

Understanding the buying behaviour of parents: A study with respect to purchasing of baby care products

Neha Wadhawan¹, Amit Seth²

¹Research scholar, ManavRachna International Institute of Research and Studies, Faridabad, Haryana, India

²Professor and PhD. Supervisor, ManavRachna International Institute of Research and Studies, Faridabad, Haryana, India

ABSTRACT:

There are lot of studies on online purchasing behavior of consumers and these studies can produce vast benefiting database to sellers, which can further facilitate them to generate huge profits, better understanding and lending better buying experiences to consumers also. Parents plays a very significant role in buying of a product. This demographic factor has common and universal characteristics all over the world, regardless of which culture or time zone the person belongs to. With reference to the same, researcher has tried to study and investigate on the different aspects of buying behavior of parents with reference to differences in gender.

Keywords: Buying behavior, Gender differences, online purchasing etc.

1. Introduction

Computers and internet particularly have brought a revolutionary change in the lifestyle of people and thereby affected buying and selling markets also. Further e-commerce has transformed the methods of purchasing and selling and has brought huge opportunities to broaden the business markets. According to Euro monitor's statistics, the online market has shown tremendous growth since 2007 onwards. Much more growth and innovation is nearly expected in electronic commerce. According to the prediction of some of the economist and philosophers, online purchase will become highly popular in the coming future.

Behaviour of consumers particularly with respect to purchase depends on numerous factors which influence consumers and help them to arrive at a particular decision. In general, consumer behavior is taken as a way of selecting a product or service, using and finally disposing it, if possible. Selection in itself involves a huge process in which a consumer goes through numerous stages like recognizing the need, attempt to search for options for need fulfillment and going through various evaluating options. The usage or consumption is further a motivation about why should people buy? The mode of using a product or the method of arriving to a conclusive decision about a purchase could vary from person to person.

Besides these there are number of other demographic and psychographic factors like culture, perception, attitude, family background, gender, race, community, motivation, perception etc which play important role in decision making. Out of these, gender particularly has numerous common traits all over the world. Therefore, it is essential for all marketers to have an understanding of the impact and relationship of gender and purchase behavior.

2. Literature Review

The literature define consumer as a person who purchase goods and services for their personal uses and does not intend to resale and customer as a person who buy goods and services produced by other business entity. A customer usually deals in resale but customer can consume as well (Shiffman G. & Lazer Kanuk, 2014). For present study parents i.e., father and mother are considered as consumers. However they don't buy baby care products and services for their personal use but at the same time they are not intended to resale (Aydin, AR, & Taskin, 2014) . Hence as per literature driven understanding the term consumer in this research represent parents (Zboja & M, 2006).

Consumer Buying decision is the process composed of many stages and that facilitate the assistance in identifying consumption oriented need, search of information, evaluation of alternatives and then purchase and post purchase aspect of decision (Ray & Choudhury, 2015). The choice at each stage is affected by many psychological, cultural, social and economic factors. As per conceptual literature consumer buying decisions are regularly resulted from single problem. Occasionally multiple problems targeted to solve.

Based on the involvement and important of the product under consideration, there are following two types of consumer buying decisions:

- Purchase involvement decision making
- Product involvement decision making

Purchase involvement refers to the consumer buying decision making initiated by the need to consider a specific purchase. It represents a temporary state. Product involvement decision making refers to the decision making that is more focused on product.

Consumer buying behaviour is the sum total of consumer's attitudes, preferences and intentions that appeared during the purchase of a product (Rajarajan & Priyanga, 2013).

In this research the consumer buying preferences are defined as the subjective and individual level liking or degree of inclination or tendency to prefer one alternative choice over other. Preferences are individual unless a group of people has similar propensity for one product. Consumer buying preferences are affected by many personal as well as social and economic factors (Miremadi & Faghani, 2012).

