AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF THE PREFERENCES AND BUYING BEHAVIOR OF SILK SAREES AMONG WOMEN CONSUMERS IN VELLORE TOWN

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Abstract

In Present Marketing Scenario, the Study of Consumer Behaviour has become essential. Consumers are the kings of markets. Without consumers no business organization can run. All the activities of the business concerns end with consumers and consumer satisfaction. Customer behaviour study is based on consumer buying behaviour, with the customer playing the three distinct roles of user, payer and buyer. Consumer buying behaviour has become an integral part of strategic market planning.

People now become dramatically and have unlimited wants on product and service, some more, their attitudes and behaviour often changed and elastic on price rise or low. Even if they want to make a decision on buying product, they also have rational choices. Seeing as now existing market has numerous of consumer, too wide and their needs are differ from one to another one, and thus marketers today are really difficult to understand these differences with consumer behaviour towards their brand and product. As a result, it is vital that marketers need to work more struggle on identifying their target customers' needs and adapt various marketing strategies to reach their needs. In order to develop a framework for the study consumer behaviour it is helpful to begin by considering the evolution of the field of consumer research and the different paradigms of thought that have influenced the discipline. Thus if they could not do so can influence company profit and sales on their product and service.

Keywords: Consumer Buying Behaviour, Strategic Market Planning, Consumer Satisfaction.

Introduction

[1] Silk has set the standard in luxury fabrics for several millennia. [1] The origins of silk date back to Ancient China. Legend has it that a Chinese princess was sipping tea in her garden when a cocoon fell into her cup, and the hot tea loosened the long strand of silk. Ancient literature, however, attributes the popularization of silk to the Chinese Empress Si-Ling, to around 2600 B.C. Called the Goddess of the Silkworm, Si-Ling apparently raised silkworms and designed a loom for making silk fabrics.

[2] The Chinese used silk fabrics for arts and decorations as well as for clothing. Silk became an integral part of the Chinese economy and an important means of exchange for trading with neighbouring countries. Caravans traded the prized silk fabrics along the famed Silk Road into the Near East. By the fourth century B.C. , Alexander the Great is said to have introduced silk to Europe. The first country to apply scientific techniques to raising silkworms was Japan, which produces some of the world's finest silk fabrics. Other countries that also produce quality silks are China, Italy, India, Spain, and France. China was the largest exporter of raw silk in the early 1990s, accounting for about 85% of the world's raw silk, worth about $800 million. Exports of China's finished silk products were about half of the world's total at about $3 billion. Silk is highly valued because it possesses many excellent properties. Not only does it look lustrous and feel luxurious, but it is also lightweight, resilient, and extremely strong—one filament of silk is stronger than a comparable filament of steel! Although fabric manufacturers have created less costly alternatives to silk, such as nylon and polyester, silk is still in a class by itself.

[3] The secret to silk production is the tiny creature known as the silk-worm, which is the caterpillar of the silk moth *Bombyx mori.* In nature, the chrysalis breaks through the

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1. Silk Production and Export Management P-5 Central Silk Board, Bangalore.
2. Silk Road Foundation
3. History of Silk.- www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silk

Cocoon and emerges as a moth. The moths mate and the female lays 300 to 400 eggs. A few days after emerging from the cocoon, the moths die and the life cycle continues.

The cultivation of silkworms for the purpose of producing silk is called sericulture. Over the centuries, sericulture has been developed and refined to a precise science. Sericulture involves raising healthy eggs through the chrysalis stage when the worm is encased in its silky cocoon. The chrysalis inside is destroyed before it can break out of the cocoon so that the precious silk filament remains intact. The healthiest moths are selected for breeding, and they are allowed to reach maturity, mate, and produce more eggs.

Generally, one cocoon produces between 1,000 and 2,000 feet of silk filament, made essentially of two elements. The fiber, called fibroin, makes up between 75 and 90%, and sericin, the gum secreted by the caterpillar to glue the fiber into a cocoon, comprises about 10-25% of silk. Other elements include fats, salts, and wax. To make one yard of silk material, about 3,000 cocoons are used.

