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Assessment of Customer Involvement and Consequences of Involvement in Home Appliances Purchase

P. JANAKI AND P. SANTHI

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 analyse 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 analysed and were using percentage weighted average score analysis of variances. The finding of the study included that education and income of the respondents are the two socio-economic variables which have significant association in all the stages which the buyers undergo while purchasing home appliances. The study uncovers customer's deep involvement in search and information affective link and social interaction and also to articulate the new thing in terms of the consumers' needs so will be accepted in the market well.

KEYWORDS: Customer Involvement, , Marketing Mix, Home Appliances, Customer Profile

Introduction

Consumer behaviour is a complex, dynamic, multidimensional process and all marketing decisions are based on assumptions about consumer behaviour. 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 (Hartill 1985). The product creates an image in the mind of the consumer, who undergoes a decision process which leads to the outcome in terms of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, which reflects on the sales and image of the product or brand (Leon G 1997). The process of decision-making varies with the value of the product, the involvement of the buyer and the risk that is involved in

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deciding the product/service. What they buy, how they buy, where and when they buy, in how much quantity they buy depends on their perception, self concept, social and cultural background and also age family cycle, attitudes, beliefs values, motivation, personality, social class and many other factors that are both internal and external to a person . (Gordon 1987). The marketer therefore tries to understand the needs of different consumers and having understood his different behaviours which require an in-depth study of their internal and external environment, to formulate the plans for marketing. The degree of involvement has a very significant effect on consumer behaviour. When more expensive products are to be purchased, the consumer gets more involved in purchase process but he may not be equally involved in a product which is just a rupee. Along with the concept of motivation, involvement is another concept which is central to activating consumer motives. Involvement refers to “the level of perceived personal importance and/or interest evoked by a stimulus (or stimuli) within a specific situation”. This definition implies that aspects of the person, the product, and the situation all combine to determine the consumer’s motivation to process product related information at a given point of time (John L1978). Home Appliances or domestic appliance, is usually defined as a large machine which accomplishes some routine housekeeping task, which includes purposes such as cooking, or food preservation, whether in a household, institutional, commercial or industrial setting. The term white goods or white ware is also used for these items.

Literature Review

The demographic variables had impact on the customer’s perception towards branded products. In a family, the role of the spouse was considered to be the most important in seeking information about home appliances brands (Lilly2010). The prominence gained by an individual consumer in marketing decision making compels the marketers to look at the components of the marketing mix through the customer’s eyes (Saravanam2010). When customers are involved, they should engage in a number of behaviors (active search, extensive choice process active information processing etc); when customers are not involved, they should not engage in these behaviors (Giles and Jean 2010). The performance of sales persons is important from the point view of customer, because the customers not only get information from sales person but also interact and classify so as to arrive at correct purchase decision. Though customer satisfaction is influenced by several factors, the sales person is always playing crucial role in making the job of customer easy by providing proper guidance (Sarojini 2009). Branding has become so strong that today hardly anything goes unbranded particularly the consumer durables (Parihar 2007). The level of involvement differs from product to product (Sridhar 2007).

Statement of the Problem

Last few years have witnessed growing demands for different consumer products (Chunawalla, 2000). Increase in demand is a result of increase in income of the people and increase in discretionary income too (Arora, 1995). A rise in discretionary income results usually in an increased spending by consumer on those items that raise their living standards, Moreover, a trend for people to utilize their income for more comforts and facilities is also developing. Intense competition among the marketers of consumer durables (Sontaki, 1999) and the increasing awareness of consumers about their own needs is making a major difference in marketing of consumer durables (Kumar, 1998). In the context of the above scenario, it is interesting to study how the human beings i.e. consumers, satisfy their different non-basic needs. Moreover, it is interesting to study, why they buy a particular product, how they buy it, when they buy it, from where do they buy it, etc (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1995). Involvement serves as a motivation to process information. Consumer involvement and consequences of involvement with respect to purchase of home appliances namely microwave oven was taken up for the study. Hence the present study has been taken up to analyse perceived linkage between consumer needs, goal or values and product knowledge and there by consequences of such involvement in consumer durable goods.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are

