INFLUENCE OF SELECTED PERSONALITY TRAITS ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

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ABSTRACT

Consumer behavior has become a very complex phenomenon now-a-days, the reason being the growing diversity in needs, wants, tastes and preferences of consumers. This is why it has become inevitable for the marketers of home appliances also to understand study and analyze the buying behavior of their consumers. They are also required to study the various factors influencing consumer behavior and personality is one such factor. There are certain personality traits like consumer innovativeness, consumer susceptibility and consumer materialism. These traits are supposed to be very much important from the point of view of consumer behavior.

The present study focuses on studying and analyzing the influence of selected personality traits like consumer innovativeness, consumer susceptibility and consumer materialism on the behavior of the consumers of home appliances. To this end 200 consumers having different demographic profiles have been surveyed and the influence of the above personality traits on their buying behavior with regard to home appliances has been studied and analyzed.

The study exhibits that the majority of home appliance consumers possess the personality traits like consumer innovativeness, consumer susceptibility and consumer materialism. Moreover, the results of chi-square test imply that the presence of the said consumer personality traits in a home appliance consumer is dependent on the demographic variables like age, gender, income and education.

Finally, the present study establishes that the personality traits like consumer innovativeness, consumer susceptibility and consumer materialism influence the consumer behavior in a significant manner.

Keywords: Social Marketing, Social Networking Websites, Instant Messenger, Principal Component Analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Understanding consumer behaviour and knowing customers is never simple. Customers may state their needs and wants in one way but may act otherwise. So, marketers should study their target customers' needs, wants and the determinants of their shopping and buying behavior very carefully.

The main aim of a marketer is to understand the needs and wants of the target consumers and satisfy them effectively. For understanding the needs and wants of the consumers a marketer has to study consumer behaviour. It is only after the detailed study of consumer behaviour that a marketer is able to predict how consumers would react to the marketing strategies and promotional messages. Marketers know that it is very important to understand that what factors influence the buying behavior of consumers most.

The consumer market consists of all the households and individuals who buy goods and services for their personal use. Consumers differ tremendously in terms of various cultural, social, personal and psychological factors. So, it is necessary for the marketers to divide consumers into so many groups and to develop products or services designed to suit their needs.

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 undergone a sea change. Many of the Indian households are buying a no. of home appliances like refrigerators, washing machines etc.

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Indian homes in urban areas have been using home appliances like refrigerators, washing machines etc. as a necessity. However in the recent years, efforts are being made by many organizations manufacturing home appliances to market their products even in small towns and also in rural areas.

Moreover, now-a-days every business is trying to make their products more popular and thereby try to be successful. But all the businesses do not attain success due to several reasons. One of the most important reasons is consumers' behaviour. Obviously, it is very difficult to predict and understand it; therefore it becomes important for every business to concentrate on consumers and their behaviour.

All human beings are consumers, from morning to evening everybody has to consume something whether it is purchased him or by others. All buyers are consumers and all consumers are not buyers. Then who are buyers and how they behave while purchasing a particular product is very important for marketers. Within the broad framework of marketing, buyer behaviour is the most interesting area and we are concerned with understanding why an individual buyer act in certain buying related ways. All buyers are having different tastes, likes and dislikes and adopt different behaviour patterns while making buying decisions. Adam Smith stated that consumption is the safe and end purpose of all production. Buying behaviour may be defined as the behaviour exhibited by people in planning, purchasing and using economic goods and services. It is an integral part of human behaviour.

Personality is one of the personal factors or psychographic variables influencing consumer behavior. Personality is a term very frequently used by everyone. Marketers have also been using personality traits and building personality brands to appeal to the consumers. Even most of the advertisements have been incorporating certain specific personality traits and characteristics while communicating advertising messages.

A personality trait can be defined as a distinguished and enduring attribute of a person which is portrayed consistently in a no. of situations, and differs from person to person. This means, trait of a person is quantitative and empirical. Here the focus is on the measurement of personality on the basis of certain specific psychological characteristics or traits. Thus a person could be read on a scale of intelligence, aggressiveness, emotional stability and so on.

