

Consumer Buying Behaviour: A Comparative Study of Male and Female Users of Electronics

Sunil Chander

The University of Agriculture Peshawar, Pakistan

Muhammad Raza

The University of Agriculture Peshawar, Pakistan

Abstract

Laptops, smartphones and tablets are currently changing the way life. While they have been used as a tool for finding information for a while, they are now also used for multitasking. Though, little effort has been done to sort out consumer buying behavior for laptop, mobile and especially tablet electronics brand. The purpose of this paper was to examine the buying behavior of male and female consumers of Pakistan towards consumer electronics. Data were collected from four different cities of Pakistan i.e. Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Lahore through structured questionnaire. SPSS version 20.0 was used to inspect the results. To find out the preferences of the consumers while making a purchase decision we used Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP). Prioritization of factors was done with the help of Analytical Hierarchy Process. The paper helps management to review their advertisement campaigns and improve their electronics according to the needs of the consumers.

Keywords: Consumer Buying Behavior, Electronics brand, Analytical Hierarchy Process.

Consumer is the main reason for business existence. Without them no company can thrive or survive. Their absence means that an organization doesn't have a purpose or business. The main intention of a company is to satisfy customer's needs and wants. Consumers are unique in themselves; they have their own requirements according to their needs. They also have different consumption behavior and different consumption patterns. The marketer helps fulfill these needs and wants through the products and services they offer. If a firm wants to survive, grow and compete it is very necessary that the marketer first identifies these wants and needs, and provide product offerings in a very impressive manner than any other competitor. For a firm to succeed, a meticulous knowledge of consumers and their consumption behavior is essential. In this, lays the real meaning of Consumer Behaviour, an interdisciplinary subject, which emerged as a separate field of study in the 1960s (Kotler & Armstrong, 2001; Gabbott & Hogg 1998; Blackwell et al., 2006). Peter Drucker stated that the main aim of marketing is to know and understand the consumer so well that the product or service fits

him and sells itself. Ideally, marketing should result in a consumer who is always ready to buy. The last step that should be needed then is to make the service or product available. In short, customer or consumer satisfaction is the key to an organizational success. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2001).

Consumer

An individual who purchases goods and services from market for his/her end-use is called a consumer or more simply a consumer is one who consumes goods and services offered in the market. In other words, consumer is an eventual user of a product or service (Blackwell et al., 2006). According to Kotler & Armstrong (2001) “consumers are purchasers of goods and services for immediate use and consumption”.

Consumer Behavior

Human beings are different from one another and the human behavior is unpredictable. They differ in their taste, wants, needs and preferences. But one unvarying thing is that, we all are consumers. Consumer Behavior is very complex and vast subject. “Knowing consumers’ and understanding consumer behavior is not that simple. It is not possible to predict hundred per cent accurately, the behavior of a consumer in a given situation. Marketers are interested in watching people playing, entertaining, shopping, flirting, parading, as they are keenly interested in the wide variety of behaviors they show. All marketers are putting their efforts to influence the behavior of consumers in a desired manner. The success or failure in this regard determines the difference between success and failure of marketing efforts or even the business itself (De Mooij, 1998; Elliott & Cameron, 1994). Consumer behavior is a complicated and diverse area of study. Consumer Behavior can be defined as “the interplay of forces that takes place during a consumption process, within a consumers’ self and his environment. As customer's tastes and preferences are changing, the market state is also changing from time to time. Today's market scenario is very different from that of the market scenario before 1990. There have been many factors responsible for the changing market scenario. Changing preferences and tastes of customers bring about change in the market. Income level, social class and life styles of people have

completely changed as compared to old days. As a result it has altered the market demand in today's world (Lee, Lee, & Feick, 2001) Technology is a major factor among many other factors which has made the paradigm shift in the market. Consumer research takes places at every phase of utilization process, before the purchase, during the purchase and after the purchase. Spectacular shifts in the market took place during the last decade which was activated by changes in the lifestyle patterns and the revolution in the communication technology. The new generation is even willing to import to fulfill specific requirement. Marketers will have to regularly monitor and understand the primary Psychographics to map their relevant industries and decide what to be done to stimulate customers to buy the company's products and empower the potential industry structure (Saaksjarvi, 2003). The knowledge of the consumer behavior assists the marketer to understand how consumers feel, think and select among different brands products and how the consumers are predisposed by their environment, family, the reference groups and salespersons etc. A consumer's buying behavior is swayed by social, cultural, personal and psychological factors. Most of these factors are irrepressible and beyond the hands of marketers but they have to be carefully measured while trying to comprehend the multifaceted behavior of the consumers. In the global market, consumer is the center point (Gupta, 1988). The study about the consumer buying behavior has become an important task because of many reasons. The first and the foremost reason is that the marketer's attention has now been diverted from products to consumers. In old days, marketers followed product oriented approach but now it has changed to consumer oriented approach. A person's behavior varies from place to place and situation to situation. It is very inconsistent. The consumer adapts different ways to satisfy its needs depending on his social, family, cultural, educational and economic background. Consumer is the principle priority of business. A business community that is unaware of consumer's preferences cannot fulfill its obligations in a responsive and meaningful manner. Consumer Behavior is generally defined as "the behavior the consumer displays in searching for, using, purchasing, and evaluating products, services, and ideas which they expect will satisfy their needs." (Rahman & Bhattacharyya, 2003).