- To understand the purchase decision behaviour relating to home appliances.
- To analyse factors influencing the customer with involvement in purchase process of home appliances.
- To measure involvement from its consequences.
- To suggest suitable measure to strengthen marketing of home appliances from customer perspective.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Coimbatore city. According to the census of India, Coimbatore is the second biggest city in Tamilnadu on the basis of demography. The respondents were selected from the two years customer data base (12612 customers) of a leading multi brand home appliances showroom in the city. Within the data base, the customer belonging to Coimbatore city were screened resulting in 2007 customers. Proportionate random sampling method was adopted by taking ten percent of the population resulting in a sample size 200 respondents. Interview schedule was used for the collection of primary data. Considerable data has also been tapped from secondary sources

such as journals, newspapers, magazines and websites. The percentage, Weighted Average, Factor Analysis has been used for data analysis.

Measurement of Involvement from its Consequences

The consequences of involvement questionnaire was used with 43 item Likert type scales, to measure the level of involvement with product as per the model suggested by Carmen Garcia. The main components consequences of involvement cover

- Affective Link (AL): High involvement with product identification with it. The product is considered to be important in daily life and people show special interest.
- Search and Information Processing (SIP): High involvement in additional information on the product and a deeper processing of this information.
- Social Interaction (SI): A high involvement also implies greater related social interaction, with the person trying to meet other people to talk about the product.
- Purchase Purposes (PP): High involvement related to purchase purposes, as people prefer to buy those products which they have high involvement.
- Social Relevance (SR): People having high involvement with a product try to extrapolate their own personal interest and view the product as also important for others. Forty three items were created which attempt to cover the five components described above.

Descriptive Statistics for Distribution of Responses

The respondents were classified based on their socio-economic profile and the purchase behavior of home appliances.

Socio-Economic Profile of the Respondents

The demographic variables namely age, sex, residence, education, occupation and monthly income are the most widely employed in market segmentation.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents Based on Socio-Economic Profile

Variables		No of respondents(n:200)	Percentage
Age (in years)	Up to 20	32	16
	21- 40	134	67
	41- 60	32	16
	Above 61	2	1
Gender	Male	54	27
	Female	146	73

Table 2. Classification of Respondents Based on Purchase Decision of Home Appliances

	Variables	No of Respondents (n:200)	Percentage
Information about Home Appliances	Television	80	40
	Radio	2	1
	Journals	8	4
	Newspaper	10	5
	Banners	8	4
	Friends, relatives and Peer group	74	37
	Sales person	18	9
Source of Purchase	Dealer	84	42
	Company Outlet	26	13
	Shops	88	44
	Second hand purchase	2	1
Mode of Purchase	Cash	46	23
	Credit	154	77
	Installment	95	62
	Hire purchase	59	38

Source: Primary data

It can be noted that all of the respondents were involved in purchase of home appliances. The respondents gathered information about home appliances from many sources 40 per cent of the respondents were aware of home appliances through television, 37 per cent of the respondents got the information about home appliances from friends and relatives and nine per cent of the respondents collected information from sales person and five per cent of the respondents from news paper and four per cent of the respondents from journals and another four percent through banners and just one per cent of the respondents through radio. The classification of respondents based on source of purchase shows that 44 per cent of the respondents bought home appliances from shops, 42 per cent of the respondents purchased through dealers out let and 13 per cent of the respondents from company outlets. Purchase of home appliances on credit basis is quite popular among 77 per cent of the respondents and another 23 per cent of the respondents were purchased on cash basis. Of the credit purchase, 62 per cent of the respondents were purchased on the basis of installment and 38 per cent of the respondents used hire purchase system.

