

Perceived Product Quality And Purchase Decision Of Consumers For Non-Durable Products In Salem

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the impact of perceived quality on consumer buying behavior for non-durable goods in Salem City, Tamil Nadu. A combination of descriptive and causal research designs was employed, utilizing structured questionnaires to gather data. These questionnaires were based on a five-point Likert scale to measure responses. The research confirms that consumers' perceptions of product quality play a significant role in their purchase decisions for non-durable goods. The findings highlight that perceived quality is a crucial factor influencing consumer behavior in the context of non-durable products, indicating that higher perceived quality leads to a greater likelihood of purchase.

Keywords : Non-durable products, Purchase decision and Product quality.

Introduction

Consumer behavior is the study of how individuals, groups, or organizations select, secure, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy their needs, and the effects these processes have on both consumers and society (Vijayalakshmi and Mahalakshmi, 2013). This field integrates elements from psychology and sociology to understand the decision-making processes of buyers, both individually and in groups. It examines individual consumer characteristics, such as demographics and behavioral variables, to understand their desires and attempts to assess the influence of social groups like family, friends, and society on consumer behavior.

Research indicates that consumer behavior is challenging to predict, even for experts (Vijayalakshmi and Mahalakshmi, 2013). Relationship marketing is a valuable tool for analyzing customer behavior, emphasizing the importance of the customer in marketing strategies. Consumer behavior encompasses the actions consumers take in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing of products and services that they believe will meet their needs (Shiffman and Kanuk, 2009). This includes what, why, when, where, and how they buy, as well as how often they use products, evaluate their purchases, and how these evaluations influence future purchases.

In an increasingly globalized world facing economic crises and intense competition, consumers are becoming more critical. Rapid changes in consumer demands and desires necessitate that companies intensify their research and development efforts to meet these evolving needs (Yakup and Jablonsk, 2012). Achieving consumer satisfaction, which is gaining importance globally, requires a deep understanding of consumer behavior.

Consumer behavior involves the processes individuals or groups go through to make purchasing decisions to satisfy their needs. This behavior is influenced by a wide range of factors, including earnings, demographics, and social and cultural influences, as well as external environmental factors (Brosekhan and Velayutham, 2013).

The concept of perceived quality is multifaceted. Gronroos (1984) and Rust and Oliver (1994) identified three dimensions of perceived quality: technical quality, functional quality, and the environment. Parasuraman, Berry, and Zeithaml (1991) proposed five dimensions: helpfulness, empathy, reliability, assurance, and the presence of tangible elements. Perceived quality is crucial for consumer decisionmaking, as consumers compare the quality of alternatives concerning price within a category. It is directly related to the reputation of the firm that produces the product. However, perceived quality is not the actual quality of a brand or product; it is the consumer's judgment of an entity's or service's overall excellence or superiority.

Consumers Behavior

Consumer behavior refers to the study of individuals, groups, or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, use, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society. It involves understanding the decision-making process of buyers as they go through various stages, including recognizing needs or wants, gathering information, evaluating options, making purchase decisions, and postpurchase behavior such as satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

According to Philip Kotler, a renowned author in marketing and consumer behavior, consumer behavior is influenced by various factors including cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors. Cultural factors such as values, beliefs, customs, and norms shape consumer behavior significantly, as they dictate what is considered acceptable or desirable in a particular society. Social factors encompass the influence of family, reference groups, social roles, and status, which can affect how individuals choose products or brands to align with their social identity.

Kotler emphasizes that understanding consumer behavior is essential for marketers and businesses to effectively design marketing strategies, develop products that meet consumer needs, set competitive pricing, create impactful promotional campaigns, and ensure satisfying customer experiences. By comprehending why and how consumers make decisions, businesses can better anticipate market trends, identify opportunities for innovation, and build long-term customer relationships.

Consumer behavior, as expounded by Philip Kotler and other scholars, is a multifaceted field that explores the intricate processes through which individuals or groups make choices about products and services. It underscores the importance of integrating psychological, social, cultural, and personal factors into marketing strategies to successfully meet consumer demands and achieve organizational objectives.

Non-durable Products:

Non-durable products are relevant to each other in various ways, primarily through their shared characteristics of frequent consumption and short lifespan. These products, such as perishable foods, toiletries, and household cleaners, cater to immediate consumer needs and are typically purchased on a regular basis due to their quick depletion. This cyclical demand creates a significant market dynamic where consumers continuously seek out replacements, contributing to a steady flow of sales and consumption.

