

A Study On Consumer Buying Behaviour Of Home Appliances With Reference To LG Products

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INTRODUCTION

Consumer behaviour is the study of when, why, how and where people do or do not buy a product. Advancement in science and technology has offered man - equipments, machineries and apparatus, which have made life more comfortable and enjoyable. Televisions, washing machines, refrigerators, microwave ovens; cell phones are some of the contributions of science meant for expediting the house hold tasks, provide personal comfort, information and entertainment.

The Wharton Virtual Test Market (WVTM) Started in November of 1997, is an ongoing survey of Internet Users concerning electronic commerce and an online laboratory that can help gauge customer reaction to new strategies and products. It offers an inexpensive and efficient way to estimate the size and composition of the online consumer population and is a means to gain feedback on new products and approaches.

This study takes up the question of buying behaviour of customers and the reason for the preference of LG products in a wide context. It tries to identify the existing market structure for the product. This study tries to identify the factors influencing the customers to buy LG Products, and to identify the customer brand preference as well as to analyze the purchase behaviour of customers in preferring their choice of home appliances. To prepare an effective marketing strategy, a company must study its competitors as well as its actual and potential customers. That is especially necessary in slow growth markets because sales can be gained only by winning them away from competitors. The importance of sales promotion in modern marketing has increased mainly on account of its ability in promoting sales and preparing the ground for future expansion. Timing is yet another factor to be stressed in planning sales promotion. Certain demand fluctuations at particular times are predictable on the basis of accumulated historical information. Such fluctuations can sometimes be counted, even without special promotion.

Consumer buying behaviour is influenced by various factors. Normally, a person chooses a retail outlet or a showroom of a particular brand for making purchase of home appliances, when they approach a showroom for purchasing home appliances, the sales men or service provider of that show room will showcase only a few products, which are available in the showroom at that time, or they will show the pamphlets, brochures and prospectus. The customer will choose among the one and ask for the details. If the terms of purchase satisfy the customer, he/she will go ahead with the purchase of the product. In this case, the customers were unaware of various product details and purchase price of the products, along with its features.

Now -a- days, consumers are aware about a product they want to purchase - they get the entire details from the internet. For example, there are more than 35 varieties of Refrigerators, 75 varieties of new latest LG Air conditioners-Split ACs, more than 25 varieties of Top load Washing Machines, more than 15 varieties of Front load washing machines, 15 varieties of semi automatic washing machines, 25 varieties of micro wave ovens and 34 varieties of LCD televisions, 8 varieties of Plasma TVs and 12 varieties of Colour TVs. The EKB Model was further developed by RICE (1993), which suggested there should be a feedback loop. Foxall (2005) further suggested the importance of the post purchase evaluation and that the post purchase evaluation is due to its influence on future purchase patterns.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ✿ To study the factors influencing customer buying behavior of LG Home Appliances.
- ✿ To identify the customers' brand preferences towards purchasing Home Appliances.

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METHODOLOGY

A structured questionnaire was circulated to 200 respondents, who were using the LG home appliances. The present study is based on both primary and secondary data. While collecting the primary data, the researchers visited LG dealers and met the LG product users who were visiting at the showrooms. Factor analysis was used to find out the factors determining the customers' preference for LG products, and the test results were obtained with the help of SPSS package 17.0 version. Chi-square analysis was used for testing the hypothesis. It was used to find whether the income level of customers will affect the mode of payment, and whether the income level of customers will affect the satisfactory level of price of LG products.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The survey was restricted to Madurai city alone.
2. The data were collected from the dealers of LG and the customers who use LG Home appliances only.

Exhibit 1 : Financial Performance of LG	
Financial Year	Turnover (In Cr.)
2005	7,500
2006	8,250
2007	9,500
2008	10,730
2009	13,069
Source: www.lgezbuy.com	

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The relationship between buyer attitudes and buyer behavior with regard to global brands was analyzed in 2002 (international market surveys on brands, corporate ethics and consumer behaviour - MTV, 2002; Research International Observer [RIO], 2002). Klein demonstrated how consumers and activists, to an increasing extent, criticize and even boycott brands that do not live up to their moral claims, the surveys, on the other hand, suggest that brands are indeed still embraced by consumers. The surveys also indicated that although consumers might disregard and even take actions against a certain brand, they are willing to consume products of that brand. This challenges both the idea of brands being causally related to purchasing behavior and the postmodern suggestion that consumption is merely an expressive project. The surveys were presented as a response to Naomi Klein's (1999) influential book *No Logo*. Klein offers a critique of the moral standards of global super-brands, and the studies were named respectively *Yo Logo* and *Logo On*.