Factors Influencing Consumer Decision Making Process

The consumer decision-making, related to purchase and utilization of various products and services, is influenced by internal as well as external factors. Among the external factors, the most important and significant are the features or attributes of the product itself, the brand and the package in which it is incased. Product-related attributes are the functions of the product or service. Non-product-related attributes are the external aspects of the product or service that relate to its purchase or consumption, like the price information, packaging or product aspects, usage imagery and user imagery (Kotler & Armstrong, 2001). Consumer buying behavior is influenced by many socio-cultural factors like social class, personality, demographics and beliefs etc. Besides these, the visual impact of the product, the brand image and awareness, the significant colors and logo of the brand and the price, greatly influence the consumer's behavior towards purchasing a product. Price is significantly an important attribute because consumers often have strong belief about the price and value of the brand and may organize their product category knowledge in terms of the price of different brands. (Chang & Tung, 2008; Funk & Ndubisi, 2006). Till now the research studies held around the globe have studied consumer behavior with reference to product choice and color dimension (Funk & Ndubisi, 2006); source of information, brand choice, role of family members (Gupta, 1988); brand association (Fernandez, 2009); income (Singh, 2011); style (Wilska, 2003); functionality, price, promotion, sales and services, style, quality, and brand image (Funk & Ndubisi, 2006; Gupta, 1988; Singh, 2011; Wilska, 2003; Farzana, 2012) and sales promotion (Gupta, 1988). These studies showed the sway of these elements on the consumer behavior towards various products. This research study is highlighting the leading factors that influence consumer decision making in purchasing smart phone, laptop, and tablet while considering male and female users as separate entities in the scenario of Pakistan environment.

Literature Review

Saaksjarvi (2003) concluded from their study that consumer electronics (Smartphones, Laptops and Tablets) got more consideration of marketing researchers by looking upon the acceptance procedure. Rogers in 1962 provided a classification of

consumers in expressions of early adopters, laggards, early majority, innovators and late majority. They found that consumers also gave the notion of being into the compatibility of the new products to their life style and self-image. Funk and Ndubisi (2006) studied a significant involvement between color and the choice of an automobile. Their study further revealed the gender moderation on the relationship between different color dimensions and the product choice. Barak and Gould (1985) found that younger consumers were fonder of stylish goods than older ones. Young consumers had more interest in buying new products. They observed that these consumers had information seeking behavior and this information leads to self confidence which further helps them in making an opinion leader that further results in brand switching. Gupta (1988) studied the factors which motivated consumers while buying durables. He found that source of information, brand choice, customer satisfaction and role of family members were the significant factors. Shanthi (2005) worked on the perceptual dimensions of brand association with reference to mobile users. Zeb, Rashid, Javeed (2011) compared the male and female lifestyles and cultural values on meaning of brand in the Pakistani market. They found that a brand manager should give a name to the product that should depict the cultural meaning to the customers. Moreover advertisement and promotions should reflect the social values of the consumers. Research showed that Pakistan has a collectivist society so all the promotion activities should be accordingly. A significant positive relation was found with income of consumers and buying behavior of consumers. Williams (2002) argued that deviation in “attitude, motivation and value orientations associated with differences in occupational opportunities and demands, childhood socialization patterns and educational influences may lead consumers to vary in many of their purchase behaviors across social classes”. Rahman and Bhattacharyya (2003) studied about emerging markets and showed the significance of emerging markets in the global business and places of interest. Wilska (2003) observed that the conventional gender division in mobile phone use styles and observed that genders were flattering more similarly in their use of new technology. Sun and Wu (2004) studied Chinese market and found that Chinese rural and urban consumers were statistically dissimilar in provisions of their attitudes toward the whole

marketing mix: “product price, brand names, promotions and distribution”. Gupta (1988) found that sales promotions had greater impact on consumer buying behavior. Lee and Feick (2001) argued that customer satisfaction contributed positively in customer retention. They found that switching cost played a very important role. This was further linked with quality. They concluded that Consumer electronics companies that will focus on quality, will increase customer satisfaction.

