of exchanging their old appliances for new ones. The relationship between consumer behavior and household appliances can thus be seen as an individual's purchases and use of products and services where these choices constitute part of his life style expression and its reflection.

Vijayalakshmi, S and Mahalakshmi, V (2013) have made an attempt on, "An impact of consumer buying behavior in decision making process in purchase of electronic home appliances in Chennai (India): an empirical study", which presents consumer behavior is the study of individuals, groups, or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, and dispose products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society. It blends elements from psychology, sociology, social anthropology and economics. It attempts to understand the decision-making process of buyers, both individually and in groups. It studies characteristics of individual consumers such as demographics and behavioral variables in an attempt to understand people's wants. It also tries to assess influences on the consumer from groups such as family, friends, reference groups, and society in general. This empirical study contributes to a vital comprehension of the impact of dissimilar factors on consumer buying behaviors. The numerous independent variables in electronic home appliances market in India are deeply analyzed. The factors that are affecting the consumer behavior in electronic home appliances markets in India have been taken as the empirical study of this research. The key findings of this study designates that, overall, the set of self determining variables are weakly associated with the self determining variable.

Srinivasa Rao Kasisomayajula (2013) have written an article entitled, "A Study on Customer Preference of LG Lap-Top", explains that the consumers' tastes change rapidly. They want new models with the latest features. It is a very hard fight. The competition is on features differentiation, time to market and promotion, basically on every front. The dealer-push and brand pull, both plays a very crucial role. Hence the company concentrate on both fronts equally will have an upper hand over the others. Companies like hp, Compaq, Lenovo, Sony and LG have practiced this very well and leading on the sales front. The dealers have to observe that the consumers add a lot of value for after sales and service provided by the company while making a purchase decision. Today Management of Customers' relationship is assuming more and more importance and company cannot afford to ignore this. Based on the above response, hp and Compaq, provide better customer service as compared to others.

Kalaiselvi, K.T and Muruganandam, D (2013) made a study on, "Consumer Attitude towards Promotional Schemes and Influence of Brand On Purchasing Home Appliances", points out that

understanding the consumer attitude is an important part of the marketing process to realize the challenges faced by marketers in comprehending the consumers' mind. The marketers have to know why a buyer makes a purchase and the processes in the mind of the buyer which influence him or her in buying different products or services. Sales promotions are designed to have an immediate impact on sales. The main objective of this study is to find the impact of promotional schemes on consumer attitude and to find out the brand loyal consumers and also brand switchers of consumer home appliances only because of promotional offers. The methodology adopted for the study was descriptive research design. Sample size was 200. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, chi-square, ANOVA and Garrett's Ranking were used for analysis

Kitchen appliances.

Household articles have become part and parcel of our day to day life. Infact it is impossible for majority of us to imagine doing our daily household chores without the mixie, wetgrinder, refregerator, micro wave oven etc., These articles which were considered luxuries a decade ago have become a necessity today. In fact everyone feels the need for owing these appliances. This thirst on the part of the consumer has attracted many businesses, either the consumer market and tries their fortune in it. Let us have a brief introduction about the kitchen appliances.

(i) Mixie

The mixie has come to solve the problems of women in the kitchen. Especially in houses constructed on apartment basis, it has become inevitable. Practically the conventional Grinding work is no langer found in most of the modern houses.

(ii) Wet Grinder

The Grinder is highly popular as a kitchen appliance the much wanted idly and dosai flour can be prepared without much difficulty. In a multi-stored building we can find only modern Grinder and not the conventional grinders. The chief advantage in the modern grinder is that it saves time because while the grinding work is in operation ladies can attend to other work also. Further it is considered hygienic to use modern grinders rather than us the conventional grinders. Grinders are available in different capacities to suit different customers.

(iii) Refrigerator

Refrigerator is a gadget used for preserving food items for a longer period. In India, we are having fridges ranging from 180 liters capacity to 280 liters capacity. The price of the fridge also ranges from Rs.6,950 to Rs.14,200.