Recent research has pointed to the necessity of recognizing cultural processes, such as historical context and ethical concerns, in order to understand how brands are perceived by consumers (Schroeder and Salzer-Morling, 2005). *'Opportunistic invocations of almost any hot ideological sign that has value at any given moment'* has been witnessed by several authors. Corporate branding often makes its presence in the public sphere with a discourse characterized by ideological and political claims. (Goldman and Papson, 1996).

For decades, scholars of consumer behaviour have sought to refine models for consumer decision-making and consumer choice (e.g. Bettman, 1979; Holmberg, 1996; Holmberg, 2004; Howard, 1989). By focusing on relations such as: brand recognition to attitude (Engel et al., 1990); involvement to purchase (Linderstam, 1989); and information to brand confidence (Howard, 1989), a theory underpinning the field of buying behavior has emerged. The theory implies a hierarchy of cause-effects, where a particular behaviour, such as purchasing, is preceded by information processing. Hence, the information processing ends in a result such as brand recognition; an attitude to that brand; a confidence in it; an intention to purchase; and finally, the purchase itself. The buying behaviour theory thus suggests that there is a match between the information processed and the purchasing behaviour.

Generally, organizational and consumers act in their own interest. Industrial buyers purchase products mainly to meet organizational objectives i.e., reselling to make a profit, whereas, consumers buy for personal consumption or to meet the collective needs of the household unit. (Walters and Bergiel 1989.)

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

The researchers analyzed the factors that influence customers to purchase LG products. The data were collected from 200 customers through interview schedule and questionnaires.

Table 1 : Monthly Income Of Customers			
Sl.no	Income	No. Of Respondents	Percentage To Total
1.	₹ 5000 - ₹ 10000	28	14
2.	₹ 10000 - ₹ 15000	40	20
3.	₹ 15000 - ₹ 20000	92	46
4.	More than ₹ 20000	40	20
	Total	200	100
Source: Field Data			

The Table 1 depicts that out of 200 customers, 28 belonged to the income category of ₹ 5,000 - ₹ 10,000 per month, 40 customers belonged to the income category of ₹ 10,000 - ₹ 15000 per month, 92 customers belonged to the category of ₹ 15000 - ₹ 20000 per month, and 40 customers belonged to the income category of more than ₹ 20000 per month.

Table 2 : Mode Of Payment			
Sl. No	Mode of payment	No of respondents	Percentage to total
1.	Cash payment	52	26
2.	Installment	88	44
3.	Bank Loans	60	30
	Total	200	100
Source: Field Data			

Table 2 shows that 26% of the customers purchased electronic goods by paying cash, 44% of the customers purchased electronic items on installment, and the remaining 30% of the customers purchased electronic goods by availing bank loans.

Table 3 : Satisfaction With The Price Of LG Products			
S.no.	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage To Total
1.	Satisfied	152	76
2.	Not satisfied	48	24
	Total	200	100
Source: Field Data			

Table 3 clearly depicts that the pricing strategy of LG is highly suitable for the customers to buy the products as per their choices. More than 75% of the customers were satisfied with the prices offered by LG.

Table 4 : Hypothesis

H_0 = The Income level of customers will not affect the mode of payment.

H_1 = The Income level of customers is significant with the mode of payment while purchasing the Home appliances.

Observed Frequency				Expected Frequency			
Level of Income	Mode of Payment			Level of income	Mode of Payment		
	Cash	Installment	Total		Cash	Installment	Total
Low income (₹ 5000 -15000)	24	44	68	Low income (₹ 5000 -15000)	38.08	29.92	68
High income (above ₹ 15000)	88	44	132	High income (above ₹ 15000)	73.92	58.08	132
Total	112	88	200	Total	112	88	200
Source: Field Data							

Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	O-E	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² / E
24	38.08	-14.08	198.2464	5.2061
44	29.92	14.08	198.2464	6.6259
88	73.92	14.08	198.2464	2.6820
44	58.08	-14.08	198.2464	3.4132
			Total	17.9272

Level of significance : 5% level of significance

Degrees of Freedom = (r - 1) (C - 1)
= (2 - 1) (2 - 1)
= 1

Table Value = 15.364

Calculated Value = 17.9272

Since the calculated value is more than the table value, **the hypothesis is rejected at 5% significance level**. Hence, there is a significant relationship between income level and mode of payment made while purchasing Home appliances. Based on the income, even the pricing of a product is done by LG. So, the income level of customers will affect the mode of payment.

