ABSTRACT

Research in social psychology provides a strong foundation and framework for understanding the complex relationship between culture and human behaviour. Research has consistently revealed link between culture and consumer behavior. Since culture influences consumer behavior, being a component of culture, religion would also have an influence on certain aspects of consumer behavior. A close review of literature revealed that there were very few consumer behavior researches which have focus of religious influences on consumption behavior. Also, the examination of literature on religious influences on consumer behaviour reveals that most prior studies on this topic have been conducted among American population who are predominantly Jews, Catholics or Protestants and little can be said about the robustness of previous findings in other religious contexts and cultural settings. It is also evident that influence of religion on consumer behavior as a component of culture varies from one culture to another or from one country to another.

The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of religiosity on shopping orientation of consumers in Gujarat. Religious influences on consumer use of information sources and shopping orientation is examined in this study. Religious influences are viewed from the perspective of religious affiliation and religiosity consistent with past study. Religious affiliation is viewed as an individual adherence to a particular religion or religious group (Hindu, Muslim, Jain and Christian) while religiosity is viewed as intensity or degree with which an individual hold or practice religious belief in their daily life. In this study religiosity is measured from the perspective of cognitive religiosity, behavioral religiosity, consequential religiosity and experiential religiosity.

The study is undertaken in Gujarat where population contains large number of people who practice four major religions namely Hinduism, Islam, Jainism and Christianity. A structured questionnaire is designed to collect primary research data which is administered by employing survey as a research approach and personal interview as a contact method. Seven hundred fifty
questionnaires are found appropriate for the statistical analysis out of nine hundred targeted. Exploratory factor analysis, analysis of variance (ANOVA), Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) and multiple linear regression analysis is used as statistical techniques for the purpose of data analysis using statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 20.

The findings revealed that consumer shopping orientation and use of information sources are influenced by consumer religious affiliation and consumer religiosity. More specifically, findings suggest that Muslim uses more media information sources than Hindu. Also, the people of the Islamic faith, as compared to Hindu and Jain, are found to be more impulsive and fashion conscious, price conscious and brand loyal and enjoy shopping. Muslims are also more convenience seeker than Hindu and brand conscious than Hindu, Jain and Christian. Also the people who are more cognitively religious are found to be more price conscious and brand loyal while behaviourally religious consumers are found to be more prices conscious and brand loyal, convenience seeker, brand conscious and having more shopping enjoyment orientation. Also consequentially religious consumers are found to be more impulsive and fashion conscious and brand conscious while experimentally religious consumers uses less media as a source of information. It is found that Muslims are more religious than Hindu, Jain and Christian. Also religiosity is associated with Gender, Marital Status, education and age.