Ownership of Home Appliances

Ownership of home appliances reflects the social status of individual and his/her living standard. The consumer durable goods serve different purposes

Marital status	Married	112	56
	Unmarried	88	44
Family	Nuclear	150	75
	Joint	50	25
Education	School Level	22	11
	Under Graduate	66	33
	Post Graduate	102	51
	Others(skill,technical)	10	5
Occupation	Business	30	15
	Govt Employment	46	23
	Private Employment	72	36
	Profession	38	19
	Others	14	7
Monthly Income(in₹)	Less than 10,000	58	29
	10,001-20,000	62	31
	20,001-30,000	68	34
	Above 30,001	12	6

Source: Primary data

The socio economic profile of the respondents shows that majority of the respondents (67 per cent) who purchased home appliances belong to the age group of 21-40 years. Female predominantly (73 per cent) involved in home appliances purchase and the remaining 27 per cent were male. Majority of the respondents were married. The nuclear families were predominant with 75 per cent. Majority of the respondents (95 per cent) were literate. Most of the respondents (51 per cent) were post graduates, 33 per cent of the respondents were under graduates, and 11 per cent of the respondents studied up to school level and the remaining five per cent of the respondents were with skill oriented and technical education. Most of the respondents were in private sector employment (36 per cent) and 23 per cent were government employments, 19 per cent of the respondents were in profession and remaining seven per cent were home maker and unemployed. Most of the respondents (34 per cent) were in the income group with having monthly income between 20,001-30,000, 31 per cent of the respondents between 10,001-20, 000, and 29 per cent of the respondents with monthly income of less than 10000 and for six per cent of the respondents monthly income is above 30,331.

Classification of Respondents Based on Purchase Decision of Home Appliances

Different people play different role to make a specific purchase. From the classification of the respondents based on purchase behavior of home appliances.

Table 2. Classification of Respondents Based on Purchase Decision of Home Appliances

	Variables	No of Respondents (n:200)	Percentage
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	Radio	2	1
	Journals	8	4
	Newspaper	10	5
	Banners	8	4
	Friends, relatives and Peer group	74	37
	Sales person	18	9
	Source of Purchase	Dealer	84
Company Outlet		26	13
Shops		88	44
Second hand purchase		2	1
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Ownership of Home Appliances

Ownership of home appliances reflects the soul status of individual and his/her living standard. The consumer durable goods serve different purposes

namely comfort, convenience, time -saving and ultimately the standard of living. Yesterday's luxuries and becoming today's necessities where in marketers of these products thrive. The respondents owned various home appliances.

Table 3. Ownership of Home Appliances by the Respondents

Products	No. of respondents	Percentage
Refrigerator	180	90
Washing Machine	152	76
Air Conditioner	50	25
Speaker and Audio Equipments	124	62
Electric Fan	200	100
Television	200	100
MP3player	52	26
Iron Box	174	87
DVD Player	158	79
Mixer and Grinder	186	93
Juicer	44	22
Microwave Oven	200	100
Chimneys	4	2
Induction Stove	58	29
Electric Cooker	38	19

Source: Primary data

All the respondents (100 per cent) owned Television, Electric fan and Microwave. Mixer and grinder were owned by 98 per cent of the respondents. Refrigerator ownership is 90 per cent. Iron box with 87 per cent. Washing machines ownership attained the 6th place with 76 per cent, Speaker and Audio Equipments with 62 per cent. Induction Stove was owned by 29 per cent, Air Conditioner by 25 per cent, Mp3 player by 26 per cent, Juicer by 22 per cent, Electronic Cooker with 19 per cent and Chimneys were owned by just two per cent of the respondents.

Involvement of Respondents in Purchase Process of Home Appliances.

Involvement is a heightened state of awareness that motivates consumers to seek out, attend to and think about the product information prior to purchase. There are two types of involvement: situational and enduring (Peter1983). The situational involvement is specific to a product or situation and its is temporary, which is the emotional, feeling a customer experiences about a particular product or situation. Involvement is induced by factors related to the customer the product or the purchase situation. Involvement affects variety of consumer behaviours, such as information search, information processing and information transmission. Enduring involvement reflects feeling experienced towards a product category that are overtime and across different situations

related to Pre-purchase and post-purchase. Measuring involvement help marketers to work on to control products selling situation depending on the type of involvement with which they are faced (Marsha 1984). The respondents involvement in purchase of home appliances at pre-purchase stage and post purchase stage were analyzed.