Table 5 : Hypothesis

H₀ = Income level of customers will not affect the satisfaction level of price of LG among the customers.

H₁ = The Income level of customers will have a significance with the satisfaction level of Price of LG among the customers.

Level of Significance: 5% level of significance

Observed Frequency				Expected Frequency			
Satisfactory Level of Price of LG	Income level of customers in ₹			Satisfactory Level of Price of LG	Income level of customers in ₹		
	Low Income	High Income	Total		Low Income	High Income	Total
	5000 - 15000	above 15000			5000 - 15000	above 15000	
Satisfaction	40	112	152	Satisfaction	51.68	100.32	152
No Satisfaction	28	20	48	No Satisfaction	16.32	31.68	48
Total	68	132	200	Total	68	132	200

Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	O-E	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² / E
40	51.68	-11.68	136.4224	2.6397
112	100.32	+11.68	136.4224	1.3598
28	16.32	+11.68	136.4224	8.3592
20	31.68	-11.68	136.4224	4.3062
Total				16.6649
Source: Field Data				

Degrees of Freedom = (r - 1) (C - 1) = (2 - 1) (2 - 1) = 1
V = 15.364

Table Value = 15.364

Calculated Value = 16.6649

Since the calculated value is more than the table value, **the hypothesis is rejected**. So, we can say that the income level of customers will affect the satisfaction level of price with the LG products.

From the Table 6, we can easily interpret that (32%) of the customers gave more importance to Good quality of the product and a competent price also influences them to purchase the product. The customers gave least importance to

Table 6 : Factors For Recommendations			
S.no.	Factors	No. of Respondents	Percentage To Total
1.	Considerable Price	56	28
2.	Good Quality	64	32
3.	Warranty	8	4
4.	Credit Facilities	32	16
5.	After Sales Service	16	8
6.	Brand image	24	12
	Total	200	100
Source: Field Data			

Table 7 : Factors Influencing The Customers To Prefer LG Products													
Factor 1		Factor 2		Factor 3		Factor 4		Factor 5		Factor 6		Factor 7	
Product width factor		Promotion factor		Product features		Service Factor		Brand image factor		Distribution factor		Innovation factor	
V05	.82107	V06	.81374	V20	.79300	V01	.79280	V16	.83638	V08	.75473	V03	.78676
V19	.20931	V13	.79527	V09	.59641	V02	.59287	V11	.20034	V17	.27127	V10	.18080
				V14	.59391	V12	.39109	V15	.57481				
				V18	.43002								

EIGEN VALUE							
Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7	Factor 8
2.71078	2.30261	2.08986	1.64810	1.47207	1.32779	1.22561	1.17288

COMMUNITY									
V1	V 2	V 3	V4	V5	V6	V7	V8	V9	V10
.73184	.66464	.71490	.71612	.74637	.75296	.63954	.67602	.74501	.63463
V 11	V 12	V 13	V 14	V 15	V 16	V 17	V 18	V 19	V 20
.63560	.79707	.72863	.81885	.64246	.78697	.78885	.50853	.51323	.70748
Source : Field Data									

the factors such as warranty, after sales service and to the brand image.

✿ **FACTOR 1** : Variable V5 (Range of Models) and V 19 (Capacity / Size of the product) have the factor scores of .82107 and .20931. This is called as the product width factor.

✿ **FACTOR 2** : Variable V6 (Advertisement) and V13 (Sales Promotion) have the factor score of .81374 and .79527. This is called as the promotion factor.

✿ **FACTOR 3** :Variable V20 (Good Quality), V9 (Attractive package), V14 (Trouble free operation) and V18 (Durability) have the factor scores of .79300, .59641 and .43002. This is called as the product feature factor.

✿ **FACTOR 4** : Variable V1 (After sales service), V2 (Warranty) and V12 (Replacement facility) have the factor scores of .79280, .59287 and .39109. This is called as the service factor.

