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ETHICAL VALUES INFLUENCING BUYING BEHAVIOR OF CONSUMERS IN FRAGMENTED MARKETS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TRISSUR DISTRICT



J. Vijimol
Assistant Professor



ABSTRACT

This research gives to a profound understanding of the impact of sensitive and ethical factors on consumer buying behavior in fragmented marketing. It analyses the relationship between several independent variables, such as quality and value of product, culture, tradition, beliefs and food diet and habits as ethical values and marketing mix of products such as product, price, promotion and place as sensitive factors.

The need for this study is to determine the factors influencing consumer preferences and shopping behavior in the fragmented product markets. This study is an exploratory analyses and through pilot

study identified around 21 fragmented products in the product lines of ready-made food mixes, some vegan snacks foods, honey, some ayurvedic products, religious products. The data employed to analyze the factors influencing consumers' shopping behavior processes were obtained through a questionnaire that was conducted in a Coimbatore city. The major findings of the study indicated that, overall, the set of independent variables are moderately associated with the dependent variable. However, the in-depth analysis found that ethical factors and sensitive factors are strongly associated with consumer shopping behavior. These analyses make it possible to discover consumer decision making behavior. The results may assist marketers in understanding consumer behavior and improving consumer satisfaction.

KEYWORDS : *Fragmented marketing, Consumer shopping behavior, Ethical Values.*

INTRODUCTION

Learning of Ethical properties in the analysis of consume behaviour has been an important variable in marketing, especially in market segmentation, fragmentation and target marketing. Today the brands have to survive and grow in a volatile and turbulent market environment. Market fragmentation is the concept of separation of a market that is relatively uniform in character into different segments that have different preferences and demand patterns, each requiring different marketing approaches. The Fragmented markets are new segments in a previously homogeneous market which have their own distinct needs, requirements and preferences and corrode brand loyalty.

Continuous metamorphosis in the areas of technological improvements, new entry of competitors, inconsistent cost of raw materials, group dynamics of traders, rational customers and their forums have been constantly reminding brand designers to be more vigilant.

Culture is that complex whole, which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by humans as members of society. The cultural inheritance in the fragmented products leads to create sensible markets in India. Cultural beliefs and values can therefore be said to be mental images that affect a wide range of specific attitudes, which in turn influence the way a person is likely to behave in a specific situation. In the early 90's the leading companies entered into the fragmented markets after the Second World War, they tried to acquire the loyalty of the scattered people who spread around the corners of the globe with different ethical values and beliefs. The Procter & Gamble first created the fragmented markets especially for the Jewish community (MuellerHeumann, 2010). In the beginning it was hard because of the standards and strict ethical values (Eli Cohen, 2002). This made the revolution in fixing various standards by the segments or the communities who consume the particular fragmented products.

In India, the market is much diversified with the pool of segmented communities with specific faith and belief. Some of the leading brands like Procter & Gamble, ITC, Uniliver and Cadburys had started systemized marketing for the fragmented products. However the failures in fragmented marketing happened due to difficulty in measuring the sensitivity and sensibility. Hence present research aims to measure the sensitivity and sensibility in fragmented markets.

2. RESEARCH GAP AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The fragmented markets are created because of the process of intuition of culture and heritage (Economic Times, 2010). Branding a fragmented product is highly risky. The sensitivity among the fragmented products is also deviated within different segments. Most customers prefer to buy the products for some ethical reasons and different people have different ethical beliefs and standards. Researchers and not others recognize and ascribe importance to the ethical content in their decision situations. There are certain retail chains which focus on particular group of customers as in the case of Big Bazaar in Mumbai which is the only store in that format that stocks burqas. The area has significant Muslim population catchments. The store organizes an Iftaar party during the holy month of Ramzan. Other retail chains have not been completely able to bring the ethical sensitivity among the fragmented customers in a customised manner which is identified as a factor that results in reduced revenue earning. (Outlook Business, 2009).

