A STUDY ON CONSUMER PERCEPTION AND BUYING BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS WASHING MACHINE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COIMBATORE CITY

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Abstract:
The Consumer is an individual who consumes goods whether manufactured by business unit or created by nature such as air, water, etc. and utilize services offered by the Government, business and non-business organizations like hospitals, religious, educational, other voluntary organizations etc. (Gopal. R. Bhatt, 1985). Undoubtedly the consumer is the ultimate patron and back-bone of any venture of consumerism. Therefore, a sound marketing programmer should start with a careful analysis of the habits, attitudes, motives and needs of consumers. Buying behavior focuses on how individuals make decisions to spend their available resources (time, money, effort) on consumption related items. This includes what they buy, why they buy it, where they buy it, how often they buy it, how often they use it, how they evaluate it after the purchase and the impact of such evaluation on future, and how they dispose of it. There are many home appliance products available in market. This study was carried out to identify the factors influenced in consumer perception and buying behaviour of washing machine. The outcome of the study was based on 250 respondents selected from Coimbatore District, Tamilnadu. The data required for the study have been collected through questionnaires and analyzed by using statistical techniques as tools, such as Simple percentage and Rank correlation. Also extend to find the brand preference of the sample consumers and suggestions for buying the particular brand in washing machine.

Key Words: Washing Machine, Consumer Perception, Buying Behavior & Brand

Introduction:

A drawing of an early washing machine appeared in the January 1752 issue of '*The Gentlemen's Magazine*', a British publication. Jacob Christian Schaffer's washing machine design was published 1767 in Germany. Electric washing machines were advertised and discussed in newspapers as early as 1904 Alva J. Fisher has been incorrectly credited with the invention of the electric washer. The US Patent Office shows at least one patent issued before Fisher's US patent number 966677 (e.g. Woodrow's US patent number 921195). The "inventor" of the electric washing machine remains unknown. By 1940, 60% of the 25,000,000 wired homes in the United States had an electric washing machine. Many of these machines featured a power wringer, although built-in spin dryers were not uncommon.

The Consumer perception can be developed from a variety of factors, such as their own personal experience or how they have heard other people experienced the product. Clothes washer technology developed as a way to reduce the manual labor spent, providing an open basin or sealed container with paddles or fingers to automatically agitate the clothing. The earliest machines were hand-operated and constructed from wood, while later machines made of metal permitted a fire to burn below the washtub, keeping the water warm throughout the day's washing.

The study of consumer behavior assumes that the consumers are actors in the marketplace. The Internet has transformed how people experience brands and builds their perceptions. Marketing research specifies the information required to address these issues, designs the method for collecting information, manages and implements the data collection process, analyzes the results, and communicates the findings and their implications. The consumers are more concerned about value satisfaction for the money exchanged, brand image and performance than ever before and it is for the companies to meet the consumer's requirement to convert them into highly profitable marketing opportunities (Shumeet Kaur & Ashita Chadha 2011).

Review of Related Literature:

Sampath Kumar (2000) in his study "A study of the customer behavior with reference to washing machine". He made an attempt to highlight the findings of consumer behavior on consumer washing machine carried out in urban areas of Coimbatore District. The study has been undertaken with a view to identify the factors influencing the behavior of consumers in the washing machine.

Sivamurgesh (2001) conducted "A study on consumer's preference for washing machine in Coimbatore City". In the present world, we have got a variety of brands of washing machine. The wide range of choice was possible because of the advent of technical changes and competition of the washing brands in machine.

Madhavi and John Williaim Felix (2001) in their study "Consumers level of perception and experience of product values with reference to washing machine" focus on the level of perception and experience of product value with reference to washing machine. The study was conducted with 150 randomly selected consumers and the aspects taken were quality, durability, availability, technology, service etc.

Nasrin Sultana and Dr.Sakthivel Murugan (2002) undertook a study on "Consumer buying behavior of washing machine with reference to LG products". The objectives of the study is to identify the factors influencing consumer buying behavior of LG washing machine, to identify the consumers brand preferences towards purchasing washing machine. Consumer behavior is concerned with consumer need for action in the direction of satisfying his needs. The external factors which influence consumer behavior were as follows: culture, subculture, locality, royalty, ethnicity, family, social.

Preethi (2005) in her study "A Study on consumer preference towards with reference to washing machine" analyzed majority of the consumers prefer durables because of standard quality and service, easy remembrance and promotion and product uniqueness.

Ashish Kumar, Poonam Gupta (2006) in their research "To Analyze Consumer Buying Behavior and Preferences in the washing machine" A survey of the people has been conducted to know the liking pattern of the products of the company. It is observed that overall people like to purchase Samsung brand. It is concluded that mostly people preferred Samsung due to its price, quality, technology and image and also due to the service provided a after sales by the company. It is thus, concluded from the facts collected that mostly people prefer to buy due to the attractive schemes.

Statement of the Problem:

There are lot of brands of washing machine are available in the market. But the consumers prefer a particular brand of the washing machine. In the modern business world, due to the development of science and technology, many new models have been introduced in the market every year. This research is pertaining to find out the present consumer perception and buying behavior of washing machine. This study will help to gain knowledge about the market factors influencing the consumer to prefer a particular brand and problems faced by using such brands.

