"Understanding Consumer intellect: Examining the Psychological Patterns of Buying Behavior

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ABSTRACT

The human mind is intricate, flexible, and holds limitless potential, serving as the repository for ideas, emotions, memories, opinions, and perceptions. Decision-making, being a mental activity, is significantly influenced by the mind. Consumer psychology is crucial in influencing choices about purchasing goods and services, with factors like past experiences, peer reviews, occupation, economic conditions, lifestyle, and personality playing a pivotal role in shaping consumer behavior. Understanding consumers' perceptions is vital since their opinions and behaviours impact marketing strategies at every stage, from production to sales promotion. This paper aims to investigate consumers' buying habits, preferences, and market beliefs. It will also explore whether consumers are conscious of their transactions and exhibit rational decision-making. As a result, the study is intended to assist researchers, scholars, advertising agencies, and other stakeholders in comprehending the consumer perspective and adapting their strategies accordingly.

Keywords: Mind Complexity, Consumer Psychology, Buying Behavior, Consumer Perceptions, Marketing Strategies.

Introduction

The future actions of individuals are intricately tied to their beliefs, shaped by the crucible of past experiences. The study of the buying and purchasing decision-making process has remained a central focus in consumer behaviour for over three decades, as highlighted by Divya Malhan in 2020. The American Marketing Association encapsulates consumer behaviour as the dynamic interplay of affect and cognition, behaviour, and the environment, governing the exchange aspects of human lives. Over recent years, the decision-making process and its impact on purchase intention have undergone substantial changes, reshaping the landscape of consumer behavior, as noted by Stankevich in 2017. A noteworthy revelation emerges, establishing a robust correlation between customer satisfaction and retention, where the former not only retains customers but significantly influences critical financial metrics, including revenue, earnings per share, and stock prices, as underscored by Williams and Naumann in 2011.

Consumer psychology, although intricate, plays a pivotal role in demand analysis. Consumers seek goods and services that offer utility, a subjective concept contingent on individual preferences, situational dynamics, and temporal considerations. The fluid nature of utility implies that a product providing satisfaction at one point in time may not necessarily offer the same level of utility on another occasion, emphasising the nuanced influence of human psychology. Aligning business activities with a profound understanding of consumer psychology can lead to enhanced consumer attraction, retention, and substantial profit growth for a company.

At the forefront of these efforts is the marketing manager, whose primary responsibility is to uncover the myriad factors influencing the purchasing decisions of consumers across diverse market segments before implementing

marketing strategies. This proactive approach is crucial, as it forms the foundation for developing effective and targeted marketing strategies that resonate with the intricacies of consumer behavior. Recognising and adapting to these psychological nuances not only fosters stronger connections with consumers but also positions a company strategically for sustained success in the competitive marketplace.

CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

Consumer behavior is the understanding of the acquisition, use, and disposal of goods and services. The way a product or service is delivered to its final users can be seen in the consumer's behavior. Having knowledge of consumer behavior is always advantageous when developing any marketing strategy. It is correctly noted that a firm's ability to survive in a competitive environment depends on its ability to comprehend consumer behavior.

- Consumer behavior is precisely defined in the following manner. According to the American Marketing Association, it is described as "the dynamic interaction of affect and cognition, behavior and the environment by which human beings conduct the exchange aspects of their lives."

- Kuester (2012) further refines the concept, stating that consumer behavior is "the study of individuals, groups, or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society."

- Recognizing the significance of consumer behavior is vital in gathering information from consumers to comprehend the tactics used to influence their behavior. Consumer buying behavior specifically refers to the purchasing habits of individuals and families who acquire products and services for their personal use (Kumar, 2010).

Factors influencing consumer behaviour

There are 5 major factors that influence consumer behavior:

Source: Business Jargons

- Psychological factor - A key factor in determining customer behavior is human psychology. Motivation, perception, learning, attitudes, and beliefs are a few of the crucial psychological elements.
- Social factors - Due to their social nature, humans are constantly surrounded by people who can affect their purchasing decisions. Family and social groups are examples of social factors.
- Cultural factors - consumer behavior is significantly influenced by culture. Social class, culture, and subculture are all included in it.
- Personal factors - Age and life stage, profession, financial condition, way of life, personality, and self-concept are all examples of personal aspects.
- Economic factors - Consumer behavior is also influenced by economic factors like income, the cost of the good or service, and the accessibility of credit.

Tools of Marketing

Advertisement is one of the most expensive but the most effective marketing communication tool that has a great impact on consumers' psychology. Advertising is everywhere in the colorful, modern world of marketing

communication, making it challenging to stand out. It is difficult for an advertising campaign's designer to stand out from the competition and capture viewers' attention. In modern times it is playing an eminent role in persuading and inducing the customers in purchasing.While drafting an advertisement it is eminent to decide its theme and the attracting element like inclusion of endorsers, logos and taglines, fun element in advertisement and advertisement showing real facts with emotional touch that can leave a mark on the viewers. Other than marketing there are many other tools of marketing, some of them are:

- Customer relationship
- Marketing automation
- E-mail
- Social media
- Lead capture and conversion
- Advertising
- Search engine optimization

Walmart's founder Sam Walton once famously said, "There is only one boss. The customer can fire everybody in the company from the chairman on down, simply by spending his money somewhere else." Customer currently controls the consumer market as an emperor rather than as the "King" of the market. (Vinodbhai Patel 2020) As a result, in addition to the initial four of those marketing pillars, Public Opinion has also been added: Product, Prices, Promotion, Place and Public Opinion. With 356 million children aged 10 to 24, India has the largest youth population in the world (UN reports). As a result, the consumer market in India is expanding primarily as a result of the population's high proportion of young people and rising standard of living.The decision-making processes and behaviors of those who purchase and use goods are referred to as buying behavior. (Manoj Kumar Sharma 2014)

People develop attachments to various goods and services around the world, and research indicates that they don't always choose them solely based on how well they perform as they may also be influenced by a product's reputable brand, first-rate after-sales service, or other factors. It is a well-known fact that consumers purchase particular brands for legitimate non-functional reasons related to emotional values or additional services and benefits, also known as the "augmented brand" or associated services and benefits.

NEED OF THE STUDY

Markets today differ from those of the past and are characterized by heightened competition, constant innovation in the goods and services offered, and a larger number of businesses operating in the same market. A favorable young population composition and rising disposable incomes are the main forces behind the expansion of India's consumer market.Time is more valuable to today's youth as their life is moving at a very fast pace.For more than 30 years, the study of purchasing and the decision-making process has been a major focus of consumer behavior research.
 Knowing the customer well in this situation is crucial (Varadarajan, 2020). Innovation and meeting customer expectations can only be accomplished through an analysis of the variables directly influencing consumer behavior. This research is necessary for marketers to be able to enhance their campaigns and more successfully target their audiences (Ding et al., 2020).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A sample of 100 consumers was selected where consumers of Rajasthan were population. Descriptive method was used for the research study. Online survey technique was used to gather primary data. For this purpose, a questionnaire was prepared through Google Forms and Chain-referral sampling under non-probability technique was used. Chain-referral sampling was deemed effective since it reaches a large number of populations in least time as compared to other sampling methods.

OBJECTIVES

1. To find out gender-wise buying preference and consumer cognizance.
2. To find out age-wise buying preference and consumer cognizance.

HYPOTHESIS

1. There is no significant difference in the buying preference of Males and Females.
2. There is no significant difference in the buying preference across age-group.
3. There is no significant difference in the cognizant buying behavior of males and females.
4. There is no significant difference in the cognizant buying behavior across age-group.
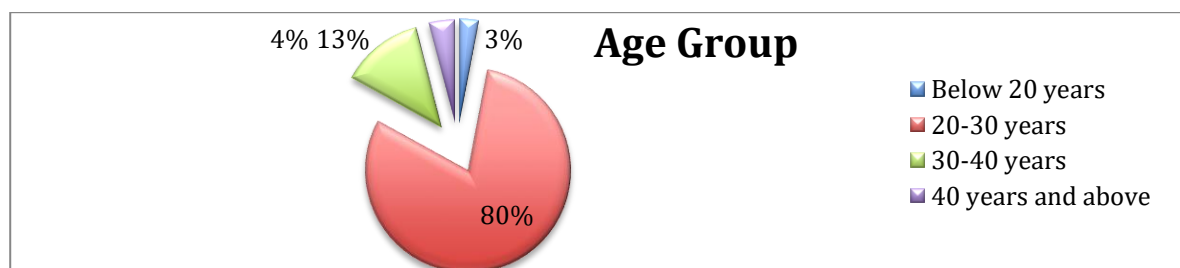
ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY

TABLE 1 – AGE-GROUP WISE CLASSIFICATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

AGE GROUP	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Below 20 years	3	3.0	3.0
20-30 years	80	80.0	83.0
30-40 years	13	13.0	96.0
40 years and above	4	4.0	100.0
Total	**100**	**100.0**	

(**Source:** Primary data from questionnaire)

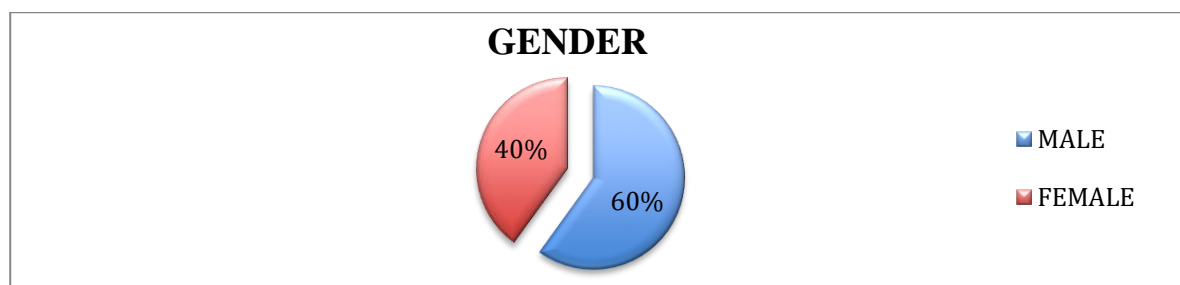**CHART 1**– AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS

It can be clearly depicted from the above table and Pie chart that 3% of the respondents are under the age of 20 years, 80% of the respondents are in the age group of 20–30 years, 13% of the respondents are in the age group of 30–40 years, and 4% of the respondents are above the age of 40 years. Therefore, it shows that the maximum number 80% of respondents are in the age group of 20–30.

TABLE 2 – GENDER OF RESPONDENTS

GENDER	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
MALE	60	60.0	60.0
FEMALE	40	40.0	100.0
TOTAL	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**

(**Source:** Primary data from questionnaire)

CHART 2 – GENDER OF THE RESPONDENTS

The above table and Chart 2 depicts that from the total 100 respondents Males are 60% and Females are 40%.

TABLE 3 – PROFESSION WISE CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS

PROFESSION	Frequency	Percent
Assistant Professor	10	10.0
Home Maker	3	3.0
Business	12	12.0
Government Servant	6	6.0
School Teacher	7	7.0
Other Private Job	16	16.0
Student	35	35.0
Professional Degree	11	11.0
Total	**100**	**100.0**

(**Source:** Primary data from questionnaire)

Chart 3: PROFESSION WISE CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS
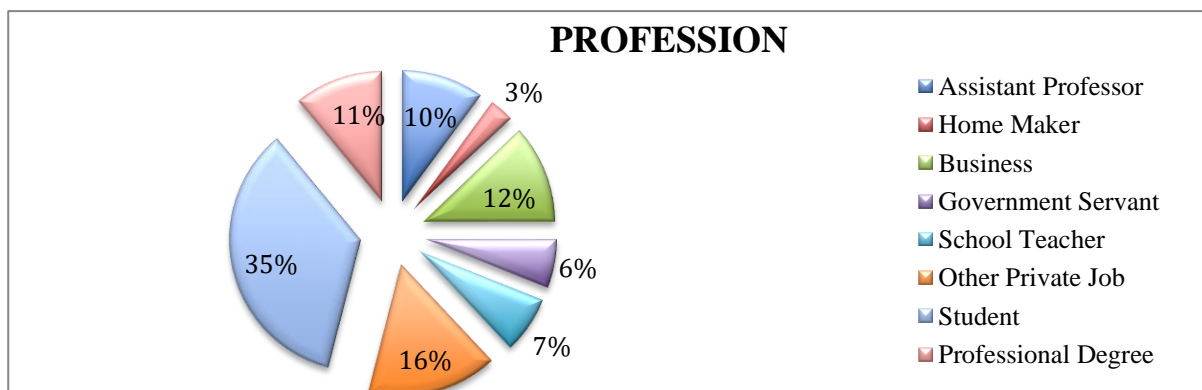
Purchasing habits of the respondents

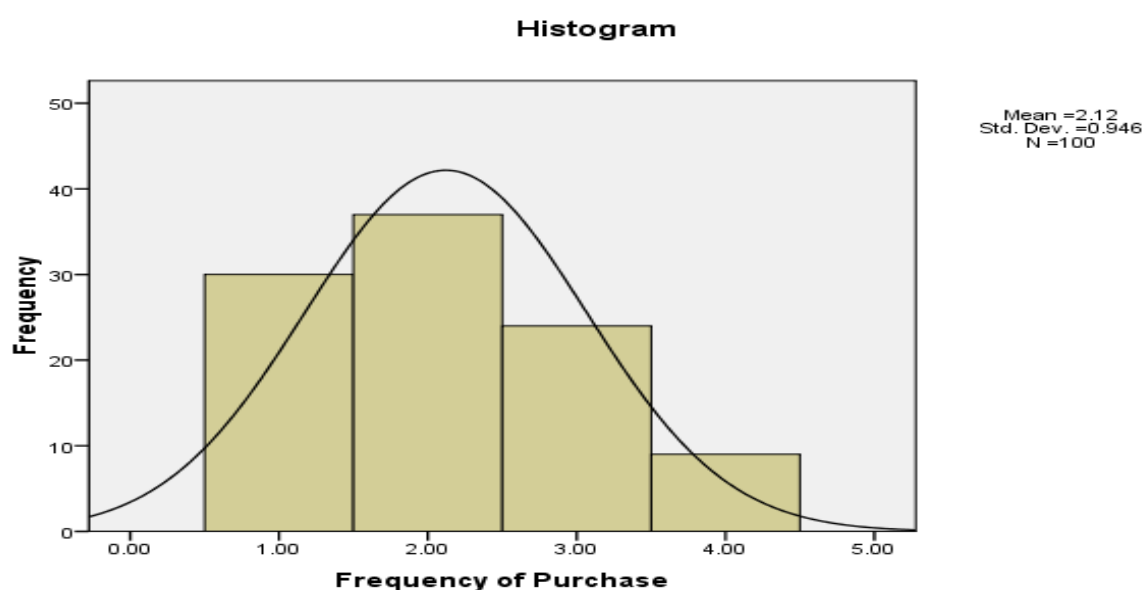**TABLE 4 –** PURCHASE FREQUENCY WISE CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS

Frequency of Purchase	
Valid	**100**
Missing	**0**
Mean	**2.1200**
Median	**2.0000**
Mode	**2.00**
Skewness	**.414**
Std. Error of Skewness	**.241**

It can be depicted from the above table that since Mode is 2, "Frequently" is the value that appears most often in this set of data, so in the above table Mean, Mode and Median are approximately equal to each other, the distribution can be assumed to be approximately symmetrical.

FREQUENCY OF PURCHASE	Frequency	Percent
Very Frequently	30	30.0%
Frequently	37	37.0%
Occasionally	24	24.0%
Rarely	9	9.0%
Never	0	0%
Total	100	100.0%

It can be observed from the above tables and histogram that 30% of the respondents very frequently demand for goods and services, 37% of the respondents demands for goods and services frequently, 24% of them occasionally buy goods and avail services,9% of them rarely prefer to buy goods and avail services and the respondents who had never purchased and commodity or availed any service are 0. Therefore, from the above paragraph it can be depicted that maximum (37%) of the respondents frequently purchase goods and services.

CHART 4 - FREQUENCY OF PURCHASES

It is depicted from the Histogram that the frequency distribution is Asymmetrical and Mean > Median & Mode and the curve is skewed Right side, therefore it is Positively Skewed.

TABLE 5– SHOPPING PREFERENCE WISE CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS

Shopping preference	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Shopping through online mode	41	41.0	41.0
Personally going to stores	59	59.0	100.0
Total	**100**	**100.0**	

**CHART 5**– SHOPPING PREFERENCE OF RESPONDENTS
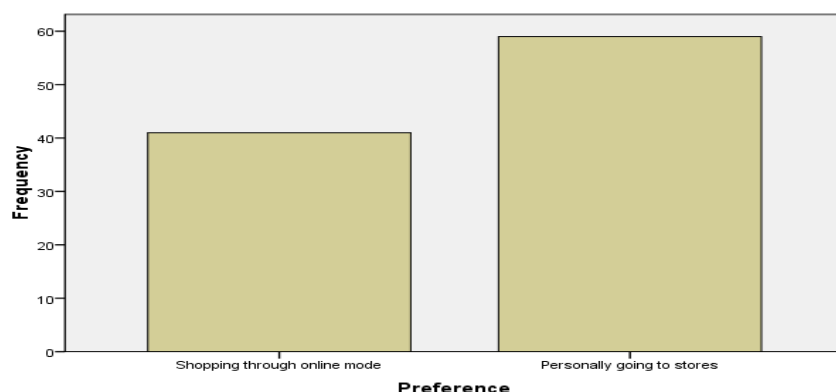
It is clear from the above table and bar graph that 41% of the respondents prefer shopping through online mode and remaining 59% of the respondents prefer personally going to the stores. Hence maximum number of respondents prefers shopping through offline mode.

TABLE 6 – BILL'S SIGNIFICANCE WISE CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONDENCE

Significance of keeping the bills after purchase	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very Important	82	82.0	82.0
Moderately Important	18	18.0	100.0
Not Important	0	0	100.0
Total	**100**	**100.0**	

CHART 6 – SIGNIFICANCE OF KEEPING BILLS AFTER PURCHASE
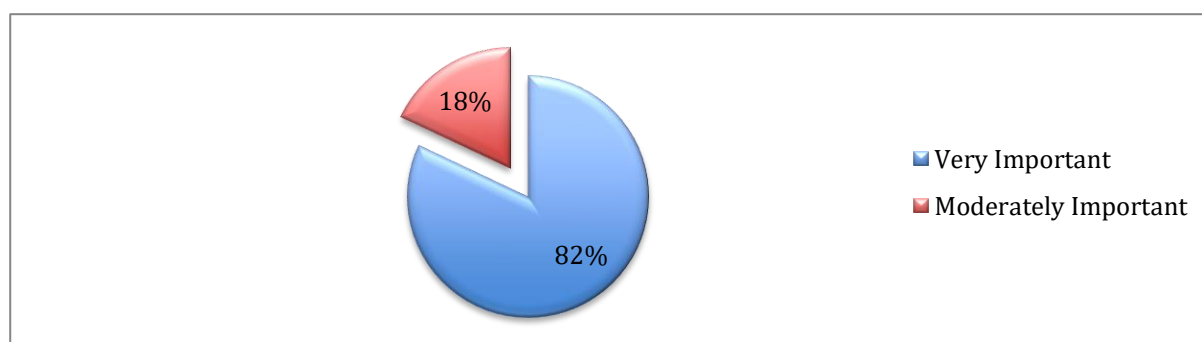
It can depicted from the above table and Pie chart that 82% of the respondents think that keeping the bill after purchases, at least until you are fully satisfied with the product is Very Important and 18% of the respondents find it Moderately Important. Fortuitously none of the respondents fined it Not Important to keep the bill.

TABLE 7 – PRIORITY TO PRODUCT DESCRIPTION WISE CLASSIFICATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

Number	Valid	100
	Missing	0

Mode	2
Minimum	1
Maximum	5

Priority to which product description				
VALID	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Price and weight	40	40.0	40.0	40.0
Manufacturing and expiry date	51	51.0	51.0	91.0
Brand name	4	4.0	4.0	95.0
Place of manufacturing	2	2.0	2.0	97.0
Ingredients used and indication to use	3	3.0	3.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