(iv) Micro wave oven

Oven is the important of the modern society. Which through more safe, time safe and fast preparing the food items to women's. Working women having less lot of energy by using the oven. It saves time because while the oven work is in operation ladies can attend to other work also most benefits goes to high range people but, low class people can't get those benefit.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

A study has been made to find out the consumer's preference for kitchen appliances through an interview schedule. The customers belonging to different walks of life were the respondents of the study. This study has been analysed by taking into account the primary data, which has been collected from, the respondents in the selected areas of Tiruvarur town. The opinions of 60 respondents were tabulated and anaysed in this study.

Table 1 Consumer behavior towards various psychological variables

Sl. No	Variables	Frequency	Total No. of Respondents	Per cent (%)
1	Gender	Male	25	42
		Female	35	58
		Total	60	100
2	Age	21 – 30	8	14
		31 – 40	23	38

3	Educational Qualifications	41 – 50	18	30
		Above 50	11	18
		Total	60	100
4	Occupational Status	Elementary school level	3	5
		Higher secondary school level	16	27
		Degree Holders	29	48
		Post-Graduate Degree Holders	12	20
		Total	60	100
5	Family Income Level	Businessmen	5	8
		Private Employee	24	40
		Government Employee	31	52
		Total	60	100
5	Family Income Level	30,000 – 40,000	13	22
		40,001 – 50,000	14	23
		50,001 – 60,000	11	18
		60,001 – 70,000	10	17
		Above 70,000	12	20
		Total	60	100

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that out of 60 respondents 25 are male and 35 are female respondents who have been taken into account for this study. It shows that there are 60 respondents of which 8 members are under the age group 21 – 30, 23 members are under the age group of 31 – 40, 18 members are under the age group of 41 – 50, and 11 are under the age group 51 and above. Education wise classification is considered necessary to probe how for the educational status influences the consumers in making use of kitchen appliances. The above table shows that 19 respondents have studied upto secondary school level and 41 respondents with Degree and post Graduate Degree level. As seen from the above table 5 respondents are Businessmen, 24 respondents are Private Employees, and 31 respondents are Government Employees. In this study the maximum number of respondents are Government Employees (52 per cent) and the minimum number of respondents are Businessmen(8 per cent). It could be seen from the above table that there are 13 respondents earning upto Rs.40,000 as annual income and 14 respondents upto Rs.50,000. 33 respondents are earning more than Rs.50,000.

Table – 2 Brand Wise Possession of the Kitchen Appliances

Sl.No	Kitchen Appliances	Sl.No	Brand Name	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Mixie	1	Prestige	11	19.30
		2	Panasonic	4	7.02
		3	Suman	5	8.77
		4	Butterfly	13	22.81
		5	Philips	7	12.28
		6	Preethi	12	21.05
		7	Sumeet	3	5.26
		8	Others	2	3.51
	Total			57	100
2	Wet Grinder	1	Royal	6	10.71
		2	Lakshmi	13	23.22
		3	Ultra	4	7.14
		4	Butterfly	12	21.43
		5	PVG Excel	3	5.36
		6	Premier	4	7.14
		7	Amirthaa	8	14.28
		8	Sowbaghya	2	3.57
		9	Aquamix	1	1.79
		10	Others	3	5.36
	Total			56	100
3	Refrigerator	1	LG	12	25.53
		2	Samsung	8	17.02
		3	Haier	3	6.38
		4	Videocon	6	12.77
		5	Whirlpool	7	14.89
		6	Kelvinator	5	10.64
		7	Allwin	1	2.13

4	Micro wave oven	8	Godraj	3	6.38
		9	Others	2	4.26
		Total		47	100
		1	LG	4	25.00
		2	Godraj	2	12.50
		3	Samsung	2	12.50
		4	Electrolux	3	18.75
		5	Whirlpool	2	12.50
		6	Panasonic	2	12.50
7	Others	1	6.25		
Total		16	100		

Source : Primary data.

