

**A STUDY ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS HOME
APPLIANCES IN SALEM CITY**

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ABSTRACT

In today's world of hyper competition and globalization, every company is trying to survive and to perform their best in the existing condition to attain the desired level of their potential customers. In this global economy the change is created by liberalization in our country. India is now playing a major role. The big MNC's have all entered in our market with their wide range of superior quality products between our and their products at large. Today Indian market is growing in world and many company exist with superiors product line especially in electronic home appliances range so it is very important to pay attention towards products and king i.e., customer. In present scenario customers are more aware about and sound enough to take the most rational decision only to achieve satisfaction.

Home appliances are that without which a modern home is considered incomplete, especially in urban areas. In metro cities and big towns, appliances are regarded as a boon, as they are instrumental in cutting down the time involved in most of the domestic chores. So the researchers studied the consumer's buying behavior towards electronics home appliances in Salem city, Tamilnadu. Home appliances products like TV, refrigerator, air-conditioner, washing machine and microwave are taken for this study. Convenience sampling method was adopted in this study to select 100 respondents in Salem city. The research design used in this study was descriptive; questionnaire was used as a tool to collect information from respondents. The result found was, demographic factors influencing the consumer for buying home appliances, other factors like price, quality, offer and features of home appliances influencing the consumer for buying home appliances.

Key words: Consumer behavior, consumer buying behavior, factors considered in buying home appliances

Introduction

Consumer behavior “is the study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use, or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy needs and desires”. Typically evaluating consumer behaviour goes beyond advertising and marketing approaches to connect to the consumer and understand their behaviours, motivations, and deepest desires. Consumer behaviour is influenced by an individual’s physical and social environment, the individual’s motivation to consume, his or her perception of the product, brand, service, or company, and the goals or needs that he or she may obtain through consumption. People may purchase as a result of their mood and their surroundings. Calm soothing environments may entice customers to stay in a store longer because they feel more comfortable and may ultimately spend find something that would satisfy their quest. Motorcyclists that may park in a certain area near other motorcyclists may feel more secure about leaving their bike with others or riding together. Behaviour is also influenced by the society and environment in which one lives and communicates, and activities by the companies themselves.

Consumer behaviour is stated as the behaviour that consumer display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products, services and ideas that they expect will satisfy their needs. The study of consumer behaviour is concerned not only with what consumers buy, but also with why they buy it, when and how they buy it, and how often they buy it. It is concerned with learning the specific meanings that products hold for consumers. Consumer research takes place at every phase of consumption process, before the purchase, during the purchase and after the purchase. It is concerned with learning the specific meanings that products hold for consumers. The term consumer is used to denote two different kinds of consumers, entitled that are personal or individual consumer and organisational consumer. The personal consumer is the individual who buys good and services for his own use or for his household usage. They buy goods for ultimate consumption; hence they are called as ‘end users’, or ‘Ultimate users’.

The 1990s have borne witness to dramatic shifts in the marketplace triggered by sharp changes in the lifestyle patterns of the past and present and the radical

revolution in the telecommunication technology. Time tested concepts on brand loyalty and mass marketing, are being turned on their heads as they fail to gauge the behaviour of new generation customers. The behaviour is characterized by the uniqueness of individual expectations, the preference for multiple options, propensity to abandon brand loyalty and switch to competition brands that give higher (perceived) value. The new breed is even willing to import to satisfy specific requirement. It is difficult to classify this generation by conventional demographic factors and unless their thought process and buying behaviour are fully understood, decisions on product designs and packaging, branding and distribution channels are likely to be misplaced.

With the inevitability of change looming large over the horizon, Indian companies must learn from their western counterparts; not only to identify the sources, timing and direction of the changes likely to affect India, but also the new competencies and perspective that will enable them to respond to these changes, comprehensively and effectively. Companies offering Product or Services will need to understand this new face of the customers.

The changing demographic profile of the population in terms of education, income, size of family and so on, are important by what will be more substantive in days to come will be the psychographics of customers that is how they feel, think or behave. Marketers will have to constantly monitor and understand the underlying Psychographics to map their respective industries are moving and decide what needs to be done, by way of adding value that motivates customers to buy the company's products and influence the future industry structure.