India and Silk
Silk, the queen of textiles dominates the textile industry with its luster, sensuousness and glamour. The history of silk, goes back to 4,500 years. India is the second largest producer of silk, contributing to about 18 per cent of the world production. Five main varieties of silks are available in India namely Mulberry silk, Tasar silk, Eri silk, Muga silk and Oak Tasar silk. These are obtained from different species of silkworms which in turn feed on a number of food plants.

Today, silk weaving tradition in India revolves around the sari, the ethnic traditional wear that is worn in most parts of the country. The vibrant colours, light weight, resilience and excellent drape etc. have made silk saris, the irresistible and unavoidable companion of Indian women. Indian silk is popular all over the world with its variety of designs, weaves and patterns.

The silk saris of India are among the living examples of the excellent craftsmanship of the weavers of the country. Their mastery lies in the creation of floral designs, beautiful textures, fine geometry, durability of such work and not the least, the vibrant colours they choose for making saris. Many states in the country have their own variety of makes in silk as well as weaving centres with their traditional designs, weaving and quality. The silk varieties are renowned by the place where it has been woven.

Banaras is one of the leading silk weaving centres in India. Amru silk, Jamvar, Navarangi, Jamdani etc. are the types of Banaras Saris. Maharashtra is famous for its Paithani Silk saris, generally with gold dots design and Kosa silk of Bhandara district. Patola silk, known as the pride of Gujarat is noted for their bright colours and geometric designs with folk motifs.

Madhya Pradesh is famous for Chanderi, Maheshwari and Tussar silk saris. Silk Bomkai Sambalpuri saris from Orissa come in single and double ikat weaves. Murshidabad in West Bengal is the home of the famous Baluchari sari in which untwisted silk thread are used for weaving brocades.

In the south, heavy silk saris from Tanjore, Kumbakonam and Kancheepuram in Tamil Nadu are known for their broad decorative borders and contrasting colors. Kancheepuram silks have an enviable position among the best silk saris in the country for their texture, luster, durability and finish. Kolegal and Molkalmoru in Karnataka are known for their simple ikat weave with parrot motif on the borders.

Raw silk reeling is a set of processes, which aims at efficient extraction of silk filament from cocoons. It is a process of combining number of ends of the cocoon filaments together to form a

single thread of desired denier. Silk reeling is carried out with the reeling devices viz, Charka, Cottage basin and Multiend reeling machines. Multiend reeling machine is a suitable reeling device to produce gradable raw silk economically under Indian conditions. Important factors which have a direct bearing of productivity and quality of silk are as follows.

1. Raw material quality: Cocoon characteristics like race, size, shape, built, reliability, filament denier, length, etc.
2. Processing parameters adopted for stifling, cooking, reeling and re-reeling.
3. Machinery / devices: Machinery / devices used for drying, cooking, reeling and re-reeling processes
4. Water quality : Water source, and water's characteristics
5. Human skill: Human skill involved in manual and mechanical operations

Consumer Buying Behaviour

Consumer behaviour can be defined as the decision-making process and physical activity involved in acquiring, evaluating, using and disposing of goods and services. This definition clearly brings out that it is not just the buying of goods/services that receives attention in consumer behaviour but, the process starts much before the goods have been acquired or bought.

A process of buying starts in the minds of the consumer, which leads to the finding of alternatives between products that can be acquired with their relative advantages and disadvantages.
Consumer behaviour is a complex, dynamic, multidimensional process, and all marketing decisions are based on assumptions about consumer behaviour. Marketing strategy is the game plan which the firms must adhere to, in order to outdo the competitor or the plans to achieve the desired objective. In formulating the marketing strategy, to sell the product effectively, cost-benefit analysis must be undertaken.

The term "Customer" is typically used to refer to someone who regularly purchase from a particular store or company.

Consequently, organizations such as religious and political groups can view their various public as "Consumers." The rationale for this position is that many of the activities that people engage in, regarding free services, ideas, and philosophies are quite similar to those that are engaged in commercial products and services.

The Ultimate Consumer

The ultimate consumers are those individuals who purchase for the purpose of individual or household consumption. Some have argued that studying ultimate consumers also reveals much about industrial and intermediate buyers and others involved in purchasing of business firms and institutions. It must be recognised that much of industrial purchasing behaviour is unique because it often involves different buying motives and the influence of a large variety of people.