Objective of the Study:
- ✓ To study the socio economic profile of the sample consumers.
- ✓ To identify the factors influenced in consumer perception and buying behavior of washing machine.
- ✓ To know the brand preference of sample consumers.

Research Methodology:

Sampling Method:

The sampling used for the study is convenient sampling. This sampling is selected by the researcher for the purpose of convenience to access. For the study, sample size of 250 respondents was selected. The study was conducted in Coimbatore city. Coimbatore is popularly known as ''Manchester of south India''. This city known as for its entrepreneurship, and remain one of the most pollution free city in India.

Tools and Techniques:

The data collected has been coded, consolidated and then entered into SPSS (statistical package for social science) for analysis. Simple percentage analysis and Rank correlation were used to analyse the data.

Analysis and Interpretation:

It deals with the analysis and interpretation of data collected from the respondents who are the users of washing machine.

Table 1: Socio Economic Profile

Factors	No. of Consumers (N=250)	Factors	No. of Consumers (N=250)
Gender		**Occupational Status**	
Male	85 (34.00)	Student	23 (9.20)
Female	165 (66.00)	Private Employee	108 (43.20)
Age		Government Employee	57 (22.80)
Below 20	60 (24.00)	Own Business	62 (24.80)
20 – 30	143 (57.20)	**Family Income**	
31 – 40	42 (16.80)	Below Rs.10000	50 (20.00)
Above 40	5 (2.00)	Rs.10000 - Rs.20000	123 (49.20)
Marital Status		Rs.20001- Rs.30000	55 (22.00)
Married	160 (64.00)	Above Rs.30000	22 (8.80)
Unmarried	90 (36.00)		

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Educational Qualification			
Illiterate	23 (9.20)		
School	40 (16.00)		
Graduate	57 (22.80)		
Post Graduate	62 (24.8)		
Professional	68 (27.2)		

It is clear from Table 1 that, out of 250 respondents, (66%) are female respondents, (57.2%) respondents belong to the age group that ranges from 20-30 years, (64%) of the respondents are married, (27.2%) of the respondents are professionally, (43.2%) of the respondents are private employee, (49.2%) of the respondents earning monthly income is Rs.10000 - Rs.20000.

Table 2: Consumer Perception & Buying Behaviour

Factors	No. of Consumers (N=250)	Factors	No. of Consumers (N=250)
Awareness of the Respondents		**Reasons for Buying**	
Friends	38 (15.20)	Easy usage	148 (59.20)
Relative	69 (27.60)	Less time consuming	66 (26.40)
Advertisement	102 (40.80)	Less electricity consumption	28 (11.20)
Others	41 (16.40)	Prestige	8 (3.20)
Frequency of using Washing Machine		**Awareness on facilities available**	
Daily	70 (28.00)	Yes	215 (86.00)
Weekly	113 (45.20)	No	35 (14.00)
Monthly	30 (12.00)		
Once in a while	37 (14.80)		
Buying Behaviour			
Price/ EMI scheme	68 (27.20)		
Feature	70 (28.00)		
Technology	90 (36.00)		
Convenience	22 (8.80)		

It is clear from Table 2 out of 250 respondents, (40.80%) of the respondents are getting awareness through advertisement. (45.2%) of the respondents are using washing machine once in a week. (36%) of the respondents buying behavior is based on the current technology. (59.2%) of the respondents are buying the product because of easy usage. (86%) of the respondents are having awareness on the facilities available in washing machine.

Table 3: Respondents Brand Preference

The Table 3 shows the consumer perception about brand preference in washing machine is mentioned following table.

Factors	Rank	1	2	3	4	5	Total Score	Avg. Rank Score	Rank
	Score	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**			
SAMSUNG	No. of Respondents	33	18	30	13	6			
	Score	165	72	90	26	6	359	71.8	I
LG	No. of Respondents	24	30	28	10	8			
	Score	120	120	84	20	8	352	70.4	II
BOSCH	No. of Respondents	6	20	6	18	50			
	Score	30	80	18	36	50	214	42.8	V
WHIRLOOL	No. of Respondents	29	20	11	27	13			
	Score	145	80	33	54	13	325	65	III
GODREJ	No. of Respondents	8	12	25	32	23			
	Score	40	48	75	64	23	250	50	IV

It is clear from Table 3 shows the results of Rank Test. This study has revealed that the Samsung is in first position, followed by LG, Godrej, Bosch & Whirlpool.

Suggestions:

✓ The awareness being the first element of purchase process, so the manufactures need to focus on the consumer awareness in a better way to achieving the results.

✓ Brand image is caused by the brand awareness and if should be created to pull the consumers towards purchasing of commodities.

✓ The buyers of consumer should prefer well known Indian brands that after sales service can be availed. Not only quality improvements but also improvement in sales service can be developed.

Conclusion:

It can be concluded that various factors play's significant role in consumer buying behavior. The marketers should focus on factors influencing consumer buying behaviour. So the main mantra for the companies to be successful is to satisfy the consumers and develop brand image and brand loyalty amongst them. Therefore, it is necessary for the companies to meet the consumer's requirement to convert them into highly profitable marketing opportunities.

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