Trait theorists advocated that there are certain personality traits which are very much important from the point of view of studying and understanding consumer behavior. We can also understand consumer diversity through these traits. The personality traits which are specifically used to analyse consumer behavior are—

1) *Consumer Innovativeness* (i.e. to what extent a person is receptive to a new buying experience)—

    Consumers can be innovators or non-innovators. Consumer innovativeness shows his willingness to innovate. His rigidity is shown by dogmatism. Dogmatism can be low, making a consumer open minded or high, making him closed minded.

2) *Consumer Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence* (i.e. to understand how consumers will respond to social influences)—

    Apart from innovativeness, another trait that is important is consumer susceptibility to inter-personal influences. A scale can be constructed to measure this susceptibility. It shows how social influence stimulates or depresses the acceptance of new products.

3) *Consumer Materialism* (i.e. to ascertain the extent to which consumers are attached to worldly 'material' possessions)—

Consumer materialism indicates what value the consumers place on the products they possess. Some consider them to be essential for proving their self-worth and enrichment

of life. Some think that products are secondary. Materialistic people have a luxurious conspicuous consumption life style and are selfish. Their possessions do not make them satisfied or happy. Fixated consumers like to show off their possessions. They search for their cherished possessions. They are passionate about these possessions. Generally, hobbyists and collectors show such behaviour. They loved to hunt for their possessions. But all said and done, fixation is normal and socially acceptable behaviour. Compulsive consumption is however, abnormal. They are addicts.

Marketers are interested in understanding how the personality in general and the above personality traits in particular influence the consumer behaviour, because such knowledge enables them to better understand consumers and more appropriately to segment and target those consumers who are likely to respond positively to their product or service communications.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the present study is to study and analyse the impact of various personality traits like Consumer Innovativeness, Consumer Susceptibility and Consumer Materialism on consumer behavior with regard to home appliances.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research study is an analytical kind of research study. It is related to the analysis of the influence of selected personality traits on consumer behavior. In order to conduct this study we have surveyed 200 Home Appliance consumers of Agra region and the instrument used for data collection has been a questionnaire.

(i) Sources of Data :-

All the data required for this purpose have been obtained mainly from the primary sources but at the times of requirement we have also referred to the secondary sources of data.

(ii) Data Collection Methods:-

The data collection method used to obtain the desired information from primary sources has been the direct interview and questionnaire has been used as an instrument.

(iii) Sampling Plan:-

Target population or Universe: Consumers of Home Appliances
Sampling Unit: An individual Home Appliance Consumer
Sampling Method: Judgement Sampling.
Sample Size: 200
Area of Survey: Various localities of Agra region

(iv) Statistical Tools and Techniques:-

For measuring various phenomena and analyzing the collected data effectively and efficiently so that sound conclusions may be drawn, we have used a no. of statistical techniques including chi-square test for the

Table 1 : Age of Home Appliance Consumers and Personality Traits

Age	No. of Consumers		No. of Consumers		No. of Consumers		Total
	Innovativeness	No Innovativeness	Susceptibility	No Susceptibility	Materialism	No Materialism	
Below 25	10 (11.07)	8 (6.93)	11 (9.54)	7 (8.46)	8 (10.71)	10 (7.29)	18
25 – 35	42 (36.9)	18 (23.1)	38 (31.8)	22 (28.2)	42 (35.7)	18 (24.3)	60
35 -- 45	44 (40.59)	22 (25.41)	36 (34.98)	30 (31.02)	45 (39.27)	2 (26.73)	66
45 -- 55	22 (25.83)	20 (16.17)	17 (22.26)	25 (19.74)	19 (24.99)	23 (17.01)	42
Above 55	5 (8.61)	9 (5.39)	4 (7.42)	10 (6.58)	5 (8.33)	9 (5.67)	14
Total	123	77	106	94	119	81	200

Note: Figures in brackets are the expected frequencies.

testing of hypotheses.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

(a) Age of Home Appliance Consumers and Personality Traits

Null Hypothesis, H_{01}: Age of Home Appliance Consumers and Personality Traits (Innovativeness, Susceptibility and Materialism) are independent of each other.

