

India a Culture with Change and Continuity in Consumer Behaviour

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ABSTRACT

Culture plays silent as well as robust role in moulding consumer behaviour. Indian culture is a symphony of various cultural instruments. Culture gets power from region and religion. We can broadly divide Indian culture into three categories Westernization, Nationalist cultural style, Popular culture style. This research aims to find out the difference in consumer buying behaviour on the basis of selected cultural ideologies. We are also interested to find out the difference in consumer behaviour on the basis of regionalism and religion.

Data is collected from the Northern parts of India and statistical tool like paired t-test along with ANOVA is applied on the collected data.

There is no significant difference is found on the two hypotheses based on cultural factors. There is a significant difference found between the regional influence on consumer decision making and influence of religion on consumer decision making.

Keywords: Cultural, Nationalism, Religion and Region.

INTRODUCTION:

Culture is the expression of life of a group of people who share common values, belief, ideologies and symbols. These traits are adopted by the society with minor changes. But one thing is inevitable that is change. In Indian society this expression of life has wide dimensions and they are changing. Therefore we can't generalize and say unanimously that culture is scientific in nature. Rather, culture is an evolved phenomenon. Culture is transparent and reveals its identity quite easily. One can distinguish between a Punjabi and Bengali through his language, dress up, food, accent and expression. Indian culture is a significant mix of change and continuity. Indian culture is archeologically accepted one, which existed before Harappan civilization. Some cultural aspects are still practised, such as worshipping of Mother Goddess and Pashupati. We are also following Vedic, Jain, Buddhist, Muslim and Christianity even today. And on the other hand, one can see skyscrapers of hi-tech cities of our country. A sustainable continuity of the past with the modern changes has clearly distinguished our country from other nations.

Modern India culturally is influenced by – Westernization, Nationalist cultural style, Popular culture style. Indian culture is highly influenced by British culture and few aristocrat families are still following it religiously. Nationalist cultural style is influenced by heroes of Indian National Movement and Popular style is the product of mass media, cinema, television, radio, internet and social sites. Indians are dwelling in between these three influences which is the cause of all social problems.

Further, region and religion are two burly features of the culture of our great country India. Muslim Bengali and Hindu Bengali they both like eating fish but their way of worship are different. Similarly two Hindus of Uttar Pradesh may be worshipping same god but their eating habits can be different. Region come first or religion it is a matter of debate. But one thing is sure that people of different religions and jatis may have common regional cultural traits like language, food, dress, values and also the worldview.

Culture serves a role in influencing purchase decision of consumers. But cultural dimensions are many folds and all cannot be studied simultaneously therefore our research paper would be focused on the following objectives:

1. To find out whether India is maintaining sustainable continuity of the past with the modern changes in the culture.
2. To find out the impact of selected cultural types on the consumer buying behaviour.
3. To find out superiority between regional influence and influence of religion on consumer purchase decision making.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Culture is considered as a composite external factor that influences the consumers (Loudon & Bitta, 1984, Zaltman & Wallendorf, 1983, Schiffman & Kanuk LL, 1983), and includes the culture, social class, and group influence (Kasarjian & Robertson, 1968, Holloway, Mittelstaedt and Venkatesan, 1971). Nicosia (1966), Engel et.al (1968), Howard and Sheth (1969), Holloway, Mittelstaedt and Venkatesan (1971) have articulated in their models some of the internal factors - individual values, beliefs, religion etc. and how they influence consumer behaviour.