Research Methodology

The brands considered for each electronics category under current study were;

Mobile: Apple, Samsung, HTC, Nokia, Q Mobile

Laptop: Apple, Dell, HP, Acer, Toshiba

Tablets: iPad, Samsung, HP, Danny, Q-Tab

Population

The population under present study was the Pakistani customers using mobile phones, laptops, and tablets respectively of selected brands.

Sample

The sample considered under this research study was the male and female customers living in Peshawar, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and Lahore respectively and using selected mobile phone, laptop, and Tablet brands. Equal proportion to both male and female was allocated in sampling.

Sampling

Convenient based sampling techniques was administered and 50 customers from each city were selected, So total 200 customers for each category of Mobile phone, Laptop, and Tablets were selected for present study.

Data collection tool

A structured questionnaire was developed and personally distributed among selected sample. The questionnaire was segmented into two sections. Section 1 captured the demographics of the respondents and section 2 captured their response against influential factors to which customers are sensitive to in buying behavior. Factors were selected by careful review of literature.

Customers were asked to rate their response in 5-point Likert scale against these influential factors.

Data analysis techniques

The collected data after screening was loaded into SPSS. Descriptive statistics, cross tabulation were used for analysis. Analytical hierarchy process technique was used to prioritize the factors responded by customers. In case of smart phones Functionality meant the user friendliness, camera quality, screen resolution, internal memory, and multitasking where Aesthetics meant the style, color, design. In case of laptop Aesthetics captured the style, color, design while Functionality captured screen resolution, graphics, and complete specifications of the laptops

Results and Discussion

The chapter is describing the demographics of the male and female respondents living in Peshawar, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and Lahore that are using smart phone, laptop and tablets. Also the sources through which they get information regarding their purchase, and the role of different individuals that helps them in their purchase decision are mentioned. Finally the weight index table is showing their priority given to the identified influential factors that make up their purchase behavior. AHP technique was administered to calculate the weight index of the influential factors according to customers' response having active role in their purchase decision.

Table 1

Demographics of the Male respondents (N = 300)

Demo	Male		
Age	18-27 yrs 90(30%)	28-37 yrs 129(43%)	38-47 yrs 81 (27%)
Education	Intermediate 69(23%)	Graduate 123(41%)	Post graduate 108(36%)
Occupation	Student 75(25%)	Employed 144(48%)	Self-employed 81(27%)

Table 1 is showing the demographics of the male respondents using smart phone, Laptop and tablets with reference to their age, education, and occupation. Male customers lying in age bracket of (28-37yrs) 43% can be captured as the target buyers of these products followed by customers (38-77yrs) 81% and (18-27yrs) 30%. The reason for that is that it is their professional stage

of life where they are coped with demand for a best smart phone to stay connected with their social circle, best laptop supporting their access to net surfing and documentation of their work and reliable tablets. 41% male respondents are graduates followed by 36% post graduate and 23% intermediate. The reason for that is Graduate students under various fields of education industry are bombarded with need to access internet for their subject notes, assignments, presentations, research works leading to their career building. Also they are active in social connections in their surrounding being in grooming stage of life. Also 48% male respondents are employed (private jobs) followed by 81% self- employed (businessmen) and 75% students.

Table 2

Demographics of the Female respondents (N = 300)

Demo		Female		
Age	18-27yrs	28-37yrs	38-47yrs	
	126(42%)	99(33%)	75(25%)	
Education	Intermediate	Graduate	Post graduate	
	84(28%)	129(43%)	87(29%)	
Occupation	Student	Employed	Self-employed	
	129(43%)	111(37%)	60(20%)	

According to table 2 female respondents lying in age bracket of (18-27) 42% can be captured as target buyers of these products. The reason for that is basically they are dependent on their parents who financially support their living. Comparing the male and female respondents in education aspects about being graduates support over above argument which was Graduate students under various fields of education industry are bombarded with need to access internet for their subject notes, assignments, presentations, research works leading to their career building. So male and female graduates can be treated as active buyers of smart phone, laptop, and tablets.