It is evident from the above table, that Butterfly mixie is the most popular among the respondents. The reasons given by the respondents are reputation and trouble free performance. 12 respondents are using Preethi mixie and 11 respondents are using Prestige mixie. 2 of the respondents are using the mixies without any brand name and these have been purchased cheaply in the kitchen appliance exhibitions. While looking at the table, it is clear that Lakshmi is the popular brand of Grinder among the respondents. It is used by 13 respondents followed by Butterfly and Amirtha. There are 4 Grinders for which brand names are not known.

It can be seen from the above table that 12, out of 47 respondents who own refrigerators have selected LG because of trouble free performance. Samsung is possessed by 8 respondents and Whirlpool by 7 for the availability of spare parts. Videocon is very costly compared to other refrigerators. Kelvinator and Godraj refrigerators are possessed by the respondents for the reputation of the manufactures. It is evident from table that LG oven is most popular among the respondents. Godraj, Samsung, Whirlpool, and Panasonic ovens is used by 2 respondents. 3 respondents are using the Electolux.

Table – 3 Influencing Factors of Purchase

Sl. No.	Influencing factor	Mixie	Grinder	Refrigerator	Micro wave oven
1	Convenience	22	14	14	4
2	Necessary	18	19	8	2
3	Status symbol	2	1	12	8
4	Pressure of family members	8	20	7	2
5	Economy	7	2	6	-
Total		57	56	47	16

Source : Primary data.

It is clear from table 3, that the most important factor influencing the purchase of kitchen appliances is convenience followed by necessity. Both the pressure of family and economy has played significant roles.

Now a days, varieties of kitchen appliances are entering the market. Some of the appliances such as Refrigerator, ovens are new kitchen appliances.47 respondents want to possess refrigerators and 16 want to possess micro ovens.

Knowledge of Brands

There are several sources through which consumers come to know about the different brands and the various attributes of products. Press advertising such as advertisement in newspapers and magazines has a wider appeal. But they have short closing times. Radio advertisement has wide appeal. But it takes selective appeal. Television is really a wonderful means of mass communication for creating market. But it has limited market coverage. Friends and relatives also influence the decision of consumers.

Table : 4 Sources of Knowledge of Brands – Kitchen appliances

Sl. No.	Sources	Mixie	Grinder	Refrigerator	Micro wave oven
1	Television & Radio Advertisement	29	23	22	6

2	Friends and Relatives	12	17	11	8
3	News papers	5	7	12	-
4	Dealers	11	9	2	2
Total		57	56	47	16

Source: Primary data.

It is interesting to note from the analysis that television advertisement have exerted greater influences on the respondents in informing the different brands of kitchen appliances and their product attributes and the dealers also have played a significant role in informing the different brands of kitchen appliances available in the market and their features to the respondents. It is clear from table 3.10 that as a source of knowledge the impact of Radio advertisement is low on the respondents.

FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

Findings

- Out of 60 respondents 25 are male and 35 are female respondents who have been taken into account for this study.
- Of the total 60 respondents, 8 members are under the age group 21 – 30, 23 members are under the age group of 31 – 40, 18 members are under the age group of 41 – 50, and 11 are under the age group 51 and above.
- 19 respondents have studied upto secondary school level and 41 respondents with Degree and post Graduate Degree level.
- Of the total 60 respondents, 5 respondents are Businessmen, 24 respondents are Private Employees, and 31 respondents are Government Employees.
- In this study the maximum number of respondents are Government Employees(52 per cent) and the minimum number of respondents are Businessmen(8 per cent).
- There are 13 respondents earning upto Rs.40,000 as annual income and 14 respondents upto Rs.50,000. 33 respondents are earning more than Rs.50,000.
- Butterfly mixie is most popular among the respondents. The reasons given by the respondents are reputation and trouble free performance 12 respondents are using Preethi mixie and 11 respondents are using Prestige mixie. 2 of the respondents are using the mixies without any brand name and these have been purchased cheaply in the kitchen appliance exhibitions.
- Lakshmi is the popular brand of Grinder among the respondents. It is used by 13 respondents followed by Butterfly and Amirtha. There are 4 Grinders for which brand names are not known.
- 12, out of 47 respondents who own refrigerators have selected LG because of trouble free performance. Samsung is possessed by 8 respondents and Whirlpool by 7 for the availability of spare parts. Videocon is very costly in compared to other refrigerators. Kelvinator and Godraj refrigerators are possessed by the respondents for the reputation of the manufactures.
- LG oven is most popular among the respondents. Godraj, Samsung, Whirlpool, and Panasonic ovens is used by 2 respondents. 3 respondents are using the Electolux.
- Television advertisement have exerted greater influences on the respondents in informing the different brands kitchen appliances and their product attributes and the dealers also have played a significant role in informing the different brands of kitchen appliances available in the market and their features to the respondents.
- The most important factor influencing the purchase of kitchen appliances is convenience followed by necessary. Both the pressure of family and economy has played significant roles.
- Now a days, varieties of kitchen appliances are entering the market. Some of the appliances such as Refrigerator, ovens are new kitchen appliances. 47 respondents want to possess refrigerators and 16 want to possess micro ovens.
- Many kitchen appliances are available under credit basis of purchase schemes. In this study it is identified that 23 respondents used credit facilities. 37 respondents have opted for cash basis purchase schemes.

Suggestions

Since female members go for purchasing home appliances more than male members, steps may be taken by the manufacturing companies to convince this group. Since youngsters, who are susceptible to change, are more in the decision making group. So, steps may be taken by the manufacturing companies to attract this group. The home appliances manufacturing companies shall concentrate more on the housewives and employee segment for achieving better sales results.

Trading up and trading down policies may be followed to cater to the needs of rich and poor people. Instead of manufacturing only one type of home appliances it would be better to manufacture high priced as well as low priced products to cover the high and low income group of the potential buyers. Sumeet is the leader in mixie market. Therefore the new product should be a close substitute of the Sumeet, so that the new product can penetrate this market share. Widespread advertisements through proper media are very essential for successful marketing of home appliances. Personal selling method is the best suitable sales technique to be followed to introduce the product.

The new mixer grinder should be capable of quality grinding and faster grinding to satisfy the requirements of the potential buyers. Steps may be taken to adopt advanced technology to give repair free mixer grinders atleast for 3 years. Steps may be taken to reduce noise while using the mixer grinder. There should be no loss of taste of the output after grinding with the help of mixies. The existing product which is in use now is the hurdle since it is in good condition even though the respondents are dissatisfied with its working. In such condition the hurdle can be removed by allowing them to exchange the old one for a new one. Therefore exchange offer will be an effective sales tool to be used. The home appliances manufacturing companies should employ their representation extensively to convince people and to make them purchase the product. Since the potential buyers are expecting a new repair free products it should be essential to offer a guarantee in this regard. There fore a guarantee for free servicing and replacing spares would definitely be an appreciable offer. Only less priced products can successfully penetrate the existing market in the study area. Therefore the manufacturing companies may follow penetration pricing policy.

Conclusion

It is true that the modern marketing starts and ends with consumers. Therefore it is necessary to know about the opinion of the consumers for survival and development. The potential consumers are ready to purchase a new product if the product is suitable to their expectations, even though their brand loyalty is very high and are price sensitive. Therefore the kitchen appliances market in the study area is very active and the consumers are very much interested in having kitchen appliances like refrigerator, mixies, microwave oven etc., There is adequate market demand for home appliances and the potential consumers are well aware of the necessity of such products. They want a new product at a cheaper price.

Less priced and less noised technology are the ultimate requirements of the potential buyers. While launching a product it would be better for the company to follow penetration pricing policy to penetrate the market since potential buyers are price sensitive. As far as product technology is concerned it would be better for the company to follow 'trading down' policy so that lower income group can be covered to the maximum extent.

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