Consumer behaviour may be defined as the decision process and physical activity individuals engage in even calculating, acquiring, using and disposing of goods and services". consumer behaviour as "all psychological, social and physical behaviour of potential customers as they become aware of evaluate, purchase, consume and tell other about products and services". Consumer behavior involves the use and disposal of products as well as the study of how they are purchased. Product use is often of great interest to the marketer, because this may influence how a product is best positioned or how we can encourage increased consumption.

Since many environmental problems result from product disposal (e.g., motor oil being sent into sewage systems to save the recycling fee, or garbage piling up at

landfills) this is also an area of interest. Consumer behavior involves services and ideas as well as tangible products. The impact of consumer behavior on society is also of relevance. For example, aggressive marketing of high fat foods, or aggressive marketing of easy credit, may have serious repercussions for the national health and economy. These references provide support for the argument that qualitative methodologies are best suited in developing an understanding deep rooted individual preference, behaviours, and motivations. Consumer behaviour has been always of great interest to marketers. The knowledge of consumer behaviour helps the marketer to understand how consumers think, feel and select from alternatives like products, brands and the like and how the consumers are influenced by their environment, the reference groups, family, and salespersons and so on. A consumer's buying behaviour is influenced by cultural, social, personal and psychological factors. Most of these factors are uncontrollable and beyond the hands of marketers but they have to be considered while trying to understand the complex behaviour of the consumers.

HOME APPLIANCES:

A major appliance, or domestic appliance, is usually defined as a large machine which accomplishes some routine housekeeping task, which includes purposes such as cooking, food preservation, or cleaning, whether in a household, institutional or industrial setting.

Major appliances are differentiated from small appliances because they are large, difficult to move, and generally fixed in place to some extent. Another frequent characteristic of major appliances is that they may have substantial electricity requirements that necessitate special electrical wiring to supply higher current than standard electrical outlets can deliver. This limits where they can be placed in a home. Major appliances have become more technically complex from the control side recently with the introduction of the various Energy Labeling rules across the world. This has meant that the appliances have been forced to become more and more efficient leading to more accurate controllers in order to meet the regulations.

MAJOR PLAYERS

PHILIPS

Apart from initiating new marketing and distribution programmes, Philips will also be launching a range of new products during the rural initiative. They have specially

designed value-for-money products specifically targeted at the semi-urban and rural consumer in India, across our CTV and audio product range. The pricing for these products has been structured to make it affordable for their target audience. Other new models to be introduced will include features such as a new 'Eye-fit' technology which allows picture improvement under any cable signal condition, economy in electricity consumption and on-screen display in the regional language, among other things.

On the distribution front, Philips claims to have the biggest distribution network (as compared to other consumer electronics companies) and a high degree of penetration even in the rural and semi-urban areas. The company has carried out an extensive product-wise mapping exercise over 540 districts across India., Keeping in mind the objective of extensive physical reach of 80 per cent plus, they have developed a second line of activity in their distribution set-up, so that there is a focus on improving relations, trade with these retailers, and catering to their needs. These steps have helped them in developing our volume reach, geographical reach and counter share significantly.

Philips is hoping that its innovative rural marketing initiative coupled with the high growth in the rural market will boost its market share. It is targeting to increase the percentage.

SAMSUNG

The Rs 1,350-crore Samsung India Electronics Ltd is charting out an aggressive marketing strategy to promote its home appliances range in the New Year. According to Mr. Ravindra Zutshi, vice-president (sales and marketing), Samsung India Electronics, and the company plans to invest Rs 25 crore towards developing new moulds for its home appliances range.

The company is in the process of rolling out 14 new colour television models this year with new marketing and promotional initiatives. To announce the new range, the company will be releasing an advertising campaign very soon. They plan to invest Rs 85 crore on mass media campaigns for Samsung's entire range of products this year. In the home appliance business, target is to garner a 19 per cent growth this year.

VIDEOCON

Videocon has become a house hold name as most upper middle and middle class people identify its products, thanks to its huge spending in advertising and its strategies to Penetrate into semi-urban and rural areas in a big way. That it has achieved a market leader position in both audio and video equipment and also remained in that position for a considerable period (almost five years) bears testimony to the success of its strategies to attract the customers. In other product lines like washing machines also it witnessed a growing rate of success until 1997.

The company believes that the only strategy for survival in a competitive market is to ensure customer satisfaction and leadership through quality and innovation, technology and performance.

KELVINATOR

In an effort to promote its new product launches, Electrolux Kelvinator Ltd is planning to launch a slew of marketing initiatives and promotions, targeted at trade partners and consumers in the year 2003-04. In addition, the company also plans to restructure its existing distribution system and consolidate its business operations.

