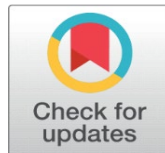
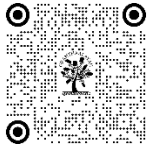


EXAMINING THE FACTORS SHAPING PURCHASE DECISIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE CONSUMER DURABLE KITCHEN PRODUCTS

N.R. Naresh¹, Dr. A. Hema Malini²

¹Ph.D., Research Scholar, Alagappa Institute of Management, Alagappa University, Karaikudi

²Research Supervisor, Alagappa Institute of Management, Alagappa University, Karaikudi & Principal Dr. Umayal Ramanathan College for Women, Karaikudi



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ABSTRACT

This research delves into the various factors influencing consumers' decision-making when it comes to purchasing kitchen appliances in the dynamic setting of shopping malls. Given the evolving nature of contemporary consumerism and the changing role of kitchens beyond mere functionality, a thorough exploration of factors affecting consumer choices becomes essential. The study relies on established models like the Consumer Decision-Making Process, Theory of Planned Behavior, Technology Acceptance Model, and Brand Equity model to construct a robust theoretical framework.

To comprehensively understand the influences on consumer decision-making, the research employs a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. Quantitative surveys focus on gathering demographic information, preferences, and behavioral patterns, while qualitative interviews offer nuanced insights into the subjective aspects of the decision-making process. The examination of variables includes factors such as brand perception, pricing dynamics, and product features, providing an all-encompassing analysis of the factors guiding consumer choices.

Keywords: Brand Equity, Consumer Decision-Making Process, Consumer durable, Kitchen Products



1. INTRODUCTION

In the ever-changing realm of consumerism, the acquisition of kitchen appliances in the lively ambiance of shopping malls has evolved into a intricate and multifaceted occurrence. This research embarks on an exhaustive exploration of the factors intricately molding the decision-making process for consumers purchasing kitchen appliances. It acknowledges the influential role of shopping malls, where a variety of choices, brands, and promotional strategies converge. The transformation of consumer decision-making processes is crucial for grasping the contemporary dynamics of kitchen appliance purchases. Utilizing established models like the Consumer Decision-Making Process, the study seeks to unveil the stages consumers go through, encompassing problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, and post-purchase behavior. These stages form a foundational framework for scrutinizing the variables affecting consumers when choosing kitchen appliances in the dynamic setting of shopping malls.

Alongside the Consumer Decision-Making Process, this research integrates perspectives from the Theory of Planned Behavior, highlighting the significance of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control in influencing consumer intentions and behaviors. Considering the substantial influence of technological advancements in the realm of

kitchen appliances, the study also incorporates components from the Technology Acceptance Model to evaluate how technological features impact consumer decisions.

Examining brand perception stands as another crucial aspect investigated in this study, employing the Brand Equity model to delve into various dimensions such as brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and brand loyalty. These dimensions collectively contribute to unraveling how consumers perceive and assess different brands when it comes to purchasing kitchen appliances within shopping malls. Employing a mixed-methods approach, which combines quantitative surveys for numerical data collection and qualitative interviews for delving into subjective aspects, this research aims to present a thorough understanding of the factors that steer consumer choices.

The study holds significance in its potential to inform strategic marketing approaches, elevate consumer satisfaction, and provide valuable insights for the broader discourse on contemporary consumer behavior in retail environments. As consumers navigate the bustling and diverse setting of shopping malls, the research endeavors to illuminate the intricate factors that influence their decision-making processes in the realm of kitchen appliances. By comprehensively exploring brand perception and incorporating a multifaceted research approach, the study aspires to contribute to the knowledge base that can guide businesses in crafting effective marketing strategies tailored to the complex dynamics of consumer choices in modern retail settings.

In the constantly changing terrain of sustainable consumerism, this research delves into the intricate elements that play a role in shaping the decision-making process for environmentally friendly home products within the dynamic environment of shopping malls. With a growing societal consciousness regarding environmental issues, consumers are increasingly inclined towards opting for sustainable alternatives, even in their everyday purchases for items within their homes.

The primary goal of this study is to thoroughly investigate the diverse factors that influence consumers as they navigate through the decision-making journey for eco-friendly home products. Adopting a mixed-methods approach, the research employs quantitative surveys to capture numerical data related to demographic information, preferences, and behavioral patterns. Concurrently, qualitative interviews are utilized to gain nuanced insights into the subjective aspects of the decision-making process, offering a more comprehensive understanding of consumers' motivations and considerations. This dual-method approach enhances the depth and breadth of the study, allowing for a holistic exploration of the intricate dynamics surrounding consumers' choices of eco-friendly home products in the context of shopping malls.

The foundational framework of this study is rooted in well-established models, notably the Consumer Decision-Making Process, which encompasses stages such as problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, and post-purchase behavior. Furthermore, the research incorporates insights from the Theory of Planned Behavior, aiming to comprehend the impact of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on consumer intentions and actions, particularly in the context of sustainable choices.

The shopping mall, identified as a crucial consumer hub, assumes a central role in shaping sustainable consumer decisions. It serves as a dynamic space where consumers are exposed to a diverse array of sustainable home products, various brands, and promotional strategies geared towards fostering environmentally conscious choices. The research, with its specific focus on sustainable consumer decisions, aspires to offer valuable insights for businesses, policymakers, and retailers looking to align their offerings with the escalating demand for eco-friendly alternatives.

By concentrating on sustainable consumer choices, the study aims to contribute insights that go beyond theoretical frameworks, holding practical implications for real-world applications. The findings have the potential to guide strategic marketing approaches, improve consumer satisfaction, and contribute meaningfully to the broader dialogue on sustainable consumer behavior within contemporary retail environments. In essence, this research endeavors to bridge the gap between theory and practice, offering actionable knowledge for stakeholders in the realm of sustainable consumerism.

Insufficient Exploration of Influential Factors: Current literature lacks a thorough investigation into the myriad factors that significantly impact consumers during their decision-making processes when choosing eco-friendly home products within retail environments. Grasping the intricacies of these factors is essential for businesses and policymakers alike, enabling them to effectively meet the rising demand for sustainable alternatives.

Research Gap in Sustainable Consumer Behavior: A noticeable void exists in research specifically dedicated to sustainable consumer behavior concerning home products. It is imperative to delve into the factors influencing consumer choices in this specific domain to bridge this research gap and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of environmentally conscious decision-making.

Role of Retail Settings in Shaping Choices: While shopping malls and retail environments are acknowledged as influential spaces for consumer decision-making, a deeper exploration into how these settings impact sustainable choices is warranted. Scrutinizing the role of retail spaces in either facilitating or impeding eco-friendly purchases holds crucial implications for both retailers and policymakers seeking to encourage sustainable practices. Understanding these dynamics is vital for creating environments that align with the preferences and motivations of environmentally conscious consumers, ultimately fostering sustainable consumption patterns.

Incorporation of Theoretical Frameworks: Although widely employed in consumer behavior research, theoretical frameworks like the Consumer Decision-Making Process and the Theory of Planned Behavior have not been extensively applied to the specific realm of sustainable consumer choices regarding home products. Adapting these frameworks to the context of eco-friendly home products holds the potential to enrich our theoretical comprehension of consumer behavior within this domain.

Addressing Unexplored Areas: The lack of exploration regarding the application of these established theoretical frameworks to sustainable consumer choices for home products presents an opportunity for research to delve into uncharted territory. By investigating these areas, valuable insights into the dynamics of sustainable consumer choices can be gained, empowering businesses, policymakers, and retailers to formulate well-informed strategies that align with the growing demand for eco-friendly alternatives in the retail landscape.

Strategic Implications: The proposed research has strategic implications for various stakeholders involved in the retail sector. By integrating well-established theoretical frameworks into the study of sustainable consumer choices, the research seeks to provide a solid foundation for understanding the underlying factors shaping purchasing decisions in this specific context. This, in turn, can guide the development of targeted strategies by businesses and policymakers to effectively meet the rising demand for eco-friendly alternatives, ultimately fostering sustainable practices within the retail environment.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify and analyze the pivotal elements that impact consumer decisions towards sustainability.
- To evaluate how online & retail environments contribute to encouraging environmentally conscious decisions

3. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Turley, L.W., & Milliman, R.E. (2000) This research examines how the atmosphere of shopping malls affects consumer behavior, focusing on elements such as lighting, music, and layout. The authors seek to comprehend how these components influence shoppers' emotions and actions. The study delves into the complex interactions between environmental factors in shopping malls and how they shape consumers' perceptions, preferences, and purchasing decisions.

Author: Sproles, G.B., & Kendall, E.L. (1986) The study aims to explore different types of shoppers and how they interact in retail settings, especially within shopping malls. Through classifying shoppers based on their preferences, motivations, and actions, the research intends to shed light on how various consumer groups interact with the shopping environment. The overarching objective is to obtain a thorough understanding of these shopper typologies, providing useful insights that can guide the customization of shopping experiences in malls to meet the diverse requirements of consumers.