Retail on the other hand is the activity where businesses sale goods and services mainly in small quantities directly to the ultimate consumers for their consumption and not for re-sale is called retail. Traditional Retailing involves the physical brick and mortar shops operating within or near residential locality to sale goods and services in small quantities directly to end consumers. These are usually run as family business or in individual capacity. The ordering of the products is manual and is normally order is processed through a wholesaler or distributor (Rangaswami, 2012). Traditional retail stores typically do not do much promotion to promote themselves and for promotion these stores depends on companies. Traditional retail stores run on very short credit period of not more than a week time. The profit calculations are based on their expenses and interest on borrowed funds.

Online Retailing is in fact the virtual setup that can perform the function of a retail store with the help of internet, web browser and other related technologies to sale goods and services to end users is termed as online retail store. Online retail stores are the extension of electronic commerce in the area of retailing. Apart from the product availability, pricing and discount, what different payment options are offered by the online retailer affect the preference for online retail store.

Objective of the study:

- a) To understand the gender differences and online purchase behaviour of parents.
- b) To understand few key reasons affecting online buying behaviour of both the parents (Male and Female)
- c) To highlight the contrast between the male and female buying intent.

Methodology:

A descriptive research will be majorly used in the study.

Secondary data will be collected to verify the objectives of the study. Secondary data from various published materials like Journals, newspapers, internet, company's research reports, books, publications and libraries, has been collected. Results will be given based on this generating further discussions and conclusions.

3. Gender Differences towards Online Purchasing due to Attitude and Perception

A person's attitude is the response of a person backed by his/her frame of mind towards a particular object, person or situation. Attitude can be learned and has tendency to influence a person's behavior towards a thing, person or situation.

Hasan(2010) in his study divided the attitude of a person into cognitive, affective and behavioural aspects. According to his study, males have a more thoughtful cognitive approach towards online shopping considering useful and effective ways to buy something online. On the other hand, (Allen, 2001; Kwak, Fox & Zinkhan, 2002) points out that usually males have a tendency to spend more than females in online shopping. Many consider online purchasing as cheaper purchase and time saving method but at the same time its risky on part of what and how product would come out on receiving (Petryl, 2012).

Females usually are found to have lower cognitive attitude, affective attitude and behavioural attitude also, such as behavioural probability of repurchasing or continuing to buy in future.

A study by Garbarino and Strahilevitz (2004) declares that normally females get easily influenced and persuaded by friend's recommendations and suggestions, in comparison to males. However, intention to online purchase is found better in males after they are done with shopping online (Hernandez, Jimenez & Martin, 2010)..

Researchers have also found that website design and approach also affects and influence consumer buying behaviour

(Cyr & Bonanni, 2005; Sebastianelli et al., 2008). The general perception towards the design of a website also varies from males to females. Males take the website designing important from point of view of visuals and need fulfillment, in comparison to females (Cyr & Bonanni, 2005).

b. Gender Differences towards Online Purchasing due to Consumer Motivation

The motivation in purchasing things online refers to the zeal or perception of people who take online commerce as positive, beneficial and would desire to purchase from there again and again.

Motivation in consumer buying decision refers to first and foremost the recognition of any need or desire to purchase any particular product (Monuwe Dellaert & Ruyter, 2004). Motivation can be Utilitarian or hedonic in nature. Utilitarian motivation bends towards rational intent and is also considered in traditional buying decisions because a person purchase from online rationally. On the other hand, hedonic motivation deals with emotional intent driven by feelings, emotions and connections towards their purchases (Gayathiri, Balachandran & Usha, 2014; Sarkar, 2011; Veronika, 2013). Hence, utilitarian motivation is compared with hedonic motivation in online purchases (Sarkar, 2011; Seock & Bailey, 2008).

Gender also plays a very significant role in consumer motivation. In a study conducted by Seock and Bailey's (2008), Females are found to have more bend towards hedonic motivation in comparison to males, as far as online shopping experience is considered. However, Males tend to have more utilitarian bend as they have high concerns on saving time especially. Other than this, convenience and lack of sociality also matters to males more, than females. Females are more concerned about availability of information, convenience, product variants and choices available, sociality, fashion, adventure and value for money (Huang and Yang, 2010).

