

A STUDY OF THE BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF DURABLE GOODS FROM FAMILY DECISION MAKING PERSPECTIVE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO LUCKNOW REGION

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Abstract:

Consumer buying behavior is the most crucial factor that affects the buying of products. Though individual behavior plays a dominant role in buying many a times but family decision making is equally vital while purchasing or buying consumer durable goods. The present paper focuses on the family decision buying pattern particularly with regard to the durable goods. The preference of consumer changes with influence of family. The present study is conducted in Lucknow to examine and find out the role of family in decision making particularly durable goods. The study is based on researches which have been conducted in past by a number of researchers who are directly or indirectly involved in marketing research. The researches have been studied in detail to analyze the role of family decision making. It is observed that the influence of family in making decisions regarding the purchase of consumer durables is of utmost importance and play a crucial role. Marketers are suggested to consider the importance of family decision making for continued and sustainable marketing. The outcome of the paper will help in raising the level of marketing and will give it a greater height and dimension.

KEYWORDS:

Consumer Behavior, Consumer Goods, Family Decision Making, Electronic Goods.

INTRODUCTION:

Consumer behaviour refers to the study of individuals and groups and the processes they use to select and purchase products and services to satisfy their needs. In other words behavior occurs either for the individual or the groups and involve the study of how the products /services are purchased. However, determining what products should be bought, which retail outlet to use and who should buy them is a complicated process. Thus it becomes imperative to understand the family decision-making process. Family group decision making is a type of participating process in which all the family members acting collectively analyse problems or situations, consider or evaluate alternatives courses of action and there after arrive at a final decision. The process of decision making within the family is usually informal. However, it is well recognized that the group decision of the family is seen superior to individuals as decision making entities because group represents a larger and more diverse set of perspectives and are seen as more fair and visible. Market research is often referred to ensure that organization produce and sell what customers really want. Thus, studying consumer behavior and more particularly the family group decision making process should help the organization in marketing their products effectively. Keeping in view the above importance of family decision making, it is proposed to carry out the present research study to find out answers to the following specific points:

1. The behavior of the family members while shopping or making other purchase decisions.

Please cite this Article as : M.S.Khan¹ and Komal Ahuja², "A STUDY OF THE BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF DURABLE GOODS FROM FAMILY DECISION MAKING PERSPECTIVE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO LUCKNOW REGION" : Tactful Management Research Journal (Dec ; 2014)

2. Who specifically within the family, influences the decisions?

- + whether to buy
- + which product to buy
- + which brand to buy
- + from where to buy
- + when to buy

The study is proposed to be restricted to the purchase decisions of only durable products viz, furniture, television, refrigerator, air conditioner and would be carried out within the city limits of Lucknow.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The basic objective of the study is:

1. To find out the role of family in buying consumer durable goods in Lucknow.
2. To find out the areas and potentials of family buying with regard to durable goods.
3. To find out the impact of family buying on marketing in general.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumer behaviour is a field of study that focuses on consumer activities. This has been a topic of vast interest for the marketers all over the world. The marketing managers always study these consumer behavioural changes and make continuous changes in products and services. According to Blackwell et al. (2006), consumer behaviour is defined as the activities that people undertake when obtaining, consuming and disposing of products and services that they expect will satisfy their personal needs. Blackwell et al. (2006) mentions that a customer follows a sequence before buying a product or service. The topic of consumer behaviour is one of the massively studied topics by the researchers and marketers in the past and still being studied. Researchers show different reasons as to why consumer behaviour has been the topic of many academics and researchers. One of the common views is that understanding consumer behaviour has become a factor that has a direct impact on the overall performance of the businesses (Kotler and Keller, 2012). Another view suggests that understanding consumer behaviour has become crucial especially due to fierce competition in retail industry in the UK and worldwide (Lancaster et al, 2002).

A system is defined as any set of objects that relate to each other in a way that forms an entity. It is a boundary composed of interdependent parts. A family is an example of a social system. The boundaries may be the goals and policies of the family. Members of the family of the system are called elements" (Ingoldsby et al., 2004; Chibucos et. al, 2005). According to Chibucos et.al (2005) and Turner and West, (2006), "family systems strive to achieve goals, and these goals change over time as family members grow and change. This concept suggests that family interactions and behaviours are goal-orientated. Goals exist at the family system level and may not usually coincide with goals of individual family members. They add that the family may be viewed as a machine. It receives meaningful inputs from outside the family, and outputs reflect an action. There is a hierarchy of system in the family. A layering of subsystems is found within family systems and reflects relationship patterns among family members. There are rules implicitly understood by family members. Hierarchy forms a property of family system theory. All systems are embedded in other systems. For example, husband and wife is subsystem of the whole family system, which consists of husband, wife and child". Poire (2006) agrees "that family system theory stresses that the contribution of the whole family is more important than the individual contributions made by each family member". "The system theory concept of wholeness emphasizes that the sum of the whole is greater than the individual parts" (Anderson and Sabatelli, 1995). The concept of interdependence is well demonstrated by the theory. Within a family, every member is so interrelated so as to be dependent on each other for their functioning. For example, parents rely on their children to define their roles as caregivers and resource providers or both. In return, children rely on their parents. Within a family system, members and the relationships between them form the whole; changes in one area will result in changes in the others. For instance, if one of the family members chooses to withdraw from the family, this may force other members into a closer relationship. Put simply, one member's action will affect all other members' action in the family. This is a mutual influence state in which all family members influence each other and might be regarded as causality among family members" (Anderson and Sabatelli, 1995)