Statement of the Problem

Silk has set the standard in luxury fabrics for several millennia. Silk, known as "Paat" in Eastern India, Pattu in southern parts of India and Resham in Hindi/Urdu has a long history in India. Recent archaeological discoveries in Harappa and Chanhu-daro suggest that sericulture, employing wild silk threads from native silkworm species, existed in South Asia during the time of the Indus Valley Civilization, roughly contemporaneous with the earliest known silk use in China.
Silk is widely produced today. India is the second largest producer of silk after China. A majority of the silk in India is produced in the state of Karnataka, particularly in Mysore and North Bangalore. India is also the largest consumer of silk in the world.

Silk is worn by people as a symbol of royalty while attending functions and during festivals. Historically silk was used by the upper classes, while cotton was used by the poorer classes. Gone are the days when only the rich sported them in select cities. Today they are way of life for the middle class too, even in smaller towns across the country.

It is usually seen that buyers purchase products which they have not planned and this phenomenon of unplanned purchasing is termed as impulse. Buying of silk sarees amongst women from the lower income group (Rs.20, 000. and below) has grown and is now on par with those earning Rs.40,000 and more.

Every Indian family at some point or other buy silk materials especially silk sarees for special ceremonial and religious occasions. Silk is considered to be a holy wear in India. No religious ceremony is complete without the use of pure silk.

The common silk consumer visiting the retail shops somehow tend to feel that they are purely at the mercy of the salesmen in respect of the purity of the material, the quality or the price of the material they buy. It is rather a difficult job to select genuine silk items from a heap of glittering silken lot. For a common consumer, all that shines is silk. So how does one ensure that one gets the value for his money that he pays for silk? It is possible to resort to the burn test on the spot. However, today an enlightened silk consumer need not go to such an extent to determine the authenticity of the product she buys. Whether it is saree or fabric, garment or made-ups, all that she needs to do is to look for the Silk Mark tag attached to the product.

In the light of these aspects, it seems pertinent to focus the study on the various aspects relating to buying behaviour of silk sarees amongst women. In this context, the following questions arise.
1. What are the factors influencing selection preferences?
2. What is the preferred brand of silk saree?
3. What is the level of awareness amongst women about the silk mark?
4. Satisfaction levels while purchasing a silk saree?

Objectives of the Study
1. To describe the buying behavior of women for silk sarees in general and in particular
2. Vellore town.
3. To identify the Preferences towards silk sarees in different brands and in different
4. Place of purchase.
5. To study the socio-economic characters of the sample respondents and their purchasing pattern of silk sarees.
6. To correlate the demographic variables with the satisfaction of purchasing silk sarees.
7. To determine the reasons for selecting a particular shop and brand and problems faced by them while purchasing silk sarees and enjoying services offered by the silk saree shops.

Hypothesis Testing
A few of the null hypotheses that were formulated after review of the literature is given below:
1. There is no significant relationship between age and level of satisfaction.
2. There is no significant relationship between educational qualification and level of satisfaction.
3. There is no significant relationship between Present status and level of satisfaction.
4. There is no significant relationship between Monthly income level and level of satisfaction.
5. There is no significant relationship between marital status and level of satisfaction.
6. There is no significant relationship between family members of the respondents and their level of satisfaction.

7. There is no significant relationship between number of females in the family and their level of satisfaction.
8. There is no significant relationship between type of family of the respondents and their level of satisfaction.
9. There is no significant relationship between religion of the respondents and their level of satisfaction.
10. There is no significant relationship between awareness level of the respondents and their level of satisfaction.
11. There is no significant relationship between buying place of the respondents and their level of satisfaction.
12. There is no significant relationship between occasion of buying the silk of the respondents and their level of satisfaction.
13. There is no significant relationship between frequency of buying of the respondents and their level of satisfaction.
14. There is no significant relationship between amount spent for purchase of the respondents and their level of satisfaction.
15. There is no significant relationship between mode of payment of the respondents and their level of satisfaction.
16. There is no significant difference between different age groups of the respondents and their interest to wear different types of silk sarees.
17. There is no significant difference between different income level of the respondents and their interest to wear different types of silk sarees.
18. There is no significant difference between different religious level of the respondents and their interest to wear different types of silk sarees.
19. There is no significant difference between amount spent for purchase by the respondents and interest to wear different types of silk sarees.
20. There is no significant difference between monthly income level of the respondents and preferred occasion to purchase silk sarees.
21. There is no significant difference between type of family of the respondents and preferred occasion to purchase silk sarees.
22. There is no significant difference between religious status of the respondents and preferred occasion to purchase silk sarees.
23. There is no significant difference between educational status of the respondents and reasons for preference to wear silk sarees.
24. There is no significant difference between present status of the respondents and reasons for preference to wear silk sarees.