c. Gender Differences towards Online Purchasing due to Perceived Risks

It is sometimes not advantageous to purchase from online medium. According to certain studies, it is a general consumer perception that online shopping gives them convenience, more choices, better purchase experiences and economical products also products (Alreck, DiBartolo, Diriker & Settle, n.d.; Veronika, 2013). But on the other side, risks as well as problems related to online purchasing cannot be ignored. Risk of security, privacy, fraudulent websites, issues in quality of products delivered and delivery and packaging issues (Bae & Lee, 2011; Garbarino &

Strahilevitz, 2004; Petryl, 2012; Suki, 2002). Other than the above mentioned, people also get irritated of spam and troublesome e-mails. Consumers have a perceived risk and concern about privacy issues related to their personal information being revealed to other businesses for their personal motives.

Consumers also have a concern about delivery and product related problems.

Researches have displayed that females encounter more privacy issues, problems related to misuse of credit cards, fraudulent sites etc. In another research, it is highlighted that females have higher risk perceiving to online shopping and thus they would be more cautious before purchasing.

d. Gender Differences towards Online Purchasing, particularly in Product Preferences

The type of product which is being purchased by males and females, also gets influenced by the the gender based preferences. It is found in a study that female consumers spend comparatively more on Apparels, beauty products, toys, healthcare products, home accessories etc., particularly when shopping online. However, males tend to spend more on online on products like hardware, software and electronic goods. In one of the research, which is categorically differentiated products based on search , experience and credence. The result of the research revealed that males are more intended to buy search goods like books, computer hardware , music , software, video , games etc. whereas female consumers are more intended to purchase experience products like apparel, beauty products, food, accessories, gifts, health products , jewellery etc.

e. Gender Differences in Searching Information in Online Purchasing

Information search, as part of consumer decision making process, is one of the most important aspects. A consumer looks for a product, catering to his need and requirements and then compares them with similar products.

Males usually take purchasing process and information search as mission to be accomplished and they would take help of only little information to complete this purchasing process. While females consider purchasing as an experience or enjoyment and seek pleasure in information search , thus they look forward to have an extensive information search, particularly in comparison to males. In a study conducted, it is mentioned that males attitude towards advertising given online is taken more positive, useful and informative than females.

f. Gender Differences in Evaluating Options in Online Purchasing

Product evaluation is considered to be a time consuming step in decision making process of consumers. People evaluate the worthiness of the product as per their perception, motivational sense and information gathered and then the decision for selecting the products or services is made. It is a general perception of people where they perceive expensive products as more valuable and superior.

Females prefer to purchase those products which they find are latest in fashion and are attractive to them whereas males prefer to purchase those products which are generally famous and expensive. This leads to a confirmation that purchase intention is related to motivation of a consumer. Whereas, consumer reviews also have a role to play in consumer decision making process. In some of the studies, it is also mentioned that female consumers go through the consumer reviews more than male consumers. This means the reviews given by consumers can boost up the excitement level and credibility for purchasing, particularly to female consumers.

g. Gender Differences in Perceiving Satisfaction towards Online Purchasing

Satisfaction rendered from purchase, motivates a consumer for repurchase further and develops loyalty among consumers. Some of the factors which develops satisfaction in consumers are perceived to be website design, quality and layout, ease of use, search experience, security of website, responsiveness and supportive consumer A reasonable pricing, good quality, reliability and consistency of the product order, also contributes in developing satisfaction among consumers (Tabaei et al., 2011).

Perception about website design also influences consumers' satisfaction, which again is found different in both the genders. Satisfaction and purchase intention can both get influenced by high quality image,

particularly in females. Whereas in case of males, only satisfaction is increased but not the purchase intention.

5. Conclusion

Gender has a very significant role to play in consumer purchase behaviour. Researches are more focused on online consumers nowadays. Gender creates diverse characteristics of female and males in shopping. Studies have revealed that male and female consumers exhibit varied approaches particularly in their decision making and online purchasing behavior. Males are taken to be more positive and willing as compared to females, in terms of shopping online. This is because females lack surety in online security and not much familiar with online purchasing. Gender is really a significant factor which affects each and every single step of online purchasing process. Marketers need to understand this gender based needs of their consumer base, to serve them with better consumer experiences and satisfaction while shopping online.

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