

INFLUENCE OF CULTURE ON REFRIGERATOR BUYING BEHAVIOUR - A STUDY IN BANGALORE

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Abstract: This study is an attempt to understand the role of local customs and culture in deciding when to buy a white good for the family, the roles played by various family members in its buying decision process and the most important factors considered in finalizing the product. Primary data collected in a survey is analyzed using techniques including Garret's ranking technique to understand the buying decision process adopted by a family to purchase a refrigerator.

Keywords: Culture, Buying behaviour, white goods, Garret ranking technique

Introduction and Background

Indian economy is facing slowdown for the past six quarters as pointed out by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). IMF lowered its GDP growth estimate for India in 2019 to 6.1% from its earlier projection of 7.3%. (View: India needs one-year..., 2019). In this context there is an urgent need to boost consumption. Customs and rituals have played an important role in the consumer behaviour. Marketers would be keen to understand the role of local customs and culture in India on their buying decision process. With rapid urbanization, white goods like refrigerators are finding increasing adoption and are no longer considered a product exclusive for the rich. The decision process to buy this durable good is not an impulsive one and happens to be an important event in the life cycle of a family. It would be of interest to marketers to understand the roles played by various family members, the occasions on which a buy is considered and which factors play an important role in evaluation and final decision to buy a refrigerator.

Review of Literature

Lawan & Zanna (2013) In their study attempted to assess the influence of cultural, economic and personal factors on the clothes buying behaviour in Nigeria. Their study revealed that the influence of social norms in combination with economic and personal factors exhibited highest influence on the buying behavior and also the economic. Age was the only personal factor influencing significantly the clothes buying behaviour of the consumers.

Spiers, Gundala & Singh (2013) compared the behaviour of the consumers of two countries Trinidad & Tobago and Jamaica. Their study indicated a relationship between family structure, language (local dialect), values and beliefs on consumer behaviour in both countries.

Sethi and Chawla (2014) have tried to look at the influence of multiple factors like cultural and subcultural factors - parental control, collectivism, and masculinity, social influences such as reference group and social class in conjunction with marketing plans of the telephone service providers on purchase behaviour of rural and urban customers. The study reveals that the influence of parental control was weak, whereas the collectivism was strong. It was found that the women were quite dependent on their male counterparts to take their decision in the rural region as compared to the urban region. They concluded that the Social, Cultural and Marketing factors have a significant influence on the buying behaviour of the consumers of rural, and urban areas. The technological advancement has narrowed the difference in usage patterns of mobile services in different areas.

Hanzaee & Lotfizadeh (2011) have tried to explain the marital roles and influence of family structure on consumer decision-making style in Islamic culture. It was found that the dominance by husband/wife, joint decision-making or egalitarianism in Iranian and Islamic culture have deep influence on the purchase decision making

Georgas, J. (2003) in this study the author has explained the changes that are taking place in the family structures and the emotional interdependence. The phenomenon such as globalisation and modernisation are the key drivers and are affecting the families throughout the world. The families across countries is changing and are becoming similar.

A study by Belch, M. A., & Willis, L. A. (2002) evaluates the roles of husbands and wives in the decision making in families and also puts on record the changes that have taken place since the 1970s and 80s in American families. The study depicts that the wife has attained remarkable influence on the decisions being made in the families and suggests that marketers should make a note of the same and design their strategies

Dr. Akpan, Sunday John (2016) in their study reveal that cultural variables exert deep influences on the purchase and consumption of pork. The study also found that aside from the cultural factors, age and income also affect the quantity of pork purchased and consumed. Based on these findings the study concludes that cultural factors, age and income influence the quantity of pork purchased and consumed. The study then recommends that these factors should not be taken for granted; rather they should be identified and studied since purchase and consumption of pork are based on them de Run, E. C., Yee, T. C., & Khaliq, M. (2012) -In this study the preference & attitude of three different brand names of coffee based on 3 different languages were measured using speech accommodation theory. It was found that English and Chinese languages were

preferred and Malay language was less preferred as compared to other languages.

Rosa, F., Sillani, S., Nassivera, F., & Vasciaveo, M. (2014) In their research have tried to ascertain whether the local language used in marketing communication affect the consumers to take favourable food purchase decisions. Which implies that use of local language enhance the effectiveness of the marketing campaigns. Hence conclude that the language used to connect to consumers is of great importance

Abdollah, I. I., Abdullah, F., & Voon, B. H. (2016) attempted to reevaluate the Malaysian cultural consumer behaviour. The EFA procedures revealed seven factors; oneself values, religiosity, social harmony, humane oriented, ethnic ancestry, group collectivism and environment. The findings of the study suggest that since markets are becoming more and more multiethnic, adoption a national culture is more relevant

Agnita Yolanda, Nurismilida, Vivi Herwinda(2017) have compared the influence of various factors on online and offline shopping by consumers. The results show that as far as online shopping is concerned cultural factors have higher influence and when shopping offline psychological factors influence is greater.

Sarpong(2017) examined the influence of cultural factors on consumer behavior. The study revealed that culture positively have influence on buying behavior but it does not exert greater influence than other factors like global trends, personal factors, economic factors and other factors.

Research Questions and objectives

Research questions: Is the refrigerator buying behaviour influenced by local culture and beliefs? What roles do the various family members play in the buying decision process? Which attributes are the most important to the buyer while choosing a refrigerator?

Objectives:

1. To study the influence of local culture on consumer behaviour of refrigerator buyers.
2. To identify the role of different family members in the buying decision process
3. To identify the most important factors for selection of a refrigerator

Methodology

1. Study design: This is a descriptive and inferential study. The study is confined to the buyers of refrigerators.
2. Population and sample: Customers or probable customers of refrigerators formed the sample. A total of 110 responses, which formed the sample, were found useful for the study.
3. Data collection method: Data is collected through a well-structured questionnaire administered to the respondents.

- Variables and measures: The Occasion of purchase of refrigerator was ascertained by providing the respondents a list of important festivals and events when the purchase of refrigerator was made or likely to be made. The role of various family members in each of the stages of buying decision process (Need recognition, search for information, evaluation of alternatives, decision and payment) was ascertained.

Data analysis and results

The following table was used to analyse the occasions when the refrigerators was bought or likely to be bought

Occasions	Number of respondents	Percentage
New year/Ugadi	29	26.36%
Akshaya Tritiya	36	32.73%
Diwali	17	15.45%
Dasara	19	17.27%
Dhan Teras	01	0.91%
Ramzaan	07	06.36%
Christmas	01	0.91%
Others	0	0%
Total	110	100%

Akshay Thrithiya, was a popular occasion with 32.73% of respondents saying that they bought / likely to buy a refrigerator on this popular Hindu festival. It was followed by Ugadi (the local New Year) with 26.36 % of respondents choosing it as an occasion to buy a refrigerator

The role of customs in the process of buying the refrigerator is analyzed using the following table

Particulars	self	spouse	Grandparent	Father	Mother	Brother	Sister	Children	Total
Identified the need for refrigerators.	24	44	0	21	14	06	01	0	110
Gathered information and studied the options.	25	42	0	21	14	07	01	0	110
Evaluate the available options.	30	39	0	20	14	06	01	0	110

Decided finally, which one to purchase.	61	22	0	22	0	05	0	0	110
Paid and purchased.	54	21	03	22	05	05	0	0	110

Self and spouse seemed to play the most important role in almost all stages of the buying process for a refrigerator

Garret ranking technique was used to analyze and identify the most important factors for selection of refrigerators. Respondents were asked to assign the rank for all factors and the outcomes of such ranking are converted into score value using following formula:

$$\text{Percent position} = 100 (R_{ij} - 0.5)/N_j$$

Where, R_{ij} = Rank given for the i^{th} variable by j^{th} respondents

N_j = Number of variables ranked by j^{th} respondents

With the aid of Garrett's Table, the percent positions estimated are converted into scores. The scores of each individual are added and the total value of scores and mean values of the score are calculated for each of the factors. The factor having the highest mean value is considered to be the most important factor.

Factors	1st	2 nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7 th	8th	9 th
Brand	52	34	18	04	01	01	0	0	0
Price	33	51	17	04	03	0	01	01	0
Performance	14	15	55	17	04	03	0	01	01
Technology	03	04	11	51	25	09	03	03	01
Color	01	0	0	06	34	33	24	07	05
Size	0	0	0	02	08	28	38	15	19
Exterior design	0	0	01	02	04	10	24	56	13
Interior design	0	02	0	01	05	06	13	19	64
Power consumption	07	04	08	23	26	20	07	08	07

$$\text{Calculation of percent position} = 110(R_{ij}-0.5)/N_{ij}$$

R_{ij} = 1to 9

N_{ij} = total rank given by 110 respondents = 9

Rank	$110(R_{ij}-0.5)/N_{ij}$	Percentage
1	$110(1-0.5)/9$	6.11%
2	$110(2-0.5)/9$	18.33%
3	$110(3-0.5)/9$	30.56%
4	$110(4-0.5)/9$	42.78%
5	$110(5-0.5)/9$	55%
6	$110(6-0.5)/9$	67.22%
7	$110(7-0.5)/9$	79.44%
8	$110(8-0.5)/9$	91.67%
9	$110(9-0.5)/9$	103.89%

Finding the Garret value for each percent position value

Rank	Percent position value	Garret value
1	6.11%	80
2	18.33%	68
3	30.56%	60
4	42.78%	54
5	55%	48
6	67.22%	41
7	79.44%	34
8	91.67%	23
9	103.89%	0

For each rank multiply Garret value with the given value as shown in the following table

Factors	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th	9 th
Brand	4160	2312	1080	216	48	41	0	0	0
Price	2640	3468	1020	216	144	0	340	23	0
Performance	1120	1020	3300	918	192	123	0	23	0
Technology	240	272	660	2754	1200	369	102	69	0
Color	80	0	0	324	1632	1353	816	161	0
Size	0	0	0	108	384	1148	1292	345	0
Exterior design	0	0	60	108	192	410	816	1288	0
Interior design	0	136	0	54	240	246	442	437	0
Power consumption	560	272	480	1242	1248	820	238	184	0

Calculated Garret Score

Factors	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th	9 th	Total
Brand	4160	2312	1080	216	48	41	0	0	0	7857
Price	2640	3468	1020	216	144	0	34	23	0	7545
Performance	1120	1020	3300	918	192	123	0	23	0	6696
Technology	240	272	660	2754	1200	369	102	69	0	5666
Color	80	0	0	324	1632	1353	816	161	0	4366
Size	0	0	0	108	384	1148	1292	345	0	3277
Exterior design	0	0	60	108	192	410	816	1288	0	2874
Interior design	0	136	0	54	240	246	442	437	0	1555
Power consumption	560	272	480	1242	1248	820	238	184	0	5044

As evident from the above table, brand, price and performance are the three most important factors in buying decision for a refrigerator.

Discussion of results:

This study was conducted with three research questions and results obtained using different statistical tools. *1. Is the refrigerator buying behaviour influenced by local culture and beliefs?*

The top three occasions are Akshaya Tritiya, Ugadi and Dasara. These three local festivals are considered auspicious for important purchases.

2. *What roles do the various family members play in the buying decision process?* The role of 'Self' and 'spouse' has emerged as prominent in all the stages of purchase process. Other family members though contribute to the decision making are not significant. 3. *Which attributes are the most important to the buyer while choosing a refrigerator?* Garrett ranking test in this study has shown that Brand, price and performance are the top three attributes considered by people to make purchase decision.

Managerial implications, recommendations and conclusion.

The results of this study can be of significant importance for managers. The cues they can pick are (i). Not all but few local festivals have greater significance for purchases. (ii) 'Self' and 'Spouse' have a greater role to play in the decision-making process and more attention can be paid to them, and (iii) Brand, Price, and Performance are the top three criteria that get substantial attention from the customers. Hence, it has to be of great importance for the managers as well. The product designing, product performance, and marketing activities can be based on these results.

Culture is the invisible fabric of the society. It plays a crucial role in the life of people. Business firms need to understand the culture of the people to win over them and to offer them the right products and services to them. The knowledge of the culture is essential to segment, target and position themselves in the market.

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