Data Collection

Primary Data
In order to fulfill the objectives set, a sample study was undertaken by using a well-framed questionnaire that was duly filled by the respondents. Respondents with varying backgrounds were selected based on aspects such as their occupation, education, age, etc.

Secondary Data
The primary data was supplemented by secondary data. The secondary data pertaining to the study was gathered from the records of major silk saree shops and silk mark society.   Secondary data was also collected from leading journals such as The Indian Journal of Marketing, Journal of Indian Management, Survey of Indian Industries, Industrial Herald, Industry 2.0, Industrial Researcher and Economic Survey Report.

Tools for Analysis
The factors were studied by means of Percentages, Chi-square test, Anova analysis, and Henry Garrett ranking technique.

Limitations of the Study
The study suffers from the following limitations
The market survey was conducted only in Vellore town of Vellore district in Tamilnadu. Further, the survey method which was adopted for collecting the data in this study has its own limitations. Only 500 customers were selected for eliciting first-hand information. In view of the time and monetary constraints involved, it was not possible to contact more respondents.
Certain respondents gave information about their economic backgrounds like annual income from their memory as they had no recorded account of them and some where hesitant of revealing these details. Hence, the generalization of the findings of the study is subject to these limitations.

Findings
Chi-Square Test
1. It is found that below 20 years aged respondents have perceived the maximum level of satisfaction in the study area. From the chi-square test analysis, it is inferred that there is a close relationship between the age of the respondents and their level of satisfaction in the overall performance of the silk sarees.
2. It is noted that the respondents who have qualified school level have perceived the maximum level of satisfaction. From the test of chi-square analysis, it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between the educational status of the respondents and their level of satisfaction in the overall performance of the silk sarees.
3. It is noted that the maximum level of satisfaction towards silk sarees among housewives. From the chi-square test analysis, it is concluded that there is a close relationship between the present status of the respondents and their level of satisfaction in overall performance of the silk sarees.
4. Thus, it is concluded from the analysis that the level of satisfaction is at the maximum among the below Rs.5000 income group of respondents than the other income group of respondents. It is found from the chi-square analysis that there is a close relationship between income and level of satisfaction in overall purchase of the silk sarees.
5. Thus the table reveals that the maximum level of satisfaction towards the overall performance of silk sarees is among the married respondents in the study area. From the chi-square analysis, it is concluded that there is a close relationship between the marital status of the respondents and their level of satisfaction in silk sarees.

Annova Test
1. It is inferred from Anova analysis that the respondents above 50 years are very much interested to wear fancy silk at the maximum level. From the Anova analysis, it is inferred that there is no significant difference between different age groups of the respondents and their interest to wear different types of silk sarees.
2. It is evidenced that the respondents whose monthly earning income is Rs.15,000 - Rs.20,000 are able to buy silk cotton at the maximum level. From the Anova analysis, it is inferred that there is no significant difference between different income level of the respondents and their interest to wear different types of silk sarees.
3. From the study, it portrays that the other religion respondents are interested to wear silk cotton at the maximum level. From the Anova analysis, it is inferred there is no significant difference between different religious level of the respondents and their interest to wear different types of silk sarees.

4. It is noted that the respondents are spending Rs.4000 - 8000 to purchase fancy silk saree to wear at the maximum level. From the Anova analysis, it is inferred that there is no significant difference between the amount spent for the purchase by the respondents and interest to wear different types of silk sarees.

5. It speculates that the respondents whose monthly income Rs.10001-15000 is preferred for their marriage occasion at the maximum level. From the Anova analysis, it is inferred that there is significant difference between monthly income level of the respondents and preferred occasion to purchase silk sarees.

6. It is clear that the joint family members have preferred to purchase silk sarees for their marriage occasion at the maximum level. From the Anova analysis, it is inferred that there is a significant difference between type of family of the respondents and preferred occasion to purchase silk sarees.