Table 4. Enduring Involvement of Respondents in Purchase of Home Appliances

Variables	No of respondents (n:200)	Percentage to the total (200)
Pre Purchase Stage		
Audio and videos about product	174	87
Home visits by representatives	104	52
Product demonstration	130	65
Risk free trials	94	47
Purchase Stagei) Purchase options		
Range of models	140	70
Personalization options	134	67
Money back guarantees	80	40
Policies for replacement	88	44
ii) Procedures		
Easy and convenient procedures	164	82
Access to hire purchase	100	50
Strategies tie ups for service maintenances	122	61
Complete product solutions	132	66
Product installation	126	63
Training on product usage and maintenance	120	60
Usage Stage		
Enjoy the benefits promised	160	80
Easy and quick access to services	112	56
Prompt and quick services	122	61
Availability of spare parts	102	51
Affordability of spare parts	102	51
Updating features of product	102	51
Engaging Customer		
Hosting events	154	77
Customer sites visits	100	50
Strategic partnership and other entities	126	63
Repurchase		
Easy disposal of old product	126	63
Loyalty bonus	126	63
New products with value addition	132	66
Tracking in purchase of product range	110	55
Comparison of value of purchase	126	63

Measurement of involvement from its consequences

The concept of involvement has been presented with two different views. For one group of researchers these functions relate to the cognitive notion

of information processing (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981). The second group claims that involvement is mainly a state of activation or arousal and therefore motivational factors are the more important (Andrews and Akhter, 1990). According to it, involvement is a state of arousal caused by some antecedents and revealed by some consequences. This analysis has been carried out by collecting required data from all the respondents (200 numbers) who all bought Microwave oven, a Home Appliances which requires depth information search, information processing and high involvement by the customer in their decision to purchase.

Factor analysis was done for identifying the importance of factors affecting consequences of involvement in purchase of microwave oven. Varimax rotation was used for this analysis. The procedure based on eigen values was followed to identify the number of factors. Factors with eigen value more than one, was considered for analysis. If any variable's component loading was 0.8 and above in any one of the factors, it was taken as a dominant variable of that factor. The elimination process was used accordingly showing the similar trend.

The forty three variables influencing the consequences of involvement were (Carmen Garcia 2010) factorized by using principal component loading. The eigen values were calculated for all the factors influencing purchase and consequences of it involvement and has been presented in the screen plot fig1. Only nine factors had eigen value more than one. The principal component analysis and rotated factor loading method is used for finding out stimulating factors.

TABLE V - Factor Analysis for Consequences of Involvement

Variable	Factor									Communality
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
X1	-.191	-.751	-.190	.103	-.155	-.202	.312	-.256	-.019	.875
X2	-.051	-.866	.149	.012	.092	.089	-.180	.055	.086	.834
X3	-.109	-.040	.559	.133	.040	.644	.048	-.257	-.169	.856
X4	.085	-.029	-.017	-.027	-.931	-.002	.021	-.072	-.052	.884
X5	.129	-.030	.680	.273	.175	-.038	-.502	-.163	-.189	.901
X6	-.011	.007	.855	-.037	-.063	.086	.134	.201	.145	.823
X7	.151	.091	.083	-.122	.015	.824	-.100	-.020	.123	.757
X8	.184	-.058	.022	-.005	.122	.052	.015	-.058	.934	.931
X9	.142	.470	.428	-.341	.464	.037	.228	.093	.091	.826
X10	.267	-.290	.247	-.381	.371	.063	.096	.493	.228	.807
X11	.321	.296	-.133	-.668	.337	.083	.082	-.174	.174	.842
X12	.270	.148	.021	.005	.062	-.110	.079	.893	-.086	.922
X13	.399	-.003	.027	.093	.078	-.114	.768	.106	-.038	.790
X14	.344	.054	.100	.832	.253	-.055	.152	-.081	.060	.924
X15	.498	-.108	-.173	.571	-.135	-.330	.147	-.312	.117	.876