Philip Kotler discusses these dynamics in the context of consumer behavior and marketing strategies. He emphasizes how understanding the rapid turnover and consumption patterns of non-durable products is crucial for businesses to effectively manage inventory, pricing, and promotional efforts. By leveraging consumer insights and behavioral data, businesses can tailor their marketing approaches to enhance brand loyalty and maintain competitive advantage in the fast-paced FMCG sector. Thus, the relevance of non-durable products lies not only in their utility but also in their strategic importance within the broader consumer goods market.

Objectives of this study

- To study the consumer buying behavior in purchasing in non-durable products.
- To examine the influence of perceived quality of the product on consumer buying decision in respect to consumer goods.

Statement of the Problem

Consumer behavior research is pivotal for marketers seeking to comprehend and forecast consumer purchasing behaviors within competitive markets. This research explores the complexities of consumer decision-making, focusing on the motivations behind purchases, the timing and locations of transactions, frequency of purchases, and post-consumption behaviors, including disposal habits. Studies indicate significant variability among consumers purchasing the same product, including differing purchase motivations, price points, usage patterns, and emotional connections.

In today's dynamic business environment, characterized by heightened consumer expectations and fierce market competition, understanding these nuances is crucial for marketers striving to meet evolving consumer demands effectively. This study aims to delve into consumer behavior, providing insights into the drivers influencing purchasing decisions, particularly in the realm of non-durable consumer goods. By uncovering these factors, the research seeks to inform strategic marketing initiatives aimed at enhancing consumer satisfaction and loyalty.

Review of Literature

The reviews the literature on consumer behavior to identify the factors influencing purchasing behavior of consumers and develop research framework and hypotheses.

Sajid, et,al (2022) while there is a growing trend towards internet shopping, a significant portion of the consumer market in underdeveloped countries like Pakistan remains unengaged. However, there has been a notable increase in global ecommerce activity. Despite this growth, Pakistan's ecommerce sector still holds untapped potential, presenting opportunities for marketers to target this segment and foster long-term growth. Their study employed a framework integrating the Technology

Acceptance Model (TAM) and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to analyze shifts in internet shopping habits. The findings underscored the influence of perceived benefits, usability, enjoyment, and social factors on consumer intentions, with minor moderating effects observed from gender and payment methods.

Svajdova (2021) examined the significant impact of external factors such as political actions and economic conditions on global markets. There has been a noticeable shift in consumer behavior patterns, particularly in the Czech Republic, affecting sales channels for various products including food, pharmaceuticals, clothing, footwear, and electronics. The study raises questions about the sustainability of these changes and the potential for long-term shifts in consumer habits.

Zolkepli, et,al. (2021) conducted research on mobile app usage patterns, focusing on perceived functionality, social impact, emotional value, and conditional factors. Through structural equation modeling and an online survey involving 392 participants, the study explored how app ratings and prices influence user behavior. Their findings provide insights

into effective mobile communication marketing strategies and underscore the critical role of user experience in app development.

Moon, et,al (2020) examined the evolving consumer behavior landscape in South Korea, highlighting a significant preference shift from offline to online shopping channels. Despite the surge in online shopping popularity, offline retail channels continue to offer unique advantages such as tactile product experiences and access to specialized items. The study advocates for a balanced approach integrating online and offline retail strategies to optimize economic activity and enhance retail space utilization.

Sheth (2020) identified four primary factors shaping consumer behavior: changes in workplace dynamics, shifts in social interactions, advancements in technology (e.g., online shopping), and regulatory influences. These factors have fundamentally reshaped global consumer habits, emphasizing the need for businesses to adapt and strategically plan amidst changing market conditions.

Research Methodology

The descriptive research design was adopted for the concerned research study. A sample size of 100 respondents were taken from Salem District of Tamil Nadu, including respondents of different demographic status were selected for the present study. Convenience sampling technique was used for the present study for collection of data. The study was conducted by using Primary data. The primary data for the present study was collected with the help of questionnaire. The secondary data for the present study was collected from journals, magazines, research articles, newspapers, and website. Interval statistical tools, correlation and regression method was used to analyze the collected data. Questionnaire has been constructed based on past literature available in this domain. Here, perceived products quality taken as independent variable and consumer purchase decision treated as dependent variable

The concerned research paper was initiated with the key objectives, to analyze the factors influencing buying behaviour of consumers of non durable products.

Analyses of the Research

Customers are the king of the market of modern business world. This study collected different viewpoints from the different respondents representing from different field. The survey questionnaire has been categorized with a view to understand consumer buying behavior and decisions of the respondents about dependent and independent variables ranging from “1” strongly disagree to “5” strongly agree. The respondents’ opinion has been analyzed using with descriptive, correlation and regression. Frequencies and percentage analysis technique used with help of SPSS 23.