✿ **FACTOR 5** : Variable V16 (Brand image), V11 (product features), V15 (Replacement by the company) have the factor scores of .83638, .20034 and .57481. This is called as the Brand image factor.

✿ **FACTOR 6** : Variable V8 (Availability of models) and V17 (Availability of spares) have the factor scores of .75473 and .27127. This is called as the Distribution factor.

✿ **FACTOR 7 :** Variable V3 (Innovation), V10 (Pleasant appearance) have the factor scores of .78676 and .18080. This is called as the innovation factor.

✿ **FACTOR 8 :** Variable V7 (Credit facilities) and V4 (Considerable price) have the factor score of .78726 and .50604. This is called as the price factor.

✿ Variable V14 (trouble free operation), V12 (Replacement facility), V17 (Availability of spares), V16 (Brand image) and V6 (Advertisement) have the highest h^2 value of .81885, .79707, .78697 and .75296. It shows that the effort of the manufacturers is needed in respect of this variable. The manufacturers have to concentrate on these variables to promote the sales.

EIGEN VALUE

The sum squared value of factor loading relating to a factor, is referred to as Eigen Value, which indicates the relative importance of each factor in accounting for the particular set of variable being analyzed. Factor 1 (Product width factor) has the highest Eigen Value of 2.71078. Factor 2 (Promotion factor) and Factor 3 (Product features factor) have the Eigen Value of 2.30261, 2.08986 respectively. So, the manufacturers have to concentrate on these factors to promote the sales.

FACTORS SHOWING THE EFFICIENCY OF THE HOME APPLIANCES

Table 8 : One-Sample t test statistics -Efficiency						
Factors	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T value	Significance
Efficiency Computer	500	3.64	.994	.044	82.759	.000
Efficiency Refrigerator	500	3.94	.907	.040	98.036	.000
Efficiency Microwave Oven	500	3.86	.988	.044	88.225	.000
Source: Field Data						

From the above Table 8, it was found that *Efficiency* was considered to be an important factor by the consumers while purchasing a refrigerator, with a mean value of 3.94, which is followed by Microwave Oven (mean=3.86). The consumers purchasing a computer were meticulous about efficiency standards (mean=3.64). The 't' values 82.759, 98.036, and 88.225 clearly indicate that the consumers purchasing a refrigerator are more meticulous about *Efficiency* than the consumers who were purchasing a computer. In Chennai city, the consumers purchasing a refrigerator also look for the purchase of a Microwave Oven. Therefore, for the meticulous consumers, an appliance that scores well on the *Efficiency* ground becomes a favored brand for the purchase of refrigerators and microwave ovens.

FACTORS SHOWING THE AFTER SALES SERVICE OF THE HOME APPLIANCES

✿ **After sales service :** After-sales service is an absolute state. The Collins Dictionary describes *unique* as meaning, “without equal, incomparable, unequalled, unmatched, being the only one of a particular type, and very remarkable”. In the purchase of durable products, after-sales service is an important factor to be considered. Everybody wants to purchase a unique durable product.

Table 9: One-Sample t test statistics -After sales service						
Factors	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T value	Significance
After sales service - Computer	500	3.59	1.037	.046	78.298	.000
After sales service - Refrigerator	500	3.68	.946	.042	87.756	.000
After sales service - Microwave Oven	500	3.47	1.004	.044	78.027	.000

Based on the results given above, it can be concluded that the after-sales service is widely considered by the consumers to be a very important factor while purchasing a home appliance. The Mean value for refrigerators is 3.68, followed

by the consumers purchasing a computer, with a mean value of 3.59. In the purchase of a Microwave Oven, the after-sales service factor was given less importance, with a mean value of 3.47. The 't' values : 78.298, 87.756, 78.027 clearly indicate that the consumers' purchasing refrigerators were more meticulous about the after-sales service for refrigerators, than the consumers purchasing a computer. In Chennai city, at the time of purchase of a Microwave Oven, the after-sales service factor was not specifically considered to be extremely important (as it is) in comparison with the purchase of refrigerators.

