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***CONSUMER'S DECISION MAKING TOWARDS PURCHASING HOME
APPLIANCES: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY***

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Abstract

Consumer behavior is comparatively a new field of study which evolved just after the Second World War. The sellers' market has disappeared and buyers' market has come up. This led to paradigm shift of the manufacturer's attention from product to consumer and specially focused on the consumer behaviour. Due to technology improving day by day, there has been an increased expectation in the customers mind for newer products and improved alternatives for the existing ones. The key to success lies in retaining customers' loyalty by providing them value-added products to fulfill their needs. Even the marketers are making use of behavioural sciences and trying very hard to establish a certain degree of brand loyalty among a new class of decision-makers in the family. In fact, marketers by direct or indirect prepositions are trying to carve out a niche in the minds of consumers. In the recent years, many manufacturing companies have diversified their business activities to meet both the needs of the households and industrial users. The aim of study was to analyse the pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase behaviour of the consumers towards the products taken for the study Mixer, Pressure Cooker and Water Heater.

Keywords

Consumer behaviour, consumer satisfaction, after sales service, durable product

Introduction

In the Indian scenario both men and women are going for employment not only to meet their financial demand but also to live with comfort. As a result, the needs and wants of the people have increased.

The consumer behaviour models have helped in giving a framework for studying the buying preferences of the consumers, the changes taking place in their order in view of the fast changes occurring in the socio-economic environment in all parts of the world.

The consumer market consists of all the households and individuals who buy goods and services for their personal use. Consumers differ tremendously in income, educational level, taste and age. So it is necessary for the marketers to divide consumer into so many groups and to develop products or services designed to suit their needs.

In olden days, marketers had close and direct contact with the consumers which enabled them to understand consumers. But the growth in the size of firms and markets has made it impossible on the part of the marketers to have such a close contact. This necessitated the present day marketing managers to conduct consumer research to have an idea about the behaviour of consumers.

Our consumer market is growing at a tremendous pace. The changing socio-cultural, political and economic orders have transformed people into sophisticated consumers. The thoughts of consumers have under gone a sea change. Many of the Indian households are buying a number of consumer durables like Pressure Cooker, Water Heater, Television, Refrigerator, Washing machine, Mixer, Wet Grinder, Fan, Vacuum Cleaner to name a few.

Due to technology improving day by day, there has been an increased expectation in the customers mind for newer products and improved alternatives for the existing ones. The key to success lies in retaining customers' loyalty by providing them value-added products to fulfil their needs.

Even the marketers are making use of behavioral sciences and trying very hard to establish certain degree of brand loyalty among a new class of decision-makers in the family. In fact, marketers by direct or indirect prepositions are trying to carve out a niche in the minds of consumers.

In the recent years, many manufacturing companies have diversified their business activities to meet both the needs of the households and industrial users.

Indian homes in urban areas have been using Mixer, Pressure Cooker, and Water Heater as a necessity. However, in the recent years efforts are being made by many organizations manufacturing consumer durables to market their products even in small towns and also rural areas.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of the study is to analyses the pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchases behaviour of the consumers towards the products taken for the study Mixer, Pressure Cooker and Water Heater. With this objective in view the following secondary objectives have been formed.

They are:

1. To find out the various factors influencing Consumer Behaviour towards the products namely Mixer, Pressure Cooker and Water Heater.
2. To find out the preferred brands of Mixer, Pressure Cooker and Water Heater purchased by the consumers.
3. To offer a few suggestions based on the findings of the study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY TYPE OF DATA

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected using a printed questionnaire by convenient sampling method from the consumers. The secondary data was collected from Books, Journals and Newspapers, pertaining to marketing and consumer behaviour. Simple statistical tools such as averages and percentages were used to analyze the collected data.

PILOT STUDY

Before carrying out this study, a pilot study was carried out and based on its findings, necessary changes were incorporated in the questionnaire-cum-schedule.

Area of the Study: Thane

FINDINGS

The major findings of the study are listed below.

No. of year's consumers owing Mixer: Majority of the surveyed households reported that they have been owning and using Mixer between 5 and 10 years.

Brand of Mixer owned by the Respondents: Sumeet, Preethi and Maharaja in that order appeared to be the brands of Mixer owned by the surveyed Households.