Chebat, J.-C., & Michon, R.(2003) The research focuses on the social aspects that impact consumer behavior within shopping malls. It explores how factors such as socializing with friends and family influence consumers' decisions, preferences, and overall shopping experiences. By delving into this area, the study seeks to provide valuable insights into the complex social interactions within shopping malls and to highlight the significant implications for consumer behavior.

4. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The central aim of this research is to understand the factors that influence consumer choices when buying eco-friendly home products in retail environments. Utilizing a mixed-methods research design, the study combines both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics at play. This investigation is guided by well-established frameworks such as the Consumer Decision-Making Process, Theory of Planned Behavior, and relevant sustainability models. Its objective is to delve into and comprehend the diverse array of factors that shape consumers' decisions towards making sustainable choices.

5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What key factors have a notable impact on consumers when they decide to purchase environmentally friendly consumer durable home products?
- In what ways do retail settings, particularly shopping malls, affect and shape consumer decisions regarding the purchase of sustainable consumer durable home products?

HYPOTHESIS

- Consumer beliefs, social influences, and the perception of control greatly affect decisions towards sustainable consumer choices.
- The retail setting, encompassing factors like store arrangement, promotional tactics, and marketing efforts emphasizing sustainability, plays a role in shaping consumer choices for eco-friendly home products.

Table No. 1: H test shows the mean rank differences toward influencing factors with respect to occupation

PDMS	Occupation	N	Mean Rank	H Score	P Value
Personal factor	Govt. Employee	65	482.30	111.352	0.001
	Private employee	352	275.46		
	Business	104	282.75		
	Others	131	421.07		
	Total	652			
Social Factor	Govt. Employee	65	503.90	98.321	0.001
	Private employee	352	302.83		
	Business	104	234.69		
	Others	131	374.98		
	Total	652			
Psychological Factor	Govt. Employee	65	406.30	22.192	0.001
	Private employee	352	333.48		
	Business	104	271.44		
	Others	131	311.87		
	Total	652			
Mall Environmen- tal Factor	Govt. Employee	65	354.00	31.735	0.001
	Private employee	352	305.39		
	Business	104	413.75		
	Others	131	300.31		
	Total	652			
Overall Factors	Govt. Employee	65	515.60	81.275	0.001
	Private employee	352	294.79		
	Business	104	289.13		
	Others	131	347.54		
	Total	652			

Source: primary data

The H-test presented above demonstrates the variations in mean ranks concerning influencing factors categorized by occupation. These mean rank differences represent the cumulative impact of all data gathered from customers. The H-test primarily reveals the overall information of the variables. Since the data collected on a five-point scale was treated as discrete data, the H-test was chosen for analysis. The influencing factors consist of four categories: personal factors, social factors, psychological factors, and mall environmental factors. Each of these factors was associated with four distinct occupation groups among customers: Government Employees, Private Employees, Business Professionals, and other types of occupations.

The personal factor is one of the influencing factors considered in this analysis, which was statistically examined across four distinct occupation groups among customers. The highest mean rank, totaling 482.30, was observed in the Government Employee occupation group, indicating their stronger association with this factor. The overall mean for the personal factor, calculated at 3.7270, suggests a slight inclination beyond the neutral point. Conversely, the lowest mean rank, at 275.46, was found among Private Employees. The significant H-ratio of 111.352 at a one percent level indicates notable differences in attitudes towards the personal factor across all four occupation groups during their shopping mall purchases.

Similarly, the social factor, another influencing factor, was analyzed across the same four occupation groups of customers. The highest mean rank of 503.90 was recorded within the Government Employee group, indicating a stronger inclination towards this factor. The overall mean for the social factor, calculated at 3.2091, also leans slightly beyond the neutral point. Conversely, the lowest mean rank, at 234.69, was observed among individuals in the Business occupation group. The significant H-ratio of 98.321 at a one percent level implies notable variations in attitudes towards the social factor across all four occupation groups during their shopping mall purchases.

The psychological factor is one of the influencing factors examined in this study, which was analyzed across four distinct occupation groups of customers. The highest mean rank, standing at 406.30, was observed among Government Employees, indicating a stronger association with this factor within this group. The overall mean calculated for the psychological factor, at 3.6234, suggests a slight inclination beyond the neutral point. Conversely, the lowest mean rank, at 271.44, was found among individuals in the Business occupation group. The significant H-ratio of 22.192 at a one percent level indicates noticeable differences in attitudes towards the psychological factor across all four occupation groups during their shopping mall purchases.