FACTORS SHOWING THE MARKETABILITY OF THE HOME APPLIANCES

✿ **Marketability** : Marketability is not simply about naming a product, or creating a logo for it (Davis 2002). On the other hand, it relates to creating a distinct unique identity for a product or a service, to allow the consumers to identify the marketability with respect to its personality, and the feelings that it brings out within the minds of the consumers. According to Al Ries (2004), Marketability creates a difference in the minds of the consumer in terms of image. It can be a set of promises, implying trust and consistency, simultaneously answering expectations. The Marketability becomes a single idea in the minds of the consumer, with respect to the identity of the product. Hence, Marketability becomes a physical/emotional trigger, which creates a relationship between the consumers and the product.

Table 10: One-Sample 't' Test Statistics- Marketability						
Factors	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t value	Significance
Marketability Of Computer	500	4.08	.898	.040	102.654	.000
Marketability of Refrigerator	500	3.52	.939	.042	84.651	.000
Marketability of Microwave Oven	500	3.42	.947	.042	81.605	.000

Sample t - test had been applied to analyze the behavior of the consumers. The results of the test reveal that the consumers purchasing a computer have more interest in marketability of durable products (mean value 4.08) in comparison to the consumers purchasing a refrigerator (mean value 3.52). While purchasing a Microwave Oven, the marketability preference was given less significance (mean value 3.42). The 't' values 102.654, 84.651, 81.605 clearly indicate that consumers purchasing a computer are very strong in their marketability preference in comparison with consumers purchasing a refrigerator. The marketability name is not specifically considered at the time of purchase of Microwave Ovens.

Table 11 : Electronic Items Owned By The Respondents								
Sl.No	Products	Company						
		LG	Samsung	Onida	Whirlpool	Sony	Others	Total
1.	Television	88	48	28	-	8	28	200
2.	Refrigerators	40	16	-	68	-	24	148
3.	Washing machine	40	20	16	40	-	8	124
4.	Microwave Oven	32	12	-	20	-	16	80
5.	Cell phones	42	10	-	-	38	90	180
Source : Field Data								

The Table 11 shows the electronics items owned by the respondents. Many customers prefer LG products due to the company's promptness in providing the after-sales service. The durability of the product is also the greatest factor to make the purchase. Samsung stood as the second highest competitor for LG in the market.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This section deals with the factors influencing the customers to prefer LG products, their brand preference and purchase behaviour and the researchers found the following facts:

✿ Out of 200 customers, 28 belonged to the income category of ₹ 5000 - ₹ 10000, 40 belonged to the income group of ₹ 10000 - ₹ 15000, 92 fell in the income group of ₹ 15000 - ₹ 20000, and the remaining 40 belonged to the income group of more than ₹ 20000.

✿ With the help of factor analysis, the researchers found that Brand image, Range of models and Advertisements motivate the customers to prefer the LG brand of products. Total factor scores of this variable are .83638, .82107 and .81374. Trouble free operation, replacement facility and availability of spares have the community score of .81885, .79707 and .78697. So, the manufacturer has to concentrate on these variables to promote the sales. Product width factor, promotion factor and product feature factor have the Eigen value of 2.71078, 2.30261 and 2.08986. So, the manufacturer has to concentrate on these factors to promote the sales.

✿ Out of 200 customers, 52 respondents purchased their electronic goods for cash, 88 purchased the electronic goods for installment purposes, and the remaining 60 purchased the electronic goods for bank loans.

✿ With the help of chi - square test, the researchers proved that the income level of customers will affect the mode of payment.

✿ Out of 200 customers, 144 of the respondents were satisfied with the sales service provided by LG products.

✿ Out of 200 customers, 152 of the respondents were satisfied with the price of LG products.

✿ With the help of chi square test, the researchers proved that the income level of customers affects the satisfaction level of respondents with the price of LG products.

CONCLUSION

Consumer buying behaviour is influenced by internal factors such as demographic, psychographics (lifestyle), personality, motivation, knowledge, attitude, beliefs and feelings. Consumer behaviour is concerned with consumer need for action in the direction of satisfying his needs.

The external factors which influence consumer behaviour were as follows: culture, sub culture, locality, royalty, ethnicity, family, social class, past experience, reference groups, lifestyle and gender. Apart from the company, the dealers are also making various efforts to improve the sales. So, it is essential for all the companies to satisfy the requirements of dealers as well as customers to increase the sales. Poor service facility, lack of replacement facility, high price and price difference among the dealers are some of the problems faced by the customers and dealers. Apart from this, the researcher found that customers have a good opinion about LG brands.

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