On the company's new marketing initiatives they have launched new range of Electrolux Kelvinator products with a new brand positioning such as 'Nurturing Hopes, Nourishing Life', the worlds first - Life Nourishing System. This system is a superior technologically advanced system with new features.

As part of its retailing strategy, the company has set up various shop-in-shop outlets, and it is also planning to launch its customer relationship management (CRM) initiatives, at the retail-end.

Electrolux is a market leader in refrigerators with its three brands Electrolux Kelvinator, Electrolux and Allwyn. Every year, customers in more than 150 countries buy more than 55 million Electrolux Group products for both consumers and professional use.

GODREJ

The Rs 7,200-crore Godrej Group has finally unveiled its brand new corporate identity and branding strategy at its headquarters in Mumbai. The group's strategy outlined a roadmap to invest in a renewed Godrej master brand and corporate identity to support the targeted revenue growth of 25-30% compounded annually, for the group.

The 111 year old Godrej Group had appointed global brand consultancy firm Interbrand to reposition its master brand with a makeover that makes the group identity modern as well as contemporary.

Unveiling the group's brand strategy, The Indian consumer now has a more demanding and youthful mindset. At Godrej, they have always been at the helm of changing and redefining the marketplace and this will now be reflected in a marketing and branding strategy that accelerates profitable growth.

On the group's makeover strategy, the revitalized corporate identity is a result of a detailed analysis of product, service and business portfolio. Using the Godrej brand as a unifier of businesses and people made sense because it is most valuable asset, it cannot be replicated and it spans all their business

Review of literature

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2001), consumer buying behaviour refers to the buying behaviour of the individuals and households who buy the goods and services for personal consumption. Consumers around the world are different in various factors such as age, income, education level and preferences which may affect the way they avail of goods and services. This behaviour then impacts how products and services are presented to the different consumer markets.

There are many components which influence consumer behaviour namely: cultural, social, personal and psychological (Kotler & Armstrong, 2001). These characteristics cannot be controlled by the companies; therefore, a need to assess these elements in order to create an effective marketing plan.

Many people do consume a wide range of products every day, from basic necessities to high-valued collectables. Owing to the proliferation of products in the market, such phenomenon is one of the most interesting and hence heavily investigated topics in the marketing field. As mentioned by Schiffman and Kanuk (2000), consumer behaviour is about how people make their decisions on personal or household products with the use of their available resources such as time, money and effort. Gabbott and Hogg (1998) and Blackwell et al. (2006) further provide a holistic view that defines consumer behaviour as the activities and the processes in which individuals or groups choose, buy, use or dispose the products, services, ideas or experiences.

The study of consumer buying behaviour is of utmost importance in a number of aspects. First of all, consumer behaviour can influence the economic health of a nation (Blackwell et al., 2006). Consumers would have their preferences in purchasing products from specific retailers and hence the remaining retailers are selected using the rule of 'survival of the fittest'. Therefore, consumers' decisions can provide a clue for which industry to survive, which companies to succeed, and also which products to excel. Second, through understanding the reasons for consumers to buy the products and their buying habits, the firms can make use of such information to devise corresponding marketing strategies in response to the consumers' needs (Blackwell et al., 2006).

For instance, tailor-made products can be made to enhance customer value and thus facilitate repeat purchase (Gabbott and Hogg, 1998). Moreover, present consumer behaviour studies regard consumers as important determinants of organizational success and it is found that the most successful organizations are customer-centric (Blackwell et al., 2006). The notion 'the consumer is king' should be deep-rooted in every business people's mind that they should try to please these kings using their innovative methods.

Peter and Olson, (1993) mention that interactions between the people's emotions, moods, affection and specific feelings is called consumer behaviour, in other words in environmental events which they exchange ideas and benefits each is called consumer behaviour. Buying behaviour of people, who purchase products for personal use and not for business purposes (Peter and Olson, 1993).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1) To find the factors involved in buying home appliances.
- 2) To find out sources of information used by customers before making decision of specific brand of home appliance.
- 3) To know about features for which the potential customers looks for when they buy any branded home appliance.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

- 1) Study helped to know about customer's expectation and opinion.
- 2) This Study helped to know the different services provided by home appliance companies.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is used to solve the research problem which is understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically. Primary data collected by well-structured questionnaire method. Secondary data was collected from books, internet and newspapers.

Research design

Prior to determining which research method to use, it is imperative to decide on research design (Bryman & Bell, 2003). The research design is a framework that determines the collection and analysis of data. It details the procedures that are needed to carry out the study and the nature of the information that is to be collected is thoroughly defined (Malhotra & Birks, 2003). The researcher adopted descriptive research methodology. In descriptive research design objectives are clearly established based on that questionnaire was designed and analysed.

Sampling Design

The sampling method chosen for this study was convenience sampling which is a form of non-probability sampling. A non-probability sample is a sample that has not been selected using a random sampling method which means that in non-probability sampling some people are more likely to be chosen than others (Bryman & Bell 2007, 730).

Sample size

The sample size was 100 respondents (75 men and 25 women) in Salem. The sampling unit of the study was all users of home Appliances in the age group of 30-45 yrs of middle income group in Salem.

Analytical tool

Frequency analysis and ranking method was used to analyze the information given by respondents.

Table 1-FREQUENCY ANALYSIS

S.No	Age of respondents	No: of Respondents	Percentage
1	30-35	37	37
2	36-40	31	31
3	41-45	32	32
	Total	100	100
	Gender of respondents	No: of Respondents	Percentage
1	Male	55	55
2	Female	45	45
	Total	100	100
	Marital status	No: of Respondents	Percentage
1	Married	80	80
2	Unmarried	20	20
	Total	100	100
	Qualification	No: of Respondents	Percentage
1	SSLC	12	12
2	HSC	18	18
3	Graduation	30	30
4	Postgraduation	40	40
	Total	100	100
	Occupation	No: of Respondents	Percentage
1	Professional	60	60
2	Business	40	40
3	Service	20	20
	Total	100	100
	Income	No: of Respondents	Percentage
1	5000-10000	15	15
2	10001-15000	32	32
3	150001-20000	36	36
	20001-25000	14	14
	Above 25000	03	03

4			
5	Total	100	100
6			
	Family type	No: of Respondents	Percentage
1	Nuclear family	56	56
2	Joint family	44	44
	Total	100	100
	Influencer	No: of Respondents	Percentage
1	Children	33	33
2	Spouse	40	40
	Friends	14	14
3	Relatives	12	12
	Retailers	1	1
4	Total	100	100
5			
	Source of Information	No: of Respondents	Percentage
1	TV ads	63	63
2	Hoardings	13	13
	Newspapers	17	17
3	Exhibitions/fares	5	5
4	Magazines	2	2
5	Total	100	100
	Number of brands known	No: of Respondents	Percentage
1	Below 3	60	60
2	Above 3	40	40
	Total	100	100
	Influence of retailers	No: of Respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly motivated	12	12
	Motivated	47	47
2	Fairly motivated	32	32
	Not motivated	9	9
3	Total	100	100
4			

The above table clearly indicates that, age group of the respondents are classified in to 3 groups like 30-35(37%), 36-40(31%),and 41-45(32%).Gender of the respondents are classified in to male(55%) and female(45%).Based on the table,80% of the respondents are married and others are unmarried. In case of educational qualification, 12% are SSLC, 18% are HSC,30% are graduated and remaining 40% are post graduated. In case of occupation,60% are professionals, 40% are business people, 20% and are service people. In case of income,15% are between 5000-10000,32% are between 10001-15000,36% are between 150001-

20000,145 are between 20001-25000,and 3% are above 25000. In case of family type 56% are nuclear family and others are in joint family.

In case of influencer, 33% are children, 40% are spouse,14% are friends,12% are relatives and 1% are retailers. In case of source of information 63% are TV ads,13% are hoardings,17% are newspapers,5% are exhibitions, and 2% are magazines. In case of brands awareness level, 60% are below 3, and 40% are above 3. In case of retailer motivation,47% are motivated,32% are fairly motivated,12% are strongly motivated and remaining 8% are not motivated.

Table 2-Present usage of home appliances companies

Sr.no	Factors	Samsun	Whirlpoo	Onida	LG	Others	Total
1	Television	24	12	36	20	8	100
2	Refrigerator	32	26	14	18	10	100
3	Washing Machine	32	34	8	26	20	100
4	Air conditioner	25	25	15	15	20	100
5	Microwave	10	25	5	10	50	100

In case of television, Onida is dominating more when compare to other companies, for refrigerator Samsung is a leading player, in case of washing machine Whirlpool and Samsung are leading the market, in case of air-conditioner Samsung and Whirlpool are the leading player, and for microwave Whirlpool is the leading player in the market.

