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RESEARCH ARTICLE

INFLUENCE OF PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES ON PURCHASE DECISION OF MODULAR KITCHEN IN CHENNAI CITY

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ABSTRACT

In the present scenario, the fierce competition has made the modular kitchen industry market very insecure. This paper tried to detect influence of product attributes in modular kitchen industry market in Chennai. The purpose of this study is to investigate the product attribute influence on the consumer decision of buying modular kitchen. In order to accomplish the objectives of the study, a sample of 130 consumers were taken by using convenience sampling technique. The study indicates that consumer give due consideration on product attributes while making purchase of modular kitchen. The descriptive statistics used to analyze the data. The result indicates that the product attributes makes significant difference on the customer preferences and influence purchase of modular kitchen.

INTRODUCTION

Product-related attributes are defined as the ingredients necessary for performing the product or service function sought by consumers (Keller, 1993). Therefore product related attributes are necessary attributes needed perform product's fundamental function or operation identified by consumers. This category attributes depends on products/ service offered. Product related Brand attributes are those attributes which relates to product physicality. A product is developed to benefit the consumer; those benefits are identified by the product attributes and those attributes are necessary for product performance. They are product quality, product design and style, and product features. Product quality is defined "as the characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied customer needs" by American society for quality. Siemens defines "quality is when our customers come back and our products don't". Kotler states that quality is measured by two dimensions one is performance quality another one is consistency level of the product (Kotler, 2010). Product features is an important tool which differentiate a product from competitors. A product's characteristics or features are the distinctiveness of a product, it helps to identify among various product categories. Added features, special features, new features are efficient and effective ways to compete. A Product's style and design are important to choose a product for consumers. Style and design

doesn't simply means appearance and aesthetics feel, also implies the comfortable and convenience designing aspects. So style and design combined with shape, size, color, height, width, design, structure, and more the technology which synchronized with the product.

Review of literature

Consumers value a brand or product by its descriptive and distinctive features that are the attributes for that brand or product. Consumer value attributes since they are used as the basis for evaluating a product. Attributes also offer the benefits that consumers look for purchasing a product. Product attributes provide a basis through which marketers distinguish and set its product (brand) apart from that of the competitors based on a specific attributes or often several attributes or product benefits (Belch and Belch, 1995). Attributes are furthermore used by the marketer as the basis for developing new products and for specific positioning strategies. Product attribute performs a major role in determining the brands that consumers will consider and give serious attention when making a purchase decision (Kotler, 2000, 2002). By understanding accurately how consumer make purchase decisions and what they value in products and services, companies can work out optimum level of attributes that balance customer value expectation as a benchmark for resources allocation, costing and pricing decision (Oyatoye, 2011). However, Beaudoin *et al.* (2000) identified 12 attributes that correlated with attitudes when purchasing apparel, namely: good fit, durability, ease of care, favorable price,

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comfort, quality, color, attractiveness, fashionableness, brand name, appropriateness for occasion, and choice of styles. Although product quality is considered as the most influencing product attribute in customers purchase decision. Product quality is an important determinant for the customers for purchasing a brand. Quality belongs to the product perspective of a brand's identity whereas perceived quality is how a brand's quality is seen by the consumers. A higher price is a sign of high quality to the consumers. Different studies focus the importance of product attributes in determining consumer preferences and decision making (Olson *et al.*, 1979). For purchasing food items consumers may consider price as the most important aspect. For some consumers, the price is vital particularly when they are purchasing everyday products. Some consumer may choose a brand just because it has the lowest price, while other consumers may choose a brand just because it has the highest perceived price inferring that it is of high quality. The product attributes used in previous studies are quality, price, availability, variety, assortment and value of the products (Gwin and Gwin, 2003). Early researchers' views product attributes as the physical properties of a product that were quantitatively and objectively measurable (Wu *et al.*, 1988).

However, in more recent years it has expanded to include all evaluative criteria, including objective or physical properties i.e. price, brand name or subjective criteria's such as quality, style, benefit or value (Grapetine, 1995 and Jamal and Goode, 2001). Aaker (1991) adds that because most product attributes provide consumer benefits, there is usually a one-to-one comparison between brands. The several previous studies also reported that extrinsic attributes such as price (Batt and Dean, 2000; Halstead, 2002; and Hoffman, 2004) and country of origin (Keown and Casey, 1995) are the most frequently used or most important attributes when making purchasing decision. Some studies have been carried out to see the influence of product attributes on consumer purchasing behavior (Belch and Belch, 1995; Oyatoye, 2011; Grapetine, 1995; Jamal and Goode, 2001; Batt and Dean, 2000; Halstead, 2002; and Hoffman, 2004). Several studies state that physical attributes of a product such as size and color influence how customers perceive it. Cox (1962) and Gardner (1970), for example, find out that different colors of ice cream and shirts affect perceptions of flavor and product quality respectively. Thus, the physical appearance of a product creates the first impression of what it might deliver when consumed. Therefore Product attributes play a big role in consumer purchase decision. As per kotler, a product or service involves defining the benefits that it will offer. These benefits are communicated and delivered by product attributes. The product attributes are necessary to perform a product functions, those attributes are quality, style and design, and features (Kotler, 2010). Product quality takes an important place in consumer's mind to consider, evaluate and purchase a brand and a product.

Consumer buying decision

The consumer decision making process consists of mainly five steps according to most researchers within the field (McCall *et al.*, Peter and Olson 2005, p.169; and Hawkins *et al.*, 2001). The steps included in the model are; need or problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase and the post-purchase process. However, not all

purchases require every step. Consumer can skip the evaluation of alternatives when considering low involvement products (Peter and Olson 2005). According to Hawkins *et al.* (2001) there are more aspects than only decision making process that affect consumer behavior which are external and internal influences. External influences are social class and reference groups while internal factors are motivation, exposure, attention, perception and attitude.

Purchase decision

According to Peter and Olson (2004), the key process in consumer decision making is the integration process by which knowledge is combining to evaluate two or more alternative behavior and select one. Most of the large company research consumer buying decision in increasing detail to answer question about what consumer buy, where they buy, how and how much they buy, when they buy and why they buy (Kotler *et al.*, 2005). According to the Consumer Decision Making Process Model (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006), a purchase or intent to purchase is often influenced by other factors such as risk and involvement. Consumers also evaluate the store's image such as merchandise, service, physical facilities, convenience, promotion, store atmosphere, institution and post-transaction factors and make a selection to purchase at that specific outlet. On the other aspect, amount of the purchase, it is common that the consumers enter to one outlet with an intention to buy a particular brand but leave the store with a different brand or additional items. This shows the influences operating in the store effect consumers purchasing decision (Hawkins *et al.*, 2001, pp.609-618).

Objectives of study

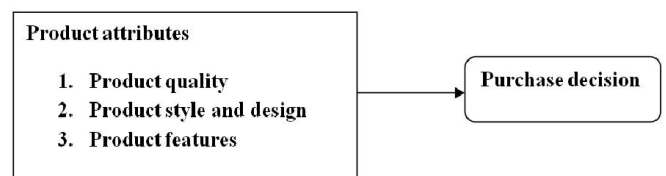
Present research work have been taken up with following objectives

- To find out the product attributes that influence decision making in purchasing
- To know the major attribute that influences consumer purchase decision.

Assumption of Hypothesis

H0: there is no significant difference of product attributes on purchase decision.

Research model



MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research methodology is the vain of every research. Present study has done to know the influence of product attribute on purchase decision of modular kitchen industry. Present study is descriptive in nature. The descriptive research design was appropriate to know the influence of product

attribute on purchase decision of modular kitchen. The study is based on primary as well as secondary data. The primary method of data collection is used in the present study. The questionnaire technique is used to collect the data from market. The researcher has tried to find out the customer decision of different product attributes such as Design, quality, and product features. Convenience sampling has been taken under the non probability sampling method. The sample size of this study is 130 respondents. Factor analysis and descriptive statistical tools is applied with SPSS for data.

Data analysis

Table1. Descriptive statistics and reliability test

S.no		No. of items	Mean	Std deviation	N
1.	Product attributes	11	4.73	.239	130
2.	Purchase decision	8	4.67	.292	130

Table 2. Correlation test

		Product Attributes	Purchase Decision
Product Attributes	Pearson Correlation	1	.639**
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	130	.000
	N	130	130
Purchase Decision	Pearson Correlation	.639**	1
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	.000	130
	N	130	130

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 130 questionnaires were used for data analysis, giving response rate of 100%. Table 1 presents the number of items for the each constructs, the mean, the standard deviation, and the number of cases. From the table the overall mean scores and the standard deviation is considered satisfactory, which indicates high relationship between the product attributes and consumer's purchase decision. Again, further analysis in Table 2 (using Pearson Product-moment correlation coefficient) revealed a satisfactory significant relationship between product attributes and consumer purchase decision. Before performing a correlation analysis, a scatter plot was generated to ensure that the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity were not violated. This also gives a better idea of the nature of relationship between the two variables. The result of the analysis revealed a positive correlation between the two variables, $r = .639$, $n = 130$ and $p < 0.0005$, with high levels of coefficient of determination between the two variables (40.83%). This also reflect that the two variables vary together approximately 41% of the time and they appear to be independent of each other by 59% of the time, and evidently other variables are included in these case (e.g. individual psychological and sociological characteristics and organizational factors). The coefficient of determination of 40.83% is quite a significant variance explained between the two variables of the study compared to previous empirical research. The level of statistical significance also indicates high level of confidence in the results obtained. On the basis of the findings of this study it can be deduce that product attribute will significantly influence consumer purchase decision, and that, there is a positive relationship between product attributes and consumer purchase decision. The finding also corroborates (Pilditch, 1976; Berkowitz, 1987; Bloch, 1995) that product

attributes generate consumer inferences. These findings also agree with Gwin *et al.*, (2003) who indicated that attributes are the characteristic or features that an object may or may not have and includes both intrinsic and extrinsic features. Benefits are the positive outcomes that come from the attributes. People seek products that have attributes that will solve their problems and fulfills their needs. Understanding why a consumer chooses a product based upon its attributes helps marketers to understand why some consumers have preferences for certain brands.

Kotler and Armstrong (2006) noted that another way to add customer value is through distinctive product style and design. He indicated that design is a larger concept than style. Style simply describes the appearance of a product. Styles can be eye-catching or yawn producing. A sensational style may grab attention and produce pleasing aesthetics, but it does not necessarily make the product perform better. Unlike style, design is more than skin deep. This is to say it goes to the very heart or core of a product. Good design contributes to a product's usefulness as well as to its looks. Good style and design can attract attention, improve product performance, cut production costs, and give the product a strong competitive advantage in the target market. This premise has been confirmed by the study as according to the research, the consumers were influenced largely by design or style, when making purchase decision of modular kitchen.

Conclusion

For most of the consumers purchase decision was significantly influenced by the attributes of the product or brand. They considered various product attributes as key in determining the nature of product they would like to purchase before considering brand such as quality, features, style and design are the benefits communicated and delivered. Therefore it can be concluded that the product features are a competitive tool for differentiating the company's product from competitor's products. Further it can be concluded that, being the first producer to introduce a needed and valued new feature is one of the most effective ways to compete thus enhancing consumer decision making process.

Future research

Product and brand attributes are significantly important to consumers when making their purchasing decision. Therefore modular kitchen companies should carry out periodic survey to help in identifying new features and decide which ones to add to its product. In this way, the company can assess each feature's value to consumers versus its cost to the company. Moreover by determining which combination of these features match the current trends and consumer needs would be cost effective to the modular kitchen industry. Notably local marketers occupy 80% of the modular kitchen market. So it's important to conduct further research to understand why consumers prefer local marketers than branded one.

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