7. It reveals that maximum of other religion members have preferred to purchase for their marriage occasion as the highest level. From the Anova analysis, it is inferred that there is no significant difference between religious status of the respondents and preferred occasion to purchase silk sarees.

8. It is inferred that the respondents from professional educational status have preferred for a status symbol at the maximum level. From the Anova analysis, it is inferred that there is a significant difference between educational status of the respondents and reasons for preference to wear silk sarees.

9. It determines that business respondents prefer silk sarees for cultural occasions at the maximum level. From the Anova analysis, it is inferred that there is no significant difference between present status of the respondents and reasons for preference to wear silk sarees.

Percentage Analysis
1. It is found from the analysis that 21-30 years of the respondents are at the maximum level (35.4%).
2. It is found from the analysis that the school level educational status of respondents are at the maximum level (53.8).
3. It is found from the analysis that the housewife status of the respondents are at the maximum level.
4. It is found from the study that the respondents of monthly income from Rs.5001-10000 are at the maximum level (33.2).
5. It is found from the analysis that the married respondents are at the maximum level (88.0).
6. It is found from the analysis that the respondents' family members are 3-4 at the maximum level (33.0%).
7. It is found from the analysis that the respondents are gathering the information through T.V/Radio at the maximum level.
8. It is found from the study that the respondents are having the awareness of pure silk at the maximum level.
9. It is found from the analysis that the respondents prefer the method of dry wash for silk saree.

Henry Garrett Ranking Technique
1. It is found from the analysis that majority of the respondents are interested to wear 'Kanchipuram' and 'Salem' silk sarees than other sarees.
2. It is noted from the analysis that majority of the respondents are selecting the new shop for the main reasons 'Proximity / Easy access' and 'Image and Reputation of the Shop'.
3. It is concluded from the analysis that majority of the respondents prefer 'Kanchipuram' and 'Arni silk' than other brands of silks.

Suggestions

1. The study has revealed that only 21.7% of the respondents have gained awareness on 'silk mark' products through silk showrooms. So owners of silk showrooms must take steps to spread the awareness on silk mark products among the consumers by establishing exclusive segments for silk mark fabrics.
2. Consumers must be provided with more information through attractive pamphlets about Silk Mark Scheme and how it protects their interest.
3. Silk Mark products must be introduced in all silk showrooms.
4. Silk Testing Laboratory must be introduced in all districts and important cities in order to test the purity of the silk.
5. Intensive advertisement campaigns must be launched by SMOI in newspapers and television channels to disseminate the awareness on silk mark logo and silk mark products.
6. Silk quality assessment centres have to be established at nodal points in the state of Tamil Nadu.
7. Silk of different states has to be pooled in one place and create awareness on the Indian silk quality and varieties to the consumers.
8. 'Silk Mark' in mega malls, Airports, Metro Centres, Bus Stations can attract many women consumers as they do not plan their trip to buy silk sarees.

Conclusion

The present study has made an attempt to bring out the awareness on 'silk mark' products in Vellore District. Further the study has also focused on the relationship between the awareness on 'silk mark' products and the demographic factors. In addition, the study has also focused on the satisfaction level and demographic factors that determine the level of satisfaction. Hence, this study would certainly help the consumers to become aware of 'natural silk' and 'silk mark' scheme, so that they get pure and genuine silk for the money they spend on silk fabrics. Also it enables the dealers in silk products to establish better marketing strategies to make the 'silk mark' products more attractive than that of synthetic and artificial silk.

This study gives an overall picture that women are lovers of dress materials, quality dress materials irrespective of their education level and income level. Women are quality conscious, tradition and heritage lovers and hence inspite of various dress materials/varieties in the form of Sarees, Churidhars, Salwars etc., they have given enough importance especially to the traditional silk in general and Kancheepuram Silk in particular.

Scope for Future Research

1. Research can be conducted on preference of women for Silk Dress materials such as Sarees, Churidars, Salwars etc., from other states.
2. Research can be conducted on establishing or manufacturing silk without silk worms. Artificial Silk can be researched, Jains community have reluctance towards wearing the traditional silk worm based silk.
3. Preferential study among women consumers with regard to the heaviness of the silk saree comparable with non-heavy silk saree can be the order of the day.
4. Research can be done in manufacturing wrinkle free silk sarees in order to help the preferences of working women to just wash and wear.

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