X16	.591	.367	.192	.330	.148	.152	.300	.048	.046	.769
X17	.545	.227	.284	.237	.070	-.029	.520	-.036	.263	.833
X18	.720	.246	-.042	.247	.043	.116	.342	-.101	.128	.800
X19	.747	.282	.244	.104	-.089	.080	.116	-.147	.388	.907
X20	.669	-.061	.011	-.162	-.072	.150	.189	.380	.420	.861
X21	.671	-.308	-.163	-.182	-.171	.481	.004	.130	-.006	.883
X22	.700	.022	-.320	-.137	.010	.540	-.042	.010	.025	.906
X23	.705	-.169	-.137	-.062	.121	.426	.172	.197	.260	.881
X24	.777	-.087	-.246	.111	.471	.100	.066	.019	.081	.928
X25	.855	-.143	-.096	.131	.087	.184	.110	.190	.146	.889
X26	.874	.043	-.096	.167	.202	.117	.169	.056	.085	.897
X27	.772	.087	-.064	.291	.101	-.193	.215	-.325	.167	.919
X28	.807	-.067	-.016	.141	.432	-.071	.211	-.027	.187	.947
X29	.857	-.157	.178	.077	.118	.017	.061	-.200	.022	.855
X30	.785	-.272	.272	-.106	-.217	-.049	.307	-.052	.159	.947
X31	.882	.012	.032	.195	-.179	.056	-.013	.144	.095	.882
X32	.855	-.017	.152	.121	.022	-.008	.033	.246	.264	.901
X33	.863	.066	.042	.122	.307	.174	-.051	-.045	-.037	.898
X34	.865	.193	-.266	.036	.065	.122	-.135	.124	.042	.911
X35	.913	.130	.086	-.106	.125	.200	-.089	.109	.078	.949
X36	.845	.126	-.065	-.259	-.002	-.077	.143	.210	-.070	.877
X37	.766	.287	.108	-.265	.269	.010	.283	.147	.146	.946
X38	.907	.282	-.176	-.005	.019	-.023	.084	-.067	.091	.955
X39	.860	.128	.070	-.028	-.053	.117	.219	.132	.286	.926
X40	.857	-.075	.142	-.009	-.039	.010	.135	.357	-.114	.920
X41	.942	.035	.097	.000	-.165	.053	.003	.057	-.002	.932
X42	.854	.121	.103	.080	-.192	-.060	.370	.121	-.022	.953
X43	.900	.227	.107	-.082	9.33	-.208	.120	.021	-.100	.947

Source: Primary data

Extraction method: Principal component analysis

Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Explanation of Independent Variables

Variables	
X1	My life would change without this product
X2	I read all available information about this product
X3	I think it is sufficient if the product fulfils the purpose for which it was designed
X4	I like having it
X5	I enjoy talking with knowledgeable people about the product
X6	This product is important for people
X7	I try to get to know the pros and cons of each brand of the product
X8	Being without it makes me unhappy
X9	Time spent learning about the product is time well spent
X10	I would choose it among other products of the same price
X11	This product is an important social advancement
X12	I talk about the product with my friends and relatives