Table 3

Source of information

Source	TV	Internet	Retailer	Newspaper
Male	174(29%)	258(43%)	90(15%)	78(13%)
Female	270(45%)	192(32%)	30(5%)	108(18%)

Table 3 is glimpsing the various sources from males and females encounter information when they are intended to buy a product in general and smart phone, laptop, and tablet in specific. Male respondents more rely on the internet in information search because these products complete specifications, models, performance rating, and user responses are found in different blogs and official websites on which customers confidently rely upon. Male customers are giving second importance to TV in information search because TV ads eventually make customers aware of the brand and their core offerings followed by brand advocacy of the retailers selling the specified brands of these products. Males are treating newspaper as last reliable source to their purchase decision.

According to our analysis in comparison to males the females rely on the TV ads for their information search because females are mostly the target audience of the TV ads in which they are associated with different roles of life in which they take care of the house and their family, dietary preferences for their kids health, kitchen utensils and cooking and baking products and a lot more. Comparing to males the females are also giving second most priority to internet source because of the argument we gave above. Newspaper is second last informative source for their purchase. In case of retail source female give least importance to retailers because of their passive role in shopping of these products where these products are purchased by their husbands or and family members.

Table 4

Role in decision making

Role	Family	Friends	Self- decision	Reference group	Media
Male	42(7%)	108(18%)	144(24%)	84(14%)	222(37%)
Female	150(25%)	60(10%)	138(23%)	42(7%)	210(35%)

Table 4 is highlighting the important role of different individuals in supporting the purchase decision and shaping the male and female consumer behavior of smart phones, laptops, and tablets. Males basically rely on their own decisions regarding their purchase of these products. Their purchase decisions of males are supported by the above mentioned relying sources of Media except retailers. Friends making their social circle are treated as third

important role that helps male customers regarding their purchase because of their interaction and belongingness need and they take suggestions and opinions of their friends followed by Reference groups (14%) and Family (7%).

Females compare to males mostly rely on Media (35%) in their decision making because as stated earlier females are the target audience of most of the ads. Those ads are recalled in mind of the females while shopping that is why the ads play a very key role in their decision making. Mostly because of soft and loving nature of females and their emotional attachment to their family they rely on their family (25%) while making purchase decisions.

Table 5
Influential factors weight based on tangible & intangible aspects of the products regarding male respondents

	Tangible aspects	Male		
		Weight index		
Tangible aspects	Factors	Smart phone	Laptop	Tablet
	Price	0.216738	0.316916	0.092801
	Aesthetics	0.139102	0.200591	0.133648
	Brand image	0.292128	0.123513	0.453139
Intangible aspects	Functionality	0.181108	0.174780	0.150661
	Promotion	0.051963	0.067218	0.045527
	Re-sale	0.079080	0.091450	0.085479
	After sales services	0.039881	0.025532	0.038745

Table 5 is highlighting the responses of the male customers regarding factors that influence their purchase decision of tangible and intangible aspects of smart phone, laptop, and tablets. Brand image is considered crucial element in purchasing smart phone because brand image is the competitive advantage of the firms in competing with its rivals. Also there is congruence between brand image and customers’ social image as customers make others to associate their image with the image of the brand based on the reputation of the brand. So we concluded branding critically does matter in case of smart phone. Also smart phone customers are price conscious and treat price as second most important factor. Functionality here meant the user friendliness, camera quality, screen resolution, internal memory, and multi tasking of the smart phones. According to customers the third most important factors is functionality because of the functions phone has and ease of its operating and adoption. Aesthetics meant the style, color, design of the smart phone and interestingly male customer give passive

importance to the aesthetics factor. Re-sale factor is also included in this study where customers rated re-sale as fifth most important factors in their purchase behavior followed by promotion and lastly after sale services.

In case of laptop buying behavior male customers give price the enriched importance because laptops are almost with same price and specification, the hardware supplier to the firms are almost the same, and there is very less room for firms to differentiate on branding only. Aesthetics here captured the style, color, design and aesthetics captured second primary role in purchase decision of laptops. A decent package of these aspects combinely will influence the males' future purchase of laptops. Functionality captured screen resolution, graphics, and complete specifications of the laptops and is third most important factor in purchase decision. Brand image is considered the fourth influential factors by male respondents followed by re-sale, promotion and after sale services. The reason to that is laptops aren't resold at good price and after sale services process is too lengthy in today's busy life style.