Similarly, the mall environmental factor, another influencing factor, was assessed across the same four occupation groups of customers. The highest mean rank, totaling 413.75, was recorded within the Business occupation group, indicating a stronger inclination towards this factor. The overall mean calculated for the mall environmental factor, at 3.7168, also leans slightly beyond the neutral point. Conversely, the lowest mean rank, at 305.39, was observed among Private Employees. The significant H-ratio of 31.735 at a one percent level suggests notable variations in attitudes towards the mall environmental factor across all four occupation groups during their shopping mall purchases.

The influencing factors were statistically analyzed across four distinct occupation groups among customers. The highest mean rank, reaching 515.60, was observed within the Government Employee group, indicating a stronger association with these factors. The overall mean calculated for the influencing factors, at 3.5691, slightly exceeds the neutral point. Conversely, the lowest mean rank, at 289.13, was found among individuals in the Business occupation group. The significant H-ratio of 81.275 at a one percent level suggests notable differences in attitudes towards the overall influencing factors across all four occupation groups during their shopping mall purchases.

Differences in influencing factors such as personal, social, psychological, and mall environmental factors were confirmed through the H-ratio and its significance levels. The Government Employee group demonstrated the highest mean rank across personal, social, and psychological factors, while the Business group exhibited the highest mean rank in the mall environmental factor. Conversely, the Business group displayed lower satisfaction levels towards social and psychological factors, while the Private Employee group showed lower satisfaction towards personal and mall environmental factors.

Table No. 2: Covariance

IV	IV	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	R	P
Personal Factors	Mall Environmental Fac- tors	0.218	0.018	12.138	0.541	0.001
Psychological Fac- tors	Mall Environmental Fac- tors	0.052	0.008	6.317	0.256	0.001
Personal Factors	Psychological Factors	0.026	0.009	2.993	0.118	0.003
Social Factors	Psychological Factors	0.054	0.007	8.107	0.335	0.001

Social Factors	Mall Environmental Fac- tors	0.096	0.012	7.951	0.328	0.001
Personal Factors	Social Factors	0.005	0.013	0.403	0.016	0.687

Source: Primary data

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the psychological factor and the mall environmental factor.

However, upon examining the relationship between the psychological factor and influencing factors associated with the mall environment, a significant relationship was found, with a computed CR value of 6.317 and a probability value of 0.001. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected. The calculated covariance was 0.256, indicating a positive relationship between the psychological factor and the mall environmental factor in influencing consumer decision-making styles for kitchen appliances in Bangalore's shopping malls.

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the psychological factor and the personal factor. However, upon analyzing the relationship between the psychological factor and influencing factors associated with personal factors, a significant relationship was identified, with a computed CR value of 2.993 and a probability value of 0.003. As a result, the formulated null hypothesis was rejected. The calculated covariance was 0.118, indicating a positive relationship between the psychological factor and the personal factor in influencing consumer decision-making styles for kitchen appliances in Bangalore's shopping malls.

Ho: Psychological factor has no significant relationship with social factor. Psychological factor influencing factors has significant relationship with social factor computed CR value was 8.107 and the probability value was 0.003. Hence, the formulated null hypothesis was rejected. Here, the calculated co-variance was 0.335. Hence, it is finished that there is positive relationship between psychological factor and social factor for consumer purchase decision making style for Kitchen appliances in shopping malls of Chennai.

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the mall environmental factor and the social factor. However, upon examining the relationship between the mall environmental factor and influencing factors associated with the social factor, a significant relationship was observed, with a computed CR value of 7.951 and a probability value of 0.003. Consequently, the formulated null hypothesis was rejected. The calculated covariance was 0.328, indicating a positive relationship between the mall environmental factor and the social factor in influencing consumer decision-making styles for kitchen appliances in Bangalore's shopping malls.

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the personal factor and the social factor. Upon examination of the relationship between the influencing factors associated with the personal factor and the social factor, a computed CR value of 0.403 and a probability value of 0.687 were obtained. As a result, the formulated null hypothesis was accepted. The calculated covariance was 0.016. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no relationship between the personal factor and the social factor in influencing consumer decision-making styles for kitchen appliances in Bangalore's shopping malls.