(i) Out of 200 consumers surveyed 123 were found to be innovative. Out of 123 consumers who were found to be innovative 10 belonged to "below 25" age group, 42 belonged to 25-35 age group, 44 belonged to 35-45 age group, 22 belonged to 45-55 age group and rest 5 belonged to "above 55" age group.

Now, as far as the independence between consumer Age and Consumer Innovativeness is concerned, the calculated value of chi-square = $\sum$ (O-E)^2/E = 8.25

Again, at 10 % level of significance for 4 degrees of freedom the tabulated value of chi-square = 7.78

Since, the calculated value of chi-square is greater than the tabulated value of chi-square, so we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant association between the age of consumers and consumer innovativeness.

(ii) Again, out of 200 consumers surveyed 106 were found to be susceptible to interpersonal influences, of these 11 belonged to "Below 25 age group, 38 belonged to 25-35 age group, 36 belonged to 35-45 age group, 17 belonged to 45-55 and remaining 4 belonged to "above 55"

age group.

Now, as far as the independence between consumer Age and Consumer Susceptibility is concerned, the calculated value of chi-square = $\sum$ (O-E)^2/E = 9.11

Now at 10 % level of significance for 4 degrees of freedom the tabulated value of chi-square = 7.78

Since, the calculated value of chi-square is greater than the tabulated value of chi-square, so we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant association between the age of consumers and consumer susceptibility.

(iii) Moreover, out of 200 consumers surveyed 119 were found to be materialistic, out of these 119, 8 belonged to "below 25" age group, 42 belonged to 25–35 age group, 45 belonged to 35–45 age group, 19 belonged to 45–55 age group and rest 5 belonged to "above 55" age group.

Now, as far as the independence between consumer Age and Consumer Innovativeness is concerned, the calculated value of chi-square = $\sum$ (O-E)^2/E = 34.98Again, at 10 % level of significance for 4 degrees of freedom, the tabulated value of chi-square = 7.78

Since, the calculated value of chi-square is greater than the tabulated value of chi-square, so we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant association between the age of consumers and consumer materialism.

(b) Gender of Home Appliance Consumers and Personality Traits

Table 2 : Gender of Home Appliance Consumers and Personality Traits

Gender	No. of Consumers		No. of Consumers		No. of Consumers		Total
	Innovativeness	No Innovativeness	Susceptibility	No Susceptibility	Materialism	No Materialism	
Male	110 (102.09)	56 (63.91)	83 (87.98)	83 (78.02)	95 (98.77)	71 (67.23)	166
Female	13 (20.91)	21 (13.09)	23 (18.02)	11 (15.98)	24 (20.23)	10 (13.77)	34
Total	123	77	106	94	119	81	200

Note: Figures in brackets are the expected frequencies.

Null Hypothesis, H_{02}: Gender of Home Appliance Consumers and Personality Traits (Innovativeness, Susceptibility and Materialism) are independent of each other.

(i) Out of 123 consumers who were innovative, 110 were males and 13 were females.

Now, as far as the independence between consumer Gender and Consumer Innovativeness is concerned, the calculated value of chi-square = $\sum$ (O-E)^2/E = 9.36

Again, at 10 % level of significance for 1 degree of freedom the tabulated value of chi-square = 2.71

Since, the calculated value of chi-square is greater than the tabulated value of chi-square, so we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant association between the gender of consumers and consumer innovativeness.

(ii) Out of 106 consumers who were more susceptible to the interpersonal influences, 83 were males and 23 were females.

Now, as far as the independence between consumer Age and Consumer Innovativeness is concerned, the calculated value of chi-square = $\sum$ (O-E)^2/E = 3.53

Now at 10 % level of significance for 1

degree of freedom the tabulated value of chi-square = 2.71

Since, the calculated value of chi-square is greater than the tabulated value of chi-square, so we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant association between the gender of consumers and consumer susceptibility.

(iii) Again, 119 consumers were found to possess the trait of consumer materialism, of these 95 were males and 24 were females.

Now, as far as the independence between consumer Age and Consumer Innovativeness is concerned, the calculated value of chi-square = $\sum$ (O-E)^2/E = 2.09

Now at 10 % level of significance for 1 degree of freedom the tabulated value of chi-square = 2.71

Since, the calculated value of chi-square is less than the tabulated value of chi-square, so we accept the null hypothesis and conclude that the gender of consumers and consumer materialism are independent of each other.

(c) *Income of Home Appliance Consumers and Personality Traits*

Null Hypothesis, H_{03}: Income of Home Appliance Consumers and Personality Traits (Innovativeness, Susceptibility

Income Group	No. of Consumers		No. of Consumers		No. of Consumers		Total
	Innovativeness	No Innovativeness	Susceptibility	No Susceptibility	Materialism	No Materialism	
Lower	17 (21.53)	18 (13.47)	15 (18.55)	20 (16.45)	14 (20.83)	21 (14.17)	35
Lower-Middle	32 (40.59)	34 (25.41)	29 (34.98)	37 (31.02)	31 (39.27)	35 (26.73)	66
Middle-Middle	47 (34.44)	19 (21.56)	29 (29.68)	17 (26.32)	41 (33.32)	16 (22.68)	56
Upper-Middle	20 (14.76)	4 (9.24)	15 (12.72)	9 (11.28)	19 (14.28)	6 (9.72)	24
Upper	17 (11.68)	2 (7.32)	8 (10.07)	11 (8.93)	14 (11.30)	3 (7.70)	19
Total	123	77	106	94	119	81	200

Table 3 : Income of Home Appliance Consumers and Personality Traits

Note: Figures in brackets are the expected frequencies.

and Materialism) are independent of each other.

(i) Out of 123 consumers who were found to be innovative 17 belonged to "Lower" income group, 32 belonged to "Lower-Middle" income group, 47 belonged to "Middle-Middle" income group, 20 belonged to "Upper-Middle" income group and 17 belonged to "Upper" income group.

Now, as far as the independence between Consumer Income and Consumer Innovativeness is concerned, the calculated value of chi-square = $\sum$ (O-E)²/E = 23.20

Now at 10 % level of significance for 4 degrees of freedom the tabulated value of chi-square = 7.78

Since, the calculated value of chi-square is greater than the tabulated value of chi-square, so we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant association between the income of consumers and consumer innovativeness.

(ii) Out of 106 consumers, who were found to be susceptible to interpersonal influences, 15 belonged to "Lower" income group, 29 belonged to "Lower-Middle" income group, 29 belonged to "Middle-Middle" income group, 15 belonged to "Upper-Middle" income group, and 8 belonged to "Upper" income group.

Now, as far as the independence between Consumer Income and Consumer Susceptibility is concerned, the calculated value of chi-square = $\sum$ (O-E)²/E = 8.71

Now at 10 % level of significance for 4

degrees of freedom the tabulated value of chi-square = 7.78

Since, the calculated value of chi-square is greater than the tabulated value of chi-square, so we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant association between the income of consumers and consumer susceptibility.

(iii) In all, 119 consumers were found to possess the consumer materialism trait, of these 14 belonged to "Lower" income group, 31 belonged to "Lower-Middle" income group, 41 belonged to "Middle-Middle" income group, 19 belonged to "Upper-Middle" income group and remaining 14 belonged to "Upper" income group.

Now, as far as the independence between Consumer Income and Consumer Materialism is concerned, the calculated value of chi-square = $\sum$ (O-E)²/E = 20.07

Now at 10 % level of significance for 4 degrees of freedom the tabulated value of chi-square = 7.78

Since, the calculated value of chi-square is greater than the tabulated value of chi-square, so we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant association between the income of consumers and consumer materialism.

(d) Education of Home Appliance Consumers and Personality Traits

Null Hypothesis, H_{04}: Education of Home Appliance Consumers and Personality Traits (Innovativeness, Susceptibility and Materialism) are independent of each other.

(i) Out of 123 consumers who were found to be innovative, 3 belonged to "Below

Table 4 : Education of Home Appliance Consumers and Personality Traits

Age	No. of Consumers		No. of Consumers		No. of Consumers		Total
	Innovativeness	No Innovativeness	Susceptibility	No Susceptibility	Materialism	No Materialism	
Below 10th	3 (2.46)	1 (1.54)	4 (2.12)	0 (1.88)	2 (2.38)	2 (1.62)	4
10th & 12th	17 (17.22)	11 (10.78)	18 (14.84)	10 (13.16)	13 (16.66)	15 (11.34)	28
UG & PG	98 (98.4)	62 (61.6)	82 (84.8)	78 (75.2)	98 (95.2)	62 (64.8)	160
Any Other	5 (4.92)	3 (3.08)	2 (4.24)	6 (3.76)	6 (4.76)	2 (3.24)	8
Total	123	77	106	94	119	81	200

Note: Figures in brackets are the expected frequencies.

10th" education group were having less than high school educational qualification, 17 belonged to "10th & 12th" education group, 98 belonged to "UG & PG" educational group and the remaining 5 belonged to "Any Other" education group.

Now, as far as the independence between Consumer Income and Consumer Innovativeness is concerned, the calculated value of chi-square = $\sum$ (O-E)^2/E = 0.32

Now at 10 % level of significance for 3 degrees of freedom the tabulated value of chi-square = 6.25

We found that the calculated value of chi-square is less than the tabulated value of chi-square, so we will not reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the education of consumers and consumer innovativeness are independent of each other.

106 out of 200 consumers were very much susceptible to interpersonal influences of these 4 belonged to " Below 10th" education group, 18 belonged to "10th & 12th" education group, 82 belonged to "UG & PG" educational group and only 2 were having some other educational qualification.

Now, as far as the independence between Consumer Income and Consumer Innovativeness is concerned, the calculated value of chi-square = $\sum$ (O-E)^2/E = 7.69

Now at 10 % level of significance for 3 degrees of freedom the tabulated value of chi-square = 6.25

We found that the calculated value of chi-square is greater than the tabulated value of chi-square, so we will not accept the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant association between the education of consumers and consumer susceptibility.

As far as consumer materialism is concerned, 119 were found to have this

consumer trait. Of these 2 belonged to " Below 10th" education group, 13 belonged to "10th & 12th" education group, 98 belonged to "UG & PG" educational group and the remaining 6 were having some other educational qualification.

Now, as far as the independence between Consumer Income and Consumer Innovativeness is concerned, the calculated value of chi-square = $\sum$ (O-E)^2/E = 3.14

Now at 10 % level of significance for 3 degrees of freedom the tabulated value of chi-square = 6.25

We found that calculated value of chi-square is less than the tabulated value of chi-square, so we will not reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the education of consumers and consumer materialism are independent of each other.

CONCLUSION

The present study reveals that the majority of home appliance consumers were found to possess selected consumer traits related to personality i.e. 123 out of 200 consumers surveyed were found to possess innovativeness, 106 out of 200 were found to be very much susceptible to inter-personal influences and 119 out of 200 were found to possess the materialism trait. Therefore, we can conclude that personality has a remarkable impact on consumer behavior.

Moreover, the results of chi-square test implies that in the majority of cases the demographic variables like age, gender, income and education of home appliance consumers are significantly associated with the consumer personality traits like consumer innovativeness, consumer susceptibility and consumer materialism. In other words, we can say that the presence of the said consumer personality traits in a home appliance consumer is dependent on the demographic variables like age, gender, income and education.

Finally, this way or that way, it is quite evident from the present research that the personality traits like consumer innovativeness, consumer susceptibility and consumer materialism influence the consumer behavior in a significant manner.

Moreover, in the light of above discussion it is important to conclude that this research adds to our understanding about consumer behavior and the influence of personality on consumer behavior in general and that of selected personality traits on consumer behavior in particular.

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