As tablets are innovative products and give the combined advantages of smart phone and laptops. The sale of tablets is steady in Pakistan but the trend is setting its flight towards growth and demand for tablets is becoming healthy now a days. Male customers are giving parsimonious importance to brand image in case of tablets as the offering firms are mostly the same manufactures of laptops and smart phones. So relying on brand image of the tablets is because the customers are associating the image of the brand with its product line. Functionality is considered as second most important factor because of the performance, screen size, and complete specifications followed by aesthetics and price as tablets are judged on the functionality here

Table 6

Influential factors weight based on tangible & intangible aspects of the products regarding female respondents

	Tangible aspects	Female		
		Weight index		
Int an aspects	Factors	Smart phone	Laptop	Tablet
	Price	0.041027	.236104	0.118016
	Aesthetics	0.396001	.255923	0.382364
	Brand image	0.114357	.116957	0.159350
	Functionality	0.181392	.172933	0.064651

Promotion	0.219184	.091368	0.214338
Re-sale	0.022172	.087843	0.014369
After sales services	0.025867	.038872	0.046912

Table 6 is highlighting the responses of the female customers regarding factors that influence their purchase decision of tangible and intangible aspects of smart phone, laptop, and tablets. In case of smart phones females gave the highest weight to aesthetics followed by promotion. The reason for which is as we stated above mostly females are potential target audience of the ads so managers should heavily rely on the aesthetics of smart phones in their promotional ads. The third important factor according to the females is functionality followed by brand image, price, after sale services, and resale respectively.

In case of laptop buying behavior of females again aesthetics of the laptop is thought to be most influential factor because females are very sensitive to color, style, and design as these elements are heavily relied upon in their purchase decision. Price also is considered second most important element it seems women are price conscious in laptop purchase. After considering aesthetics and price women laptop buying behavior is influenced by functionality elements and they will prefer the one with best package of specifications, screen size, and graphics. Next come the brand image of the laptop followed by other elements respectively.

In case of tablets again females have given highest scoring to the aesthetic factors on the board. Promotion is given second most important rating in purchase decision followed by brand image price respectively.

Conclusion, Recommendations and Limitations

Conclusion

Analysis of our results revealed that female and male consumers pose difference in set of choices they make in purchase decision of smart phone, laptop, and tablets respectively. Also if considering the male and female purchase decision separately in purchasing these products interestingly their purchase decision varies. Both males and females give importance to identified elements in purchasing smart phones are different than importance given to same elements while purchasing laptop and tablets. From our findings we concluded that; Comparing males to females the

males heavily rely upon brand image, price, aesthetics and functionality while purchasing smart phone where as the females rely upon aesthetics, promotion, functionality, and brand image. So males give primary importance to brand image where females give least importance, secondary importance to price where females aren't price conscious, third most importance to aesthetics where females give it top priority, and finally males give least importance to functionality where females consider it third most importance factor.

Comparing males to females the males heavily rely upon price, aesthetics, functionality, and brand image while purchasing laptop where as the females rely upon aesthetics, price, functionality, and brand image. So males give primary importance to price where females give primary importance to aesthetics, secondary importance to aesthetics where females give to price. Both males and females share same attributes where both gender gave third order importance to functionality followed by the brand image of the laptop. Females aren't considering promotion as importance because laptops are very least advertised in Pakistan, and net is the mostly the source to get complete information.

Same difference behavior goes to the purchase of tablets by males and females where highest influential factor on purchase of tablets is brand image by males and aesthetics by females. Males consider functionality as second most important element where females this rating to promotion followed by aesthetics and price by male customers, and brand image, and price by females respectively

Recommendations

Based upon our findings we recommend that managers should treat males and females customers separately in their ads because demographics of the respondents did matter here and the respondents posed different set of choices in depicting purchase behavior of smart phone, laptop, and tablets. Managers should focus on brand image building, economical price, aesthetics and functionality of these products while targeting male consumers in their marketing and promotional campaigns. And best effort should be taken to make male customers confidently associate their social image with the image of the brand they are offering to enhance their status. And product offering should be best suitable to

demand of the customers they focus in purchase behavior depicted by aesthetics and functionality elements.

As females are styles and look conscious and portrays feminine attributes while making purchase so the aesthetics of these products should be specifically associated with their demand for the products and ads should heavily promote the aesthetics of these products to inspire women in purchase decision. Functionality attributes of these products will also inspire the confidence of the female consumers and should be promoted in the way that functionality elements of the product will be congruent to their life standards and demands. Females rely on their family in making decisions so these emotional tiers should be specifically focused to reach the potential females consumers to grow the selling of these products. Also TV ads should be best strategized as females heavily rely upon ads to ads should be strategically positioned to make the female consumers confident in buying your brand and product in their current and future purchase.

Limitations of the Study

- The sample size was small and it included male and female. Further study on larger population can be carried out
- It focused on consumers from four cities of Pakistan but it can be made more effective and informative by including other cities as well.

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