CONCEPTUALIZING FAMILY PURCHASING

For this research, a family purchase was defined as one in which all family members were involved in the decision-making process or consumption. Although the family is of central importance to marketers and consumer researchers, research has tended to focus on a narrow set of issues. Quantitative research exploring who makes purchase decisions within the family and how much influence family members have has been extensive, especially with regard to adult partners (Davis and Rigaux, 1974; Hempel, 1974; Quails, 1982, 1984; Brinberg and Schwenk, 1985; Ekstrom et al., 1987). However, this has meant that little is known about the processes and complexities of family purchasing.

PURCHASE INFLUENCE AND INFLUENCE STRATEGIES

A key focus for researchers exploring the consumer behaviour of the family has been purchase influence. Previous research has concentrated on measuring the relative influence of family members (Belch et al., 1985; Corfman and Lehman, 1987; Beatty and Talpade, 1994). However, this provides little insight into the nature of influence behaviour. Some researchers (Lee and Collins, 2000; Levy and Lee, 2004) have focused on exploring influence behaviour and the strategies adopted by family members, although there are limitations to this research and a gap exists in the literature concerning how children influence purchase decisions (Williams and Bums, 2000). The literature suggests that family members adopt various decision or influence strategies in an attempt to resolve conflict during purchase decisions (Davis, 1976; Spiro, 1983; Quails and Jaffe, 1992). It is argued that some form of conflict is highly likely during family purchase decisions because decision making involves integrating various individual preferences. Blood (1960), Sprey (1960), Sheth (1974) and Lee and Collins (2000) have recognised the potential for disagreement among family members in decision making. Drawing on previous research (Sheth, 1974; Davis, 1976; Spiro, 1983; Quails and Jaffe, 1992), Lee and Collins (2000) summarise the strategies used to influence family purchase decision.

| Strategy | Behaviour |
|------------|---|
| Experience | Using experience and knowledge as a source of information that will influence the outcome of the decision. |
| Legitimate | Emphasizing a role stereotype in order to obtain influence. For example, a mother may assume or point out that she is the one who deals with the provision of food and therefore should dominate this decision. |
| Coalition | Two or more members of the family decision making unit collude in order to obtain a particular outcome. |
| Emotion | A member of the decision making unit tries to persuade others by using emotive appeals, crying, pouting and other non verbal techniques in order to achieve influence |
| Bargaining | Giving in on this occasion in return for getting their way on some other occasion |

Influence Strategies (Lee and Collins, 2000)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology adopted for studying the research comprise of only secondary data through books, magazines, journals, periodicals and publications by government agencies. Secondary research involves using information that others have already compiled and is available in the public domain. As no research study to assess the family decision making process has been carried out in Lucknow city.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

The present study investigates the role of family in making decision regarding the purchase of consumer durable goods. It is observed from the study that there is an enormous and important role of family

when it comes to decision making regarding the purchases of consumer durable goods. The durable goods are not frequently purchased in the family and it needs the collective decision of the family for making right choice of the durable goods. The family becomes too cautious and conscious to make decisions regarding the purchase of durable goods. It is common perception amongst the members of the family that the durable goods are going to last for a longer period of time so the decision has to be careful and conscious and it can only be made by the family together. It is also found that every member in the family has different purchase perception and preference. While purchasing the consumer durable goods the view of every family member is considered and based on the view of family members the decision is taken. It becomes very important on part of marketer to assign greater roles and importance to family decision while deciding to market durable goods. This will help in continued and sustainable marketing strategy resulting into maximization of profits and widening the base of consumers in an era of high and volatile competition.

SUGGESTIONS

On the basis of our study we would like to suggest the following measures in order to give a pace to the marketing world.

The organization must pay focus on encouraging the family decision pattern in order to gain maximum advantage. The marketer has to realize the importance of family members when it comes to decision making for durable goods. The firms have to give importance to each and every member of the family constituting the determinants of decision making process. Durable goods are always high priced goods and some time needs technological filtration which can be done collectively by the family members. The goods which are high priced need collective decisions so the firms have to address this aspect also. The firms also have to take into account the liking and disliking of every member of the family when it comes to buying for durable goods. The family members always admire and appreciate the collective decision as in case of failure the onus of the decision will not fall on an individual. So the members of the family are to be regularly encouraged and coaxed. The firms have to encourage family members and encourage them to behave like one single unit.

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