CHART 7 – PRIORITY TO PRODUCT DESCRIPTION
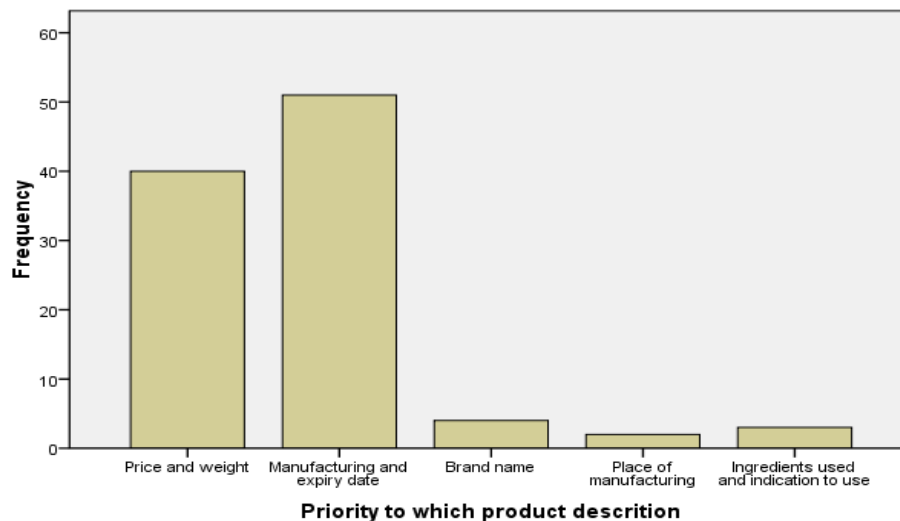
It can be stated that 40% of the respondents give priority to Price and weight of the product while purchasing it, 51% of the respondents notice the Manufacturing and expiry date of the product before purchasing it, 4% of the respondents give priority to the Name of Brand of the products they are going to buy, 2% of the respondents take note of the place of manufacturing of that product that the wish to buy and 3% of the respondents observe the Ingredients used and indication to use of the product before purchasing it.

TABLE 8 Attractive elements in advertisement wise classification of respondents

What attracts you the most in an advertisement or makes you believe in the product				
		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Endorser (famous personalities) sharing their experience about the product while advertising i	14	14.0	14.0
	Logos and taglines of the product	21	21.0	35.0

Advertisements showing real facts with emotional touch	52	52.0	87.0
Fun element in the advertisement	13	13.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	

CHART 8 – ATTRACTIVE ELEMENT IN AN ADVERTISEMENT
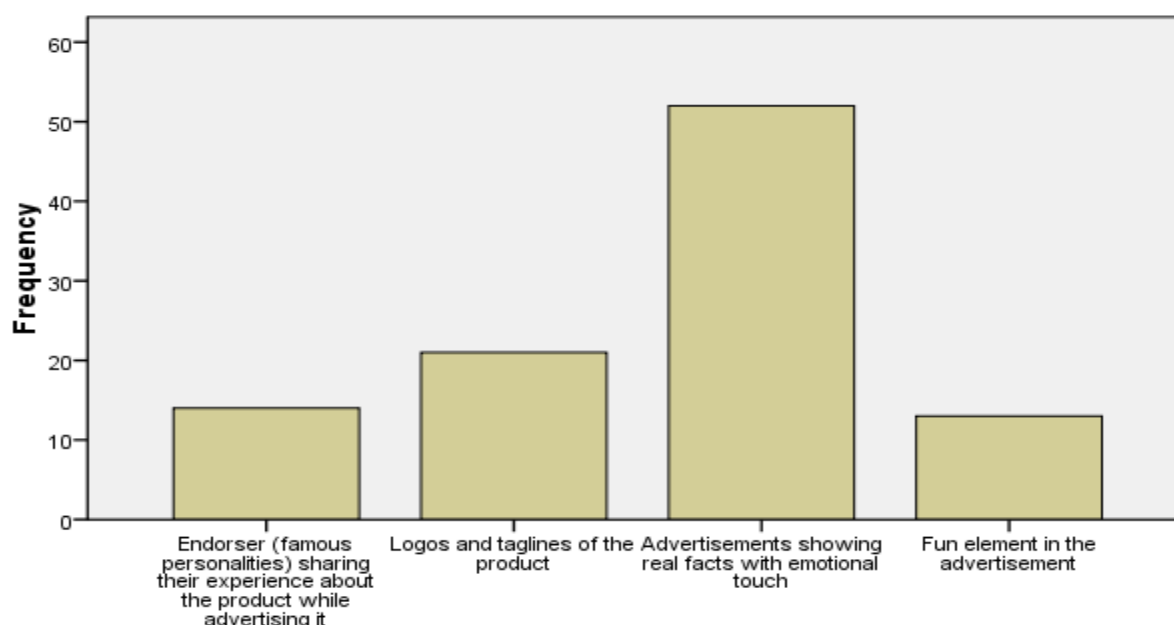
What attracts you the most in an advertisement or makes you believe in the product