Modern India is influenced by the Western culture. Portugueses, French, Dutch and British all came to India and mixed in its culture. Among these countries British wielded power in India and conquered India. Indian culture has been primarily influenced by the British. British culture was fundamentally different from Hindu and Islamic culture. Some good aspects of the British culture were rationalism, experimentation, rule of law and utility. However the implementation of these aspects in India was biased towards British. But it is difficult to dissuade from the fact that modern India is the result of British rule. British culture initially became the sub-culture and later it resulted in the cultural modernization of India. Emergence of modern education institutions and the birth of social reformers changed entire gamut of the Indian culture. Raja Rammohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra, and Vivekanand challenged old thoughts and brought renaissance in Indian culture. British modern rules of administration and education policies established by Cornwallis and Hastings respectively tried to establish cultural changes in the Indian society (Chandra, 1982). Railways, Postal services and new education system started by British are still prevailing in India (www.yourarticle.com). Therefore Indian culture is highly influenced by Western British culture. In the 19th century, John Stuart Mill argued that nationalist movements were dependent on ethnicity, language and culture (Aditi, 2016). It was only when colonialism had reached its peak in the late 19th century did the need to arrive a common language, culture, identity arose amongst the people (Gangs, 2000). Cultural values play a significant role in the integration of people belonging to a particular nation (Meds, 1972). Nationalist people have their own choice and selection procedure of the products they consume. India, as a country, is pluralistic, contradictory, yet integrated into a unified whole. Several cultural traits have been identified as characterizing the commonality of Indian despite a staggering number and variety including an innate ability to improvise, adapt and innovate (Khilnani, 2001, Beteille, 1993). Therefore popular style of culture also influences consumer behaviour.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

In this empirical research data is collected by survey conducted in the Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi-National Capital Region of India. A questionnaire is designed and data is collected by non probability based convenient sampling method. Thousand responded are asked to mark their response on the two questions scaled on five point likrt scale. There response in noted in the Table I given below:

Table I

Culture and traditions are considered criteria for purchasing	Modern changes in the present culture are considered before purchasing	
	Frequency	Valid Percentage
Strongly Not Agree	152	15.5%
Not Agree	250	25.5%
Can't Say	48	4.9%
Agreed	205	20.9%
Strongly agreed	327	33.3%
Total	982	100%
Missing	18	
General Total	1000	

Source: Self Complied

H1: India is not maintaining sustainable continuity of the past culture with the modern changes in the present culture. Paired t-test is applied on the collected data and p value is found to be less than 0.02 at the five percent level of significance stating that India is maintaining a sustainable continuity of the past culture with the modern changes in the present culture.

Later consumers were asked to put their response on the question pertaining to the impact of cultural type on their buying behaviour. Three hundred responses were collected and one way ANOVA is applied with the help of SPSS. Cultures are categorized in to three categories namely Westernization, Nationalist and Popular style and following hypothesis is formed:

H2: There is no significant difference of the impact of Westernization, Nationalist and Popular style of Indian culture on the consumer buying behaviour.

Results are presented in Table II suggesting acceptance of null hypothesis, hence we can say that customers are indifferent from the cultural impact of their own country while making any purchasing decision. Even robust test on equality of means suggest that there is no significant difference of the impact of Westernization, Nationalist and Popular style of Indian culture on the consumer buying behaviour.

Table II: ANOVA

Points					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.775	2	.388	.444	.642
Within Groups	303.099	347	.873		
Total	303.874	349			
Robust Tests of Equality of Means					
Points					
	Statistic ^a	df1	df2	Sig.	
Points	.435	2	227.873	.648	
Brown-Forsythe	.445	2	342.389	.641	

a. Asymptotically F distributed.

H3: There is no significant difference between regional influence on consumer decision making and influence of religion on consumer decision making.

A paired t test is applied on the responses collected from three hundred respondents. Findings are tabulated in the Table III there in a significant difference between the regional influence on consumer decision making and influence of religion on consumer decision making.

Table III: Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Regional – Religion	-.24000	1.57691	.08429	-.40578	-.07422	-2.847	349	.005

Source: SPSS output

CONCLUSION:

This study concludes that India is maintaining a sustainable continuity of its past culture with the modernized current cultural. Therefore people are interested in buying culturally influenced as well as modern products. Although we have different people with different ideologies but there is no significant difference is found in consumer behaviour as far as their ideologies are concern. People selected on three categories of ideologies namely - Westernization, Nationalist cultural style, Popular culture style have displayed no difference in their buying behaviour. But there is a significant difference in the consumer behaviour as far as regional and religious grounds are concern.

SUGGESTIONS:

Companies in India must understand the religious and regional requirements of the Indians. Both put an impact on the customer buying behaviour however we need identify other factors which further influence regionalism purchase and religious purchase. Further sales persons of companies can initiate their sales strategy as per the Westernization, Nationalist cultural style, Popular culture style of culture.

LIMITATION:

Study is conducted in the Northern India only, cultural study cannot be completed without the inclusion of Southern, Eastern and Western states of India. Hence restricted sample size can give non generalised results.

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