Table 1: Consumer perception towards perceived quality

Perceived quality	Mean	Standard Deviations
Product features	4.20	0.124
Values for money	4.12	0.543
Brand name	4.06	0.213

Table 1 showed that the product feature is more concern about the perceived quality variable based on the consumers opinions.

Consumer Purchase Decision

This section shows the scenario of consumer purchase decision for purchasing consumer non-durable goods through descriptive analysis. In this study, consumer purchase decision includes six different statements.

Table 2: Consumer Purchase Decisions

Purchase Decisions	Mean	SD
I understand my need before taking buying decisions	3.76	0.94
I do not think about my need before buying	2.28	1.11
I understand the brand before buying the product	4.06	1.02
I compare the available alternatives before buying	3.86	0.73
I evaluate the available features before buying	4.06	0.68

I search information from various sources before buying	3.90	0.81
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The table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of and individual item and as a whole of consumer purchase decision. Among 6 statements, the statement I understand the brand before buying the product and I evaluate the available features before buying, have scored highest mean 4.06 with standard deviation of 1.02 and 0.68 respectively the statement two has scored the least mean of 2.28 with 1.11 standard deviation.

Karl Pearson’s Correlation coefficient is used to find out the relationship between dependent and independent variables. In this study consumer purchase decision is taken as dependent variable and perceived quality as an independent variable. The following table shows the relationship between dependent and independent variables without considering moderating variables.

Levin and Fox(2006) if p-value is less than 0.3 there is weak correlation between the variables. If p-value is greater than 0.3 but less than 0.6 there is moderate correlation between the variables and if p- value is greater than .06 there is strong correlation between the variables.

Table No. 3: Correlation Analysis

		CPD	Perceived Quality
Consumer purchase Decision	Correlation p-value	0.987	0.598 0.001
Perceived Quality	Correlation p-value	0.598 0.001	0.986

Table 3 shows significantly positive correlation between perceived quality and consumer purchase decision which is 0.598.

Table 4: Relationship between the consumer purchase decision with perceived quality

	Coefficient value of B	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
(constant)	2.157	0.295	7.322	0.001*
Perceived Quality	0.441	0.085	5.168	0.001*
R2	0.357	0.342	0.984	0.001*
Adjusted R2	0.344	0.087	0.981	0.001*
Standard Error of Estimate	0.509	0.293	3.002	0.001*
F- value	26.707	0.789	5.168	0.001*
p-value of F test	0.001	0.854	7.322	0.001*

Multiple regression is one of the most widely used techniques in the analysis of data in the social sciences (Bryman and Cramer, 2001). The technique can be used to analyze the relationship between a single dependent variable and several independent variables. Taking consumer purchase decision as dependent variable and perceived quality as independent variables. The independent variable is regressed with consumer purchase decision.

Major Findings of the research

The respondents are the males and females with different academic background, Intermediate, Bachelor and Masters with different age groups. And were engaged in different sectors such as bankers, teachers, business personnel, homemaker etc.

The study showed that there was significantly positive correlation between perceived quality and purchase decision of the consumers and that purchase attitude was moderately influenced by the perceived quality. The result indicated that the respondents were aware with the quality and brand and price of the product was not important factor for them.

According to respondents the quality of the product was the most important factor because use of those products were directly relating with their health and it also showed their concern on the health from the study.

Conclusion

The major objective of the study the factors influencing consumer purchase decision for non-durable products. Consumers are influenced by different factors in their purchase decisions for products to meeting the requirements. The research found that people were aware about the brand and the quality of the product. The findings showed perceived quality is the most important factor affecting consumer purchase intention.

The finding of this study is consistent with Iza, Syamsun and Najib (2016) who studied the effect of brand awareness and image on consumer perceived quality and purchase intention. The study found that brand awareness affects brand image, brand image affects perceived quality and perceived quality affects consumer purchase intention for both brand. This study is also consistent with, who measured the impact of brand awareness, brand association and brand perceived quality of female consumer's purchase decision of foreign make up products. The study revealed that there was a significant relationship between brand awareness, brand association and brand perceived quality on female consumer's buying decision for foreign make up products and these factors highly impact on female consumer's buying decision.

It can be concluded that perceived quality plays a crucial role in buying behavior. Consumers buy products on the basis of quality and consistency of the product quality which should be maintained by the marketers. The study also can be concluded that age and income level of the respondents were not the important factor in purchasing decisions. The data showed that there was no significant relationship of consumer purchase decisions with age and income level. This study was based on consumer buying behavior on non-durable products which are frequently purchased and consumed and these goods are required for them to satisfy their day to day needs.

So, income level and age do not influence on consumer purchase decisions.

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