Chapter 5

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 FINDINGS

5.1.1 REFERENCE GROUP INFLUENCE ON CONSUMERS BEFORE BUYING

(i) Reference Group Influence while Need Recognition

Reference group which influenced most the need recognition to buy TV/LCD, DTH was family, in case of bike it was relatives, and in case of smart phone it was friends. Reference group influence was found more over females in recognizing need with respect to TV/ LCD, DTH, Bike, Refrigerator and influence was same over males and females for smart phone.

(ii) Reference Group as a Source of Information

Reference group which acted as a main source of information before buying TV/LCD, DTH, and refrigerator was family, for bike it was relatives, and for smart phone it was friends. Females collected more information than males from reference group before buying for TV/LCD, Bike, and refrigerator where as males collected more information than females for buying DTH and Smartphone.

(iii) Reference Group Influence while Evaluation of Alternatives

Reference group which helped respondents in evaluation of alternatives before buying TV/ LCD, DTH, refrigerator was family, for bike it was relatives, and for smart phone it was friends. With respect to evaluation of alternatives before
buying TV/ LCD, DTH, refrigerator, bike females were more influenced by their reference group in comparison to males except smart phone.

5.1.2 REFERENCE GROUP INFLUENCE AT THE TIME OF BUYING

Reference group which influenced respondents at the time of buying TV/ LCD, DTH, refrigerator was family, for bike and smart phone it was friends. Males were more influenced by their reference group in comparison to females at the time of buying TV/LCD, DTH, Bike and smart phone except refrigerator.

5.1.3 CONSUMERS’ SUSCEPTIBILITY TO REFERENCE GROUP INFLUENCE OF ACROSS CITIES

(i) Consumers’ Susceptibility to Informational Influence of Reference Group on selected products across cities

Consumer susceptibility to informational influence of reference group among the respondents product wise is shown across cities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>Consumer susceptibility to informational influence of reference group product wise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) Association of professionals’ / independent group of experts</td>
<td>TV/LCD, Bike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Professionals working in the industries</td>
<td>TV/LCD, Bike, Smartphone, Refrigerator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) Friends, neighbors,</td>
<td>TV/LCD, DTH,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1 Consumers’ Susceptibility to Informational Influence of Reference Group on selected products across cities
relatives, or work associates | Bike, Smartphone, Refrigerator
---|---
(iv) Retailers | TV/LCD | DTH, Bike, Smartphone, Refrigerator
(V) Word of mouth/evaluation report by agency | TV/LCD | DTH, Bike, Smartphone, Refrigerator

(ii) Consumers’ Susceptibility to Utilitarian Influence of Reference Group on selected Products across Cities.

Consumer susceptibility to utilitarian influence of reference group among respondents product wise is shown across cities:

**Table 5.2: Consumers’ Susceptibility to Utilitarian Influence of Reference Group on selected Products across Cities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>Consumer susceptibility to utilitarian influence of reference group product wise</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>Similarity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation and perception of friends</td>
<td>Bike, Refrigerator</td>
<td>TV/LCD, DTH, Smartphone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other person’s recommendations</td>
<td>Bike, Refrigerator</td>
<td>TV/LCD, DTH, Smartphone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preference of family</td>
<td>Refrigerator</td>
<td>TV/LCD, DTH, Smartphone, Bike</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classmates or fellow work associates</td>
<td>Refrigerator</td>
<td>TV/LCD, Bike, Smartphone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(iii) Consumers’ Susceptibility to Value Expressive Influence of Reference Group on selected Products across Cities.

Consumer susceptibility to value expressive influence of reference group among respondents product wise is shown across cities:

**Table 5.3: Consumers’ Susceptibility to Value Expressive Influence of Reference Group on selected Products across Cities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>Consumer susceptibility to value expressive influence of reference group product wise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Particular brand or model enhance image among others</td>
<td>DTH, Refrigerator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Particular brand or model possess the characteristics liked by the respondents</td>
<td>DTH, Refrigerator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisements influenced to buy a particular brand or model</td>
<td>TV/LCD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Particular brand or model are sometimes admired or respected by others</td>
<td>TV/LCD, DTH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through product respondents want to show their lifestyle or what they want to be</td>
<td>TV/LCD, Refrigerator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.1.4 CONSUMER OVERALL SUSCEPTIBILITY TO REFERENCE GROUP INFLUENCE PRODUCT WISE

(i) Consumer Overall Susceptibility to Informational Influence of Reference Group Product Wise

Consumers’ susceptibility to informational influence of reference group was found maximum for TV and minimum for refrigerator.

(ii) Consumer Overall Susceptibility to Utilitarian Influence of Reference Group Product Wise

Consumers’ susceptibility to utilitarian influence of reference group was found maximum for bike and minimum for refrigerator.

(iii) Consumer Overall Susceptibility to Value Expressive Influence of Reference Group Product Wise

Consumers’ susceptibility to value expressive influence of reference group was found maximum for bike and minimum for TV/LCD.

(iv) Consumer Overall Susceptibility to Reference Group Influence Demographically

Every consumer is different sex wise, income wise, age wise, and occupation wise thus product utility and importance varies consumer to consumer.

5.1.5 REASON FOR CONSULTING REFERENCE GROUP

(i) Reason of Consulting Reference Group about TV/LCD across Cities

Respondent consulted their reference group possibly to know the feature and function of TV/LCD particularly the utility and to reduce the risk of buying with respect to technology, price etc.
(ii) Reason of Consulting Reference Group about DTH across Cities

Respondent consulted their reference group for DTH is possibly to know the service performance of the product and to reduce the risk of buying with respect to rental plans, schemes, channel offerings etc. available with first time installation.

(iii) Reason of Consulting Reference Group about Bike across Cities

Respondent consulted their reference group for bike is possibly to know the service performance of the product and to reduce the risk of buying with respect to mileage, performance, after sales service etc.

(iv) Reason of Consulting Reference Group about Smartphone across Cities

The reason for consultation of reference group for Smartphone differs among sampled respondents in selected cities which could be due to the fact that respondents’ personal usage differs person to person.

(v) Reason of Consulting Reference Group about Refrigerator across Cities

The reason for consultation of reference group for refrