

MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR FEMALE CONSUMERS IN INDIA: A STUDY OF FEMALE PSYCHOLOGY AND BEHAVIOUR IN INDIAN MARKET

Lavina Khilnani*

ABSTRACT

Modern females are knowledgeable, intelligent, and combination of various skills. They are financially autonomous and pursue self-worth satisfaction. The article primarily shows how contemporary marketers evolve their marketing strategy after thorough observation and scientific research on the psychology of females' consumers in terms of the three significant components (product, price and communication). Marketers design products that completely fulfil the physical and emotional requirements of customers; set the appropriate price that attracts females, and then interact efficiently with women customers in order to create a continuous and trusting relationship. The article attempts to combine marketing theory and case analysis to conclude that client research in the highly competitive market will be the trend of business strategy.

Keywords: Marketing Strategy, Female Psychology, Female Behaviour, Communication.

Introduction

A depiction of females and males is prevalent nowadays in all media coverage, radio, press, television, films, and gender- related subjects often create the headline and form the program's central focus. Picking up a magazine or newspaper is nearly impossible without figuring out at least one article describing the evolving social status, attitudes, lifestyle, and conduct of women in relation to their traditional position in the family. More and more females are independent financially.

Review of Literature

Consumer participation is described as the perceived significance of the consumer to an item, such as product or brand, publicity or purchasing circumstances based on an object's intrinsic requirements, values and interests (Salomon et al., 2004). In terms of understanding consumer behavior relating to consumer possessions and the broad range of consumer involvement can be linked to the product, to the message, to the sensor, according to O'Cases (2000). The antecedents of involvement as recognized by Zaichkowsky (1986) were (a) persons ' variables (b) Object or stimulation variables and (c) Situational variables.

Factors may cause distinct kinds of participation (products, purchases and marketing) than can result in distinct outcomes or implications. Previous research has shown several forms in which customers engage with goods and the consumer involvement in products has different kinds of buying and consuming behaviours.(Mittal and Lee, 1989; Tigert, Ring and King; 1976).

According to Backewell and Mitchell (2003), the various environmental factors have an effect on the young female shoppers that distinguishes them from the elderly female shoppers. Young women are expected to consume sooner as compared to matured and adult female shoppers and indulge into shopping as one of the form of recreational activity.

According to Zelezny et al. (2000) in the study conducted for analysing women behaviour indicated that women are more environmentally friendly than men while purchasing.

* Taxila Business School, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

Kindra' (1994) described lifestyle as an outer manifestation of people's requirements, views or trends in participating in their nations' personal, financial and political lives. This internal manifestation of clients' requirements and principles reflects what the client is planning to purchase and not to purchase.

The segmentation of lifestyle is essential not just to explore women's consumer behaviour, but also to the global marketing because of its huge effect on each individual's regular buying choice. (**Lesser and Hughes 1986, Kucukemiroglu, 2005**).

In 1985, Zaichkowsky developed the Personal Involvement Inventory (PII) scale to measure product involvement. Tests of construct validity over three products demonstrated the scores were positively related to perceptions of brand differences, brand preferences, interest in gathering information about the product category, and comparison of product attributes among brands

In 1985, in order to assess consumer participation, Zaichkowsky established a personal inventory (PII) scale. Construct validity tests for three products have shown that the results have a positive relation to perception of brand variations, brand attitudes, the interest in collecting product category data and the comparison of products characteristics amongst different brands.

Park and Lennon (2004) were of the opinion that TV advertisements can extremely persuade women buying behaviours beside the information received from their associates. According to Sheers 2007 females in comparison to males are extremely well-informed on the subject matter of price and types of stores and in continuation the same has been supported by Scheers, 2007 therefore this information can persuade the vendor management strategies.

Marketing Reasons for Females

The research has concluded that modern women's multi-roles in society allow them to have the following four parts of the women's market: First, there is a powerful earning power for contemporary women. For marketers and advertisers, their purses are a wonderful temptation. From the workplace of a tiny manufacturing factory to the office of a large and luxurious chief executive officer, from the classroom of a tiny kindergarten to the stage in the lecture of a renowned university, from the office of a neighbourhood committee to a global meeting, females appear anywhere and anytime. The high-paid occupation and leadership position is no longer the privilege of men. 60% of the women respondents are relatively normal in earning much more wages than males have. It is therefore also quite normal for marketers to turn their attention to the purses of contemporary women.

Second, the spending power of modern women is also appealing. Women are still the purchasing officers of the household chief. While representing only half of the complete consumer market, the multi-roles of women allow them to make the vast majority of buying decisions. Moreover, when it comes to large purchases such as household appliances, cars, houses, it seems that it is often the men who make the decision, but if the housewife is not in favor of the product, it can rarely make the deal as well. A marketer once said: "Women are the planet's biggest single block of expenditure," as he considers it, "It's just dumb not to cater."

Last but not least, the demand and willingness of contemporary females is high. For all the lovely stuff, women have powerful wishes. They have never felt enough about their overflowing closets, hundreds of pairs of shoes, countless ornaments, different hairstyles, and functional cosmetics.

Indeed, modern females are an incredibly strong and attractive consumer industry. It is time to recognize that women consumers are a powerful force which cannot be ignored. If companies are interested in expanding to a fresh level of achievement, they should have a plan to ensure that "you have females." Big global corporations operating on a global scale have started to understand that the financial strength of females will undoubtedly influence their big market share and put more effort into researching the psychology and conduct of females customers in order to make the product "fit for her" ideal.

However, gaining women's satisfaction and preference is not simple if marketers still only maintain their ancient stereotypical form about women as a housewife and do not have the subject-by-subject summary of women's attitude, conduct, and customer preference and so on. Many businesses still regard females as customers of "minority" or niche. Such "minority thinking" can cripple any important shift towards women customers as it does not place females in their rightful location as the majority of customers whose needs and wants are critical to marketing strategy.

Consumer-Centred Products

A product is anything acquired or acquired by a customer to satisfy a perceived need. Consumers usually buy require fulfilment, not attributes of the physical product. Consumers are not buying products; they are buying motive fulfilment or issue solving instead. For instance, women consumers do not purchase perfume or milk lotion: they purchase romance, appeal, sex, sensual enjoyment, sophistication, and a host of emotional and psychological advantages. Because of its preciousness, women customers do not actually purchase costly jewellery, but it is a sign of elegance, economic affluence and joy in marriage.

Just as Revlon's former head said: *"In the factory we make cosmetics, in the store we sell hope."*

Today, more and more females see shopping as their great activity in recreation and lifestyle. The big shops and supermarkets are also attempting to position more categories of products for women for their choice and selection. Women are always willing to pay for the item that will attract their eyes and meet their requirements.

Products for Meeting Women's Need

Marketers must bear in mind what is the value of females, what females cherish, what they take faith in, what they care about, what they appreciate, and comprehend the knowledge - sense and sensitivity of their females as compared to the minds of men- things and theorems. The product- designer can only create the true product "completely fit for her" with the assistance of female studies.

According to Webster (1997) the effective organisation of the future will be customer-focused, not product-focused or technology-focused, provided by business data expertise that connects the customer's voice to the entire value distribution process of the company. Successful marketing organisations will have the required skills to handle various strategic marketing procedures, many of which, until recently, have not been effective.

Products for the Changing Market of Women Customers

If a product is determined to win the cash of customers, the dynamic change in the marketing environment should be a problem. It is possible to divide the marketing environment into the competitive environment (including the business, its direct competitor and clients) and the macro environment (the broader social political and economic environment in which the organisation works).

Awareness of how the environment in which marketing takes place is altering when designing and implementing a solid marketing approach. In a word, the attitude of women's self-esteem is likely to be a vibrant, continuing method. The change will generate more requirements and demand among women customers, which in turn will give businesses with the insight into altering environments more opportunities.

Products for the Various Sections of Female Markets

We can't expect all females to work with a piece of product or advertising commercials. Neither the market for women nor the market for men is as homogeneous as it once was. Women perform a variety of roles today and have a broad variety of attitudes about their positions in society, and females vary and differ from each other depending on their notion of value, age, educational degree, earnings, occupation, and even cultural background. Just attempt to demonstrate from the age aspect, we can learn that middle-aged women over the age of 40 who are married tend to put a lot of emphasis on their family and they spend a lot on their kids. The young girls between 21 and 32, however, who often have less financial stress and family burden, tend to spend all the cash they have earned. They generally have little expenditure limitation and control. The various consumer organizations therefore need distinct products to meet their requirements. That's when the segmentation of advertising grew up.

According to the segmentation of females in America by Del I. Hawkins; there are at least four major female market segments.

- **Traditional Housewife:** married in general; prefers staying at home, home-and-family centred, they want spouse and/or kids to be pleased, seek satisfaction from household and family maintenance, feel contented with this support and love and are usually satisfied with role.
- **Trapped Housewife:** married in general. They would prefer to work, but because of young kids, absence of possibilities outside, family pressure, they have no other option but to stay at home,

does not appreciate household chores, has mixed emotions about the current status and worries about the chances already lost in past.

- **Working Female in Captivity:** married or single. They'd rather remain at home, but they're working for economic necessity or social or family pressure. Does not derive satisfaction or meaning from employment, enjoys most household operations, but lack of time is frustrating for her, feels the conflict over her position, especially when there are younger kids at home.
- **Working Lady in the Career. Married or Unmarried:** They prefer to work and derive enjoyment and meaning from job rather than home and family. If younger kids are at home, they experience some conflict over their role, but are usually happy. For such females home maintenance is a total conflict with their existing role and persona.

Each female has her own character and attitude. Deciding which segment you are willing to target and then "treat" each segment differently is essential.

Research Methodology

The research was conducted based on the need and demand of the Indian industry to understand the female psychology and accordingly take the decisions to formulate the marketing strategies. The research paper has tried to understand the female perspective of buying and decision making and the communication and marketing strategies of companies for women consumers in the Indian market. For the purpose of study 800 women consumers from all over India were approached through online questionnaire, but only 580 female consumers responded.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data was analysed on the percentage based method to maintain the simplicity and increase the chances of better understanding. The analysis of data has concluded on major dimensions of female psychology and behaviour.

Marketing Strategies for Women

- **Lower Prices Attract Women**

Women are aware of the price and in fact a keen observer too, which can explain why some marketers frequently promote their sale in "on sale" activity. The attractive newsletter printed for the lower price often push women to buy something they don't need or can't use for a long time. For example, a cluster of masks that is almost near to its valid time, at its surprised price will be picked up by women in their shopping cart; they can even use one piece of the mask back home. A couple of shoes that cause ankle's pain after a long walk owing to its poor quality are often purchased by a woman because of the lovely design of the shoes and the very little cost. Indeed, she only wears the shoes once after she owns it because the ankle pain makes her put the shoes in her closet. It is the "reduced price" temptation, and we often call this behaviour "impulse purchase." Women prefer "impulse purchasing" to males because males often care less about the cost but about the function and usefulness of the item. Nearly all females have the experience of impulse purchasing for any item ranging from clothing to food, cosmetics to household appliances just by the means of "really-super-lower-price" attractiveness. That's why we say, "Despite females angry or happy, always store. 84 % of the women respondents were of the opinion that low pricing is one of the significant factor for the purchase decision.

- **Higher Price Meaning Quality**

As the living standard has grown in the last few years tremendously, most women customers have started placing a lot of emphasis on quality and features. A lower price drop can rarely make them rush for the goods. On the other hand, the preferential benefit campaign may sometimes have adverse impacts on the image of the brand and in fact it further restricts the promotional value of the brand. Many products that rarely use the price approach appear to likely cause the preference of women because they were considered to have long-term reputation and high quality standards. 60 % of the female respondents believe high pricing means high quality but 42 % of the respondents still prefer to go for the brands offering low price despite of the significant difference in the quality offered.

In other words, it is far from constructing a loyalty to a brand to rely on a reduced cost approach to support sales.

It may be able to boost sales in a short time, but it's just a "fake loyalty" supported by low prices. The company should establish a really appealing strategy of repayment and pricing based on the sections of distinct female customers and their associated psychology and cost value. But since the market has price sensitive consumers, therefore the marketers develop the different marketing strategies for different categories.

Gender Perspective of Attitude towards Branded Apparels

The inclination of consumers for ready-to-wear outfits even for branded clothes is quickly shifting caused by the creation of individuality and position with the quality and ease they deliver. As a result of the increased consciousness consumers are prepared to spend higher price for ease and quality the opportunity too. The results have shown that Indian people have become extremely brand conscious. Therefore, brand image is a not the only significant factor in choosing the merchandise or brand. There are other factors like, quality, ease, expectations and demographic characteristics that influence the purchasing decision of males and females. From the research analysis it is evident that the gender differences do exist with respect to building attitude towards fashionable apparels and brands. But the variation in age and income is not significant in relation to consumers preferred brands or outfits.

Strategic Communication with Women Customers

The communication of marketing involves advertising, the sales force, public relations, packing and other indications which the company offers about itself and its products. An efficient goal of women's communication strategy needs responses to the following issue: What are the impacts of our interaction on the target audience? We often say that advertising and some communication in the marketing industry are intended to encourage sales. While this is the ultimate goal, the behavioural goal is often much closer, that is, the audience can try to know more about the product, then like the product and advise others to do something, or feel good about buying the product or a whole range because of the influence of the various communication methods.

Word - of - mouth communication, the sharing of data with others, is critical to customer decision-making and company achievement. By watching or engaging in latest products and services, or through seeking or receiving data from friends and other reference groups, we can learn about our latest goods, restaurants and distributors. About 60% of the female consumers agree that when they decide to purchase goods or services, they often seek advice from others and 40% of the female consumers believe that people often come to them to take advice on the purchase decisions. Marketers would like to enter the consumer's minds and wallets in the highly competitive market place. Dr. Leigh McAlister, Marketing Professor at the University of Texas, in Austin said, "Some business live on a razor thin margin, and it is really tough to survive in the market." Driving the requirements of finicky buyers is therefore essential for gaining clients, and then developing an efficient marketing plan for the target market.

Findings

- Majority of the women respondents were of the opinion that low pricing is one of the significant factor for the purchase decision.
- Majority of the women respondents make their purchasing decisions on others advice instead of giving importance to their own opinion.
- Study has concluded that gender differences do exist with respect to building attitude towards fashionable apparels and brands.
- Difference in age and income is not significant in relation to consumers preferred brands or outfits.
- Female consumers have a strong opinion that high pricing signifies high quality.

Limitations

- The study has been done on a specific time, had the longitudinal effect of the study been considered the results could have been different.
- The study has not taken all the dimensions of female psychology, many more variables can be studied to conclude on more concrete results.
- The study has been conducted in Indian setting; results might differ for the research in western markets.
- The study has used the percentage based method for conclusions; there can be various other quantitative methods for analysis of data and its interpretations.

Conclusion

Women consumers are concluded to be the smarter consumers than males. Therefore the marketing strategies become more female focussed. But issues have been found that companies become so focussed in luring the female consumers that they fail to understand that there cannot be the universal application of marketing strategies with the overall population of the female market. The study

has thus pointed out the areas such as price and marketing communication strategies which have to be framed keeping in mind the female market orientation towards the different categories of products.

References

- ✧ Aaker. (1991). *Managing Brand Equity: Capitalizing on the Value of a Brand Nam*. The Free Press. New York, NY.
- ✧ Alexander. (2005). Clothing fit preferences of young female adult consumers. *International Journal of Clothing Science and Technology*, 17(1), 52-64.
- ✧ Ambler. (1992). *Need-to-know Marketing*. Century Business. London. Anderson, Stephen. (1963). Effects of Concomitant Verbal Recall on Order Effects in Personality Impression Formation. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior*, 2 (5-6), 379-91. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0022-5371\(63\)80039-0](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0022-5371(63)80039-0)
- ✧ Auty, Elliott. (1998). Fashion involvement, self-monitoring and the meaning of brands. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 7(2), 109-123. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/10610429810216874>
- ✧ Blery, Gilbert. (2006). Factors Influencing Customer Retention in Mobile Telephony: A Greek Study. *Transformations in Business & Economics*, 5(2), 178-188.
- ✧ Del I. Hawkins. *Consumer Behavior*. Mechanic Industry Press, 2006, 8, p.10-11.
- ✧ Graham Hooley, John Saunders Nigel. *Marketing Strategy and Competitive Position* (third edition). Zhongxin Press, 2004, p34-35.
- ✧ Ji Hye Park, Sharron J. Lennon, 2004 "Television Apparel Shopping: Impulse Buying and Parasocial Interaction" Volume: 22 issue: 3, page(s): 135-144
- ✧ Man Wang. "She-era" Business Need to See Her World. *Business Forum*, 2004, 9,
- ✧ Ministry of Labour Statistics 2005 India, Maspar NV *The Retail Weeks*, 2007 p 3.
- ✧ Ross Brennan, Paul Baines and Paul Garneau. *Contemporary Strategic Marketing*. Great Britain: Antony Rowe Ltd, 2006, 2 p10-11.408
- ✧ Wanzhen Wang. *On Women's Psychology of Consumption in Marketing*. Fujian Administration College, 2005, 11, p25-26.