The above table and graph depict that respondent find the advertisement showing real facts with emotional touch are most attractive more than half of the respondents (52%) opted the third option.

BIVARIATE ANALYSES: CROSS TABULATION AND LAYERED CROSS TABULATION

Bivariate Analysis is one of the simplest forms of quantitative analysis of data. Here, two variables are analyzed in order to determine the empirical relationship between them. It is helpful in testing simple hypothesis of association. Cross tables are used to tabulate the interaction between two variables. Layered cross tabulation is used to tabulate the interaction between variables using layer.

BIVARIATE ANALYSIS CROSS TABULATION

TABLE 9 – CONSUMERS' OPINION ON GETTING CHEATED GROUNDED BY AGE-GROUP

	Exploitation Chances		Online Shopping	Offline Shopping	Not Answered	Total
Age Group	Below 20 years	Count	3	0	0	3
		% within Age Group	100.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
	20-30 years	Count	73	7	0	80

		% within Age Group	91.2%	8.8%	.0%	100.0%
	30-40 years	Count	11	1	1	13
		% within Age Group	84.6%	7.7%	7.7%	100.0%
	40 years and above	Count	2	1	1	4
		% within Age Group	50.0%	25.0%	25.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	89	9	2	100
		% within Age Group	89.0%	9.0%	2.0%	100.0%

This table presents consumers' opinions on the chances of getting cheated in online and offline shopping, categorized by age groups. Let's break down the interpretation:

1. **Exploitation Chances:** The first column represents the different aspects or categories related to the perceived chances of exploitation or cheating.
2. **Shopping Channels:** The table is divided into two main categories - "Online Shopping" and "Offline Shopping," indicating whether the respondents are considering the chances of exploitation in online or traditional brick-and-mortar shopping.
3. **Not Answered:** This column shows the count of respondents who did not provide an answer.
4. **Total:** This column represents the sum of responses within each category.
5. **Age Groups:** The table is further segmented by different age groups, namely "Below 20 years," "20-30 years," "30-40 years," and "40 years and above."
   - **Count:** This is the number of respondents within each age group who provided their opinion on the chances of exploitation in online and offline shopping.
   - **% within Age Group:** This represents the percentage distribution of responses within each age group for the respective shopping channels.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

1. **H_0** = There is no significant difference in the buying preference of Males and Females.

   H_1 = There is a significant difference in the buying preference of Males and Females.

z-Test: Two Sample for Means	MALE	FEMALE
Mean	0.2	0.2
Known Variance	0.1627	0.1641
Observations	60	40
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Z	0	
P(Z<=z)	0.5	
z Critical	1.644853627	

Table explains the mean, variance significance value and critical value of buying preference across consumers' gender. For that matter a null hypothesis was tested with the help of non-parametric tool. It is to be noted that the null hypothesis will be rejected if the p-value comes <.05, that is Z-test is applied at 5 percent level of significance. If the P-value is >.05, the Null hypothesis will be accepted and there will be no difference in the buying preference of Males and Females.

Since the P-vales are .5, i.e. more than .05, H_0 is accepted.

So there is no significant difference in the buying preference of Males and Females.

2. **H_0** = There is no significant difference in the buying preference across age-group.

   H_1 = There is a significant difference in the buying preference across age-group.

ANOVA					
BUYING PREFERENCE	**Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Between Groups	3.031	3	1.010	7.478	.000
Within Groups	12.969	96	.135		
Total	16.000	99			

Table explains Sum of Squares, df, Mean Square, F-value and critical value (significance) of buying preference across consumers' age-group. For that matter a null hypothesis was tested with the help of non-parametric tool. It is to be noted that the null hypothesis will be rejected if the p-value comes <.05, that is ANOVA test is applied at 5 percent level of significance. If the P-value is >.05, the Null hypothesis will be accepted and there will be no difference in the buying preference across Age-groups.