6. FINDINGS

The discernment of critical factors that mold sustainable consumer choices is a multifaceted exploration, revealing the considerable influence wielded by attitudes, subjective norms, and the intricate dynamics of the retail environment, with shopping malls serving as focal points of analysis. Within these bustling commercial hubs, consumers navigate a myriad of stimuli that shape their preferences and purchasing behaviors.

Attitudes towards sustainability, ingrained through individual values and beliefs, play a pivotal role in guiding consumer decisions. Likewise, subjective norms, encompassing societal expectations and peer influences, exert a subtle yet profound impact on the choices consumers make, particularly in environments like shopping malls where social interactions are prevalent.

Moreover, the retail environment itself emerges as a potent determinant of consumer behavior. Shopping malls, with their array of stores, displays, and promotional activities, serve as arenas where consumer preferences are both shaped and reinforced. Eco-conscious branding initiatives, designed to communicate a commitment to sustainability, resonate deeply with environmentally conscious consumers, influencing their purchasing decisions. Furthermore, product features that emphasize sustainability, such as recyclable materials or energy-efficient design, resonate strongly with consumers seeking eco-friendly options.

In-store promotional strategies further amplify the allure of sustainable consumer choices. From eye-catching displays to engaging demonstrations, these tactics not only draw attention to eco-friendly products but also educate consumers about their benefits, fostering a sense of connection and affinity.

Collectively, these elements underscore the intricate interplay between consumer preferences, retail dynamics, and sustainability imperatives, highlighting the profound impact they have on shaping sustainable consumer choices within the vibrant landscape of shopping malls.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS:

Tailoring marketing strategies to accentuate eco-friendly attributes, elevating the prominence of sustainability-focused branding, and seamlessly integrating green initiatives within the retail landscape represents a strategic imperative. Collaborative ventures with eco-conscious brands, coupled with the implementation of educational campaigns, serve as pivotal drivers in fostering sustainable consumer behavior. Within the realm of shopping malls, where consumer choices converge, a concerted effort to enhance the selection of kitchen appliances necessitates a multifaceted approach.

Retailers must prioritize the creation of captivating in-store displays and immersive product demonstrations to engage consumers and underscore the appeal of eco-friendly options. Offering competitive pricing structures, bundled deals, and enticing discounts serves to further sway purchasing decisions, thereby incentivizing sustainable choices. Effective marketing endeavors, emphasizing the salient features and benefits of eco-friendly products, stand as influential mechanisms in shaping consumer preferences and driving adoption.

To augment the consumer experience, it is imperative to provide knowledgeable staff capable of assisting customers and ensuring a seamless shopping journey. Additionally, fostering a positive online presence through garnering favorable reviews and maintaining an active social media presence contributes to building brand credibility and consumer trust.

Furthermore, a commitment to staying abreast of emerging trends and technological advancements underscores the retailer's dedication to innovation and customer-centricity. Regularly updating product offerings to align with evolving consumer preferences not only sustains interest but also fosters long-term customer satisfaction and loyalty.

In essence, the comprehensive adoption of tailored marketing strategies, coupled with an unwavering commitment to sustainability and consumer-centric initiatives, lays the foundation for fostering a culture of eco-consciousness within shopping malls. Through a concerted effort to integrate green practices and elevate the prominence of eco-friendly options, retailers can catalyze meaningful change and drive sustainable consumer behavior.

8. CONCLUSION

The research underscores the critical importance for businesses and retailers to comprehend and address these factors when aiming to fulfill the escalating demand for eco-friendly home products, thereby nurturing sustainability within retail ecosystems. When it comes to consumers' decisions regarding kitchen appliances in shopping malls, a plethora of influences come into play. These encompass various aspects such as product attributes, brand reputation, pricing structures, and the overall shopping encounter. Consumers are actively seeking appliances that resonate with their individual preferences and cater to their lifestyle requirements. Marketing strategies that place a heightened emphasis on these pivotal factors hold the potential to exert a substantial influence on consumer purchasing behavior. Consequently, retailers and manufacturers alike are urged to prioritize a deep understanding of these elements and adapt their approaches accordingly to bolster consumer satisfaction and drive sales within the fiercely competitive landscape of kitchen appliances in shopping malls. In essence, by aligning their efforts with consumer preferences and evolving market dynamics, businesses can position themselves as leaders in promoting sustainability and meeting the evolving needs of eco-conscious consumers. Through strategic alignment with these influential factors, retailers can foster lasting connections with their customer base and thrive in the dynamic realm of retail.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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