Table 3-Features affecting for purchase of any branded TV set

Sr.no	Factors	1 st rank	2 nd rank	3 rd rank	4 th rank	5 th rank	Weighted score
1	Picture quality	61	30	3	4	2	444
2	Sound quality	27	54	13	2	4	398
3	Slimness of screen	7	6	40	38	9	264
4	Size(inches)	2	3	29	46	20	219

5	Television Color	3	7	15	10	65	173
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From the above table it can be interpreted that, majority of the respondents are influenced by picture quality first, then sound, then slimness of screen, then size, and then color.

Table 4-Features affecting for purchase of any branded refrigerator

Sr.no	Factors	1 st rank	2 nd rank	3 rd rank	4 th rank	5 th rank	Weighted score
1	Capacity	57	22	3	16	2	416
2	Energy efficiency	25	21	5	49	0	322
3	Colour	12	50	11	20	7	340
4	Storage space	5	6	62	12	15	274
5	LED panel	1	1	19	3	76	148

(Source- Primary Data)

From the above table it can be interpreted that, majority of the respondents are influenced by capacity first, then color, then energy efficiency, then storage space, and then LED panel.

Table 5-Features affecting for purchase of any branded washing machine -

Sr.no	Factors	1 st rank	2 nd rank	3 rd rank	4 th rank	5 th rank	Weighted score
1	Washing capacity	70	2	7	4	17	404
2	Soak time	16	6	56	8	14	302
3	Weight	6	15	15	48	16	247
4	Colour	1	27	13	25	34	236
5	Energy efficiency	7	50	9	15	19	311

From the above table it can be interpreted that, majority of the respondents are influenced by washing capacity first, then energy efficiency, then soak time, then weight, and then color.

Table 6-Features affecting for purchase of any branded air conditioner-

Sr.n o	Factors	1 st rank	2 nd rank	3 rd rank	4 th rank	5 th rank	Weighte d score
1	Cooling system	69	13	10	7	1	442
2	Size	7	48	20	18	7	330
3	Colour	4	5	10	50	31	201
4	Energy efficiency	19	28	38	6	9	342
5	Auto turn off	1	6	22	19	52	185

From the above table it can be interpreted that, majority of the respondents are influenced by cooling system first, then energy efficiency, then size, then color, and then auto turn off.

Table 7-Features affecting for purchase of any branded microwave

Sr.n o	Factors	1 st rank	2 nd rank	3 rd rank	4 th rank	5 th rank	Weighte d score
1	Capacity	10	57	14	14	5	353
2	Space	5	12	28	46	9	258
3	Heating system	78	9	6	4	3	455
4	Cavity	5	15	44	25	11	278
5	Auto turn off	2	7	8	11	72	156

From the above table it can be interpreted that, majority of the respondents are influenced by heating system first, then capacity, then cavity, then space, and then auto turn off.

CONCLUSION

Based on this study, the researchers concluded that, people in Salem city aware about different brands of home appliances. Knowledge about home appliances differ based on the age level The demographic factors like age, gender, marital status, qualification, occupation, income and family type affecting the buying behavior of home appliances.

Based on this study the awareness level of home appliances are less in Salem city. Most of the respondents known Samsung, Whilpool, LG, and Onida, company brands. Based on rankings given by respondents, the main factors involved in

selecting home appliances are price then brand name, then quality, then offers, then service. Respondents are not much influenced by retailer's information. Television advertising providing more information when compare to other medium. For buying TV, most of the respondents are given priority to picture quality and sound quality. In case of refrigerator, majority of the respondents given priority to capacity, then color, then energy and efficiency, then storage space, then LED touch panel. For buying Washing machine, most of the respondents given first priority to washing capacity when compare to other factors. In case of Air-conditioner, cooling system and energy efficiency are top most features considered by the respondents. In case of microwave most of the respondents are influenced by heating system of the microwave. Most of the respondents are motivated by retailers for buying home appliances.

SUGGESTIONS

The companies have to plan for sound marketing strategies to attract the customers. Developing 4p's of marketing based on customer requirement. Selection of media, fixing price, offer etc based on the demographic profile of the customers. Training to the dealers, salesman at regular intervals by the company so that they should provide the expected information and service.

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