- X13 I enjoy using it
 X14 I am interested in experts evaluations and comments on this product
 X15 I do not mind spending money on this product
 X16 I know different brands or models of this product
 X17 If I can afford it, I buy it
 X18 The product is something which people are interested in
 X19 I pay attention to adverts about the product
 X20 I can remember some adverts about the product
 X21 I would join a users club of this product
 X22 I would find it very difficult to stop using it
 X23 Using it helps me feel secure
 X24 The product is better than all others with the same purpose
 X25 I am interested in this product
 X26 I notice the differences between the various brands of the product
 X27 I would like to know about the manufacturing of the product
 X28 I enjoy talking about the product
 X29 When I use the product, I feel well
 X30 I am not at all interested in this product
 X31 I do not have a preferred brand of this product
 X32 Not having it makes me feel uneasy
 X33 I would not make much effort to get more information about this product
 X34 I find that there is little to choose between brands of the product
 X35 I find that the product is important in my daily life
 X36 I could talk for quite a while about this product without getting bored.
 X37 I feel emotionally attached to the product.
 X38 Most people do not care about this product.
 X39 It seems silly to me to have a strong interest in the product.
 X40 I would read an article on this product published in a consumer weekly magazine.
 X41 I spend some of my spare time trying to get more information about this product.
 X42 I keep abreast of recent news on the relevant product development.
 X43 I do not understand people who show a strong interest in these kinds of things.

From the above table, it is observed that out of 43 variables, 9 factors are identified by the rotation method. The total percentage of variation of all factors showed is 87.042 per cent.

While analysing the highly influential components from communality values, the following components were resulted with high values such as most people do not care about this product (0.955), the respondents were abreast of recent news on the relevant product development (0.953), find the product as important in life (0.949) and enjoy talking about the product (0.947). The resultant components were grouped into four factors.

Table 6. Clustering of Key Variables into Factors

Factor	Key Variables	Rotated factor loadings
I. Search and Information Processing (SIP)	Spend spare time to get more information	0.942
	Noticed differences between the various brands of the product	0.882
	Little to choose between different brands of product	0.865
	Read all available information about the product	0.866
	Not much effort to get more information about the product	0.863
	Read article on this product published in magazines	0.857
	Abreast of recent news on product development	0.854
II. Affective Link(AL)	Interested in experts and evaluation and comments on this product	0.832
	Product is improvement in my daily life	0.913
	It seems silly to have strong interest in this product	0.860
	When I use the product I feel well	0.857
	I am interested in this product	0.855
III. Social Interaction(SI)	Do not understand people we know strong intent in the kinds of things	0.900
	Not having it makes me feel uneasy	0.855
	I could talk about this product quite and while without getting bored	0.845
IV. Social Relevance(SR)	I enjoy talking about the product	0.807
	To product is important for people	0.855
	Do not understand people we know strong intent in the kinds of thing	0.900

Under the factor I “Search and information processing” (SIP), the components namely spare time to get more information (0.942), notice differences between the various brands of the product (0.882), little to choose between different brands of product (0.865), no efforts to get information (0.863), read article on this product published in magazines (0.857), and abreast of recent news on product development (0.854) were highly influential. Under factor II “Affective Link”(AL), the dominant components were product improvement (0.913), do not understand people to have strong intent in the kinds of things (0.900), no brand preferences (0.882), silly to have strong interest in this product (0.860), feel well on product (0.857), I interested in this product (0.855) and not having it makes feel uneasy (0.855). Under factor III “Social interaction”(SI), resulted with components such as could talk about this product without getting bored(0.845), enjoy talking about the product(0.807). The last factor IV “Social relevance”(SR) to product is important for people (0.855).

It is understood from factor analysis that the factor "search and information" were the dominant in consumer decision making process about home appliances. Customer involvement itself is a motivation to search and gather information. Then the consumer durable home appliances purchase reflects high customer involvement in search and information.

CONCLUSIONS

To the degree that there is a perceived linkage between a consumer's needs, goals, or values, and product knowledge, the consumer will be motivated to pay attention to product information. When relevant knowledge is activated in memory, a motivational state is created that drives behaviour. As the involvement with a product increases, people devote more attention to advertisements related to the product, exert more cognitive effort to understand these ads, and focus their attention on the product-related information. The study concludes by stating that customer involvement ultimately leads to attitude, attitude guides in achieving desired benefits and that in turn enhances the brand loyalty.

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