Since the P-vales is .000, i.e. less than .05, H_0 is Rejected.

So there is a significant difference in the buying preference across age-group.

3. H_0 =There is no significant difference in the cognizant buying behavior of males and females.
   H_1= There is no significant difference in the cognizant buying behavior of males and females.

z-Test: Two Sample for Means	MALES	FEMALES
Mean	0.883333	0.6
Known Variance	0.61	0.91
Observations	60	40
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Z	1.561672	
P(Z<=z)	0.059183	
z Critical	1.644854	

Table explains the mean, variance significance value and critical value of buying preference across consumers' gender. For that matter a null hypothesis was tested with the help of non-parametric tool. It is to be noted that the null hypothesis will be rejected if the p-value comes <.05, that is Z-test is applied at 5 percent level of significance. If the P-value is >.05, the Null hypothesis will be accepted and there will be no difference in the buying preference of Males and Females.

Since the P-vales are .59, i.e. more than .05, H_0 is accepted.

So there is no significant difference in the buying preference of Males and Females.

4. H_0 = There is no significant difference in the cognizant buying behavior across age-group.
   H_1 = There is no significant difference in the cognizant buying behavior across age-group.

ANOVA					
CONSUMER COGNIZANCE	**Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Between Groups	8.183	3	2.728	3.996	.010
Within Groups	65.527	96	.683		
Total	73.710	99			

Table explains Sum of Squares, df, Mean Square, F-value and critical value (significance) of buying preference across consumers' age-group. For that matter a null hypothesis was tested with the help of non-parametric tool. It is to be noted that the null hypothesis will be rejected if the p-value comes <.05, that is ANOVA test is applied at 5 percent level of significance. If the P-value is >.05, the Null hypothesis will be accepted and there will be no difference in the buying preference across Age-groups.

Since the P-vales is .010, i.e. less than .05, H_0 is Rejected.
So there is a significant difference in the cognizant buying behavior across age-group.

SUMMARY

1. Predominance of age group 20-30 – in the survey the respondents between the age of 20-30 age-group are maximum and most of them were students.

2. Frequent buyers – 67% of the respondents frequently and very frequently purchase products and avail services.

3. Respondents are well-red – The sample size consists of Teachers, Assistant Professors, Government Employees, Lawyer, Advocate and graduates.

4. Traditional buying habits – 3/5th of the respondents preferred directly going to the stores for shopping. It is ironical to find that even after experiencing the breakdown of COVID-19, people still favor going to stores for shopping. This shows that the consumers' conservatism.

5. Clever in their dealings – Since 82% of the respondents think that keeping the bill after purchases is very important and thankfully no one opted for 'not important' option, this depicts that consumer are educated and well informed in their dealings.

6. Rational buyers – 91% of the respondents are rational buyers since that give priority to price of the product, weight of the product, manufacturing date and expiry date of that product while buying it. This shows that they are cautious in the act of buying. 4 of the respondents give priority to the 'Brand name', this shows that they are brand conscious.

7. Cognizant respondents – 52% of the respondents like advertisements that show real facts with an emotional touch. They prefer "Realism" element in the advertisement.

CONCLUSION

Understanding why people choose to buy things and how they decide what to buy becomes simpler when we look at consumer behavior. When people decide to purchase something, their choices can be influenced by many factors, such as their background, culture, social group, personal traits, and how they think. Everyone is different, so customers from various backgrounds might behave in unique ways when it comes to buying things.

The success or failure of any marketing organisation ultimately depends on how well it understands and responds to the buying behaviour of its target customers, whether they are individuals or part of a group. In today's marketing systems, understanding consumer purchasing behaviour is crucial. This means that marketing managers must identify various factors that impact how consumers make decisions about buying things. By doing so, they can effectively plan and carry out marketing activities that cater to different groups of customers in different markets. Simply put, studying consumer behaviour is essential for businesses to do well in today's market, where people's choices and preferences play a big role in the success of marketing efforts.

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