The present study is successful to such an extent that if a company achieves the Law of Sensitivity especially in measuring sensitivity cost because of that the customers of the fragmented markets very sensitive in nature. The company concentrating to move its market towards fragmentation have to measure the sensitivity cost right from its production stage because it increases the quality of product and slickly enter into the fragmented market in a profitable manner.

The present research aims to identify the factors responsible for shopping behaviour of customers in choosing fragmented products

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The objectives of the study are.

- 1.To identify Ethical factors that affect customers to choose the fragmented products
- 2.To study the satisfaction level of customers of the fragmented product

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The research design adopted for this study is basically the collection of primary data. The data collection for this study conducted through questionnaires. The target groups of respondents for this study are categorized into marketers and consumers. The total initial sample size for the study is 350. Sampling technique adopted for this study is snowball sampling. The sensitivity analyses for this research studied on 185 marketers and for the analyses of sensibility the questionnaire have been issued to 165 customers in and around Coimbatore. Out of which 153 and 135 samples respectively considered reliable for the study.

Stage	purpose	Input	Process	Output
I	Pilot study (To check the validity of the study)	100 samples from customers	Analyzed with simple percentage analysis to identify sensible factors and chi square test to find out association.	Located ethical factors responsible for consumer buying behaviour. 21 product lines have been identified.
II	Hypotheses formulation	Review of literature and analysis for pilot study	Review	Formulated hypotheses
III	Collection of Primary data and Sampling	300 samples	Snowball sampling	Cron Bach Alpha
IV	To find out relationship between sensitive factors and consumer buying behaviour	Primary Data from Marketers	Pearsons Correlation Co-efficient	Statistically significant correlation between factors and shopping behavior.

5. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Major results and findings of initial stage of this study is discussed below

- Cronbach’s alpha was used to measure the internal consistency or how closely related a set of items This analysis was used to assess the inter-item reliability for each variable. Cronbach’s alpha suggested that the items have a relatively high degree of internal consistency (note that a reliability coefficient of 0.70 or higher is considered “acceptable” in most social science research. These alpha scores are acceptable for an exploratory analysis, indicating that the factors within each variable are inter-related.

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha
Culture	0.85
Tradition	0.94
Belief	0.95
Food Diet and Habits	0.77
Product	0.80
Price	0.72
Promotion	0.82
Place	0.82
Routine shopping behaviour	0.83

•Chisquare analysis have been done in order to find out the association. Each and every factors are analysed in various criteria dimensions and put into two-way analysis to apply chisquare test.

The hypotheses framed after reviewing literature and analysed in pilot study to find out the relationship of sensible factors in shopping behaviour of customers.

- H1: Quality and Value of Product influence the shopping behaviour.
- H2: Cultural factors influence the shopping behaviour
- H3: Traditional impact on shopping behaviour
- H4: Belief (religious) influences shopping behaviour
- H5: Impact of Food diet and habits on shopping behaviour

Relationship Of Ethical values with Consumer buying behaviour	Results
Quality and value	Significant
cultural	Significant
Tradition	Significant
Belief(religious)	Significant
Food diets and Habits	Significant

•Pearson's correlation coefficients between the variables associated with sensitivity of this study. To check Statistically significant correlation between sensitive factors(marketing mix) responsible for marketers to market fragmented products and shopping behavior The values of the Person's correlation coefficients in this study were rather low; there is not a strong relationship between the variables. The strongest correlation was between product of fragmented market and shopping behavior.

Sensitive Factors	Pearson Correlation-consumer behaviour	buying
Product	0.459	
Price	0.221	
Promotion	0.232	
Place	0.257	

6. CONCLUSION

This study contributes understanding of factors ethical values considered by consumers in fragmented marketing. This research analysis the factors in major in fragmented marketing. Moreover his study will help to explore more areas in fragmented marketing in future. As a result of this research further extensions can be possible more in the marketing of fragmented product and analysing the risk associated with planning, production, selling and profitability of fragmented products with the identified factors.

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