Brand of Mixer owned before the Present one: It is surprising to know that only 33 percent of the surveyed respondents appear to have owned a Mixer before the present Mixer.

Motivators to buy Mixer: Majority of the respondents appeared to have been self-motivated to purchase the Mixer.

Sources of information sought by the Respondents: Majority of the surveyed respondents reported that they got information about Mixer from their Television.

Persons Accompanied during the purchase of Mixer: Majority of the respondents have been accompanied by Family Members while purchasing the Mixer.

No. of shops visited to purchase Mixer: More than four fifth of the surveyed respondents reported that they visited not more than 3 shops before they purchased the Mixer.

Factors considered before the purchase of Mixer: Quality appeared to be the factor primarily considered by the surveyed respondents.

Purchase of desired Mixer: Majority of the surveyed respondents reported to have purchased the Mixer they desired.

However, 7 percent of the respondents could not buy the Mixer of their choice.

Reasons for dissatisfaction: From amongst the respondents who reported that they could not buy

the Mixer of their choice, majority of the respondents differed from buying the desired Mixer because of the arrival of new models.

Time of Purchase of Mixer: Majority of the respondents appeared to have purchased their Mixer during Discount Offer.

Mode of payment to purchase Mixer: Majority of the surveyed households have not availed any Craft facilities to buy the Mixer.

Sources of credit: Bank, Office and Dealer in that order appear to be the sources of credit used by the respondents to purchase their Mixer.

Post purchase behavior of the Respondents: Majority of the respondents reported satisfaction with the performance of their Mixer.

Reaction to After Sales Service: Majority of the respondents have reported that they are satisfied with the After Sales Services.

Problems in Mixer: Majority of the surveyed respondents reported that so far they have had no problems with their Mixer.

Parts of Mixer causing problems: Jar, Motor, Wheel and High power consumption in that order appeared to have caused problems for the surveyed respondents.

Persons sought to set right problems in Mixer: Majority of the surveyed respondents informed that they set right the problems with the help of Private Service Centers.

Feedback on future purchase: Majority of the surveyed respondents have expressed a desire to buy the same brand of Mixer if and when they buy a Mixer in future.

No. of year's consumers owning Pressure Cooker: Majority of the surveyed households reported that they have been owning and using Pressure Cooker less than 5 years.

Brand of Pressure Cooker owned by the Respondents: Prestige, Premier and Hawkins in that order appeared to be the brands of Pressure Cooker owned by the surveyed households.

Brand of Pressure Cooker owned before the Present one: It is surprising to know that only 35 percent of the surveyed respondents appear to have owned a Pressure Cooker before the present Pressure Cooker.

Motivators to buy Pressure Cooker: Majority of the respondents appeared to have been self-motivated to purchase the Pressure Cooker.

Sources of information sought by the Respondents: Majority of the surveyed respondents reported that they got information about Pressure Cooker from their Television.

Persons Accompanied during the purchase of Pressure Cooker: Majority of the respondents has been accompanied by Family Members while purchasing the Pressure Cooker.

No. of shops visited to purchase Pressure cooker: Majority of the surveyed respondents reported that they visited not more than 3 shops before they purchased the pressure cooker.

Factors considered before the purchase of Pressure Cooker: Quality appeared to be the factor primarily considered by the surveyed respondents.

Purchase of desired Pressure Cooker: More than 90 percent of the respondents reported to have purchased the Pressure Cooker they desired. However, 5 percent of the respondents could not buy the Pressure Cooker of their choice.

Reasons for dissatisfaction: From amongst the respondents who reported that they could not buy the Pressure Cocker of their choice, majority of the respondents differed from buying their desired Pressure Cooker because of the arrival of new model.

Time of Purchase of Pressure Cooker: Majority of the respondents appeared to have purchased their Pressure Cooker during discount Offer.

Mode of payment to purchase Pressure Cooker: Majority of the surveyed households have not availed any credit facilities to buy the Pressure Cooker.

Sources of credit: Office, Bank and Dealer in that order appear to be the sources of credit used by the respondents to purchase their Pressure Cooker. '

Post purchase behavior of the Respondents: Majority of the respondents reported satisfaction with the performance of their Pressure Cooker.

Reaction to After Sales Service: Majority of the respondents reported that they are satisfied with the After Sales Services.

Problems in Pressure Cooker: Majority of the surveyed respondents reported that so far they

have had no problems with their Pressure Cooker.

Parts of Pressure Cooker causing problems: Gasket, Handle, Safety Valve and Weight Valve in that order appeared to have caused problems for the surveyed respondents.

Persons sought to set right problems in Pressure Cooker: Majority of the surveyed respondents informed that they set right the problems with the help of Private Service Centers.

Feedback on future purchase: Majority of the surveyed respondents have expressed a desire to buy the same brand of Pressure Cooker if and when they buy a Pressure Cooker in future.

No. of year's consumers owning Water Heater: Majority of the surveyed households reported that they have been owning and using Water Heater less than 5 years.

Brand of Water Heater owned by the Respondents: Vijay, Venus and Bajaj in that order appeared to be the brands of Water Heater owned by the surveyed households.

Brand of Water Heater owned before the Present one: It is surprising to know that only 15 percent of the surveyed respondents appear to have owned a Water Heater before the present Water Heater.

Motivators to buy Water Heater: Majority of the respondents appeared to have been self motivated to purchase the Water Heater.

Sources of information sought by the Respondents: Majority of the surveyed respondents reported that they got information about Water Heater from their Television.

Persons Accompanied during the purchase of Water Heater: Majority of the respondents have been accompanied by Family Members while purchasing the water Heater.

No. of shops visited to purchase Water Heater: More than four fifth of the surveyed respondents reported that they visited not more than 3 shops before they purchased the Water Heater.

Factors considered before the purchase of Water Heater: Quality appeared to be the factors primarily considered by the surveyed respondents.

Purchase of desired Water Heater: Majority of the respondents reported to have purchased the Water Heater they desired. However, 10 percent of the respondents could not buy the Water Heater of their choice.

Reasons for dissatisfaction: From amongst the respondents who reported that they could not buy The Water Heater of their choice, majority of the respondents differed from buying their desired Water Heater due to stock not being available.

Time of Purchase of Water Heater: Majority of the respondents appeared to have purchased their Water Heater during Off Season.

Mode of payment to purchase Water Heater: More than 90 percent of the surveyed households have not availed any credit facilities to buy the Water Heater.

Sources of credit: Office, Dealer and Bank in that order appear to be the sources of credit used by the respondents to purchase their Water Heater.

Post purchase behaviour of the Respondents: Majority of the respondents are satisfied with the performance of their Water Heater.

Reaction to after Sales Service: More than three fourth of the respondents have reported that they are satisfied with the After Sales Services.

Problems in Water Heater: Majority of the surveyed respondents reported that so far they have had no problems with their Water Heater.

Parts of Water Heater causing problems: High Power Consumption, Not Heating, Passing Current in that order appeared to have caused problems for the surveyed respondents.

Persons sought to set right problems in Water Heater: Majority of the surveyed respondents informed that they set right the problems with the help of Private Service Centers.

Feedback on future purchase: Majority of the surveyed respondents have expressed a desire to buy the same brand of Water Heater if and when they buy a water heater in future.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the study, the following suggestions are made;

Durable Products manufactures should focus their attention on the sources of information from where the consumers get information about the products namely Mixer, Pressure Cooker and Water Heater and promote their products through these sources.

The marketing executives whose products are not so popular will have to find out the reasons why

Their brands are not preferred by the customers as much as their competitor's products and try to improve their products to suit the requirements of their customers.

Due to the economic and social changes that are taking place in our country, more and more people are buying durable products to suit their requirements. This gives plenty of scope for the manufacturers of durable products to tap not only the growing market but also the potential market. Rural market is another area which is fast growing in our country. Many rural people have started buying Mixer, Pressure Cooker and Water Heater. It is the right time the manufacturers of durable products take notice of the changes that are taking place in the modes of Household items used by the rural people and bring out products to meet the specific requirements of this enormous population which is both growing and a potential market.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it must be stated that the manufactures and marketing executives of durable products realize that they have to bring out products to meet the specific needs and wants of their customers. Otherwise, it will not be possible for these companies to survive in these competitive environments where they have to not only retain their existing customers but also get new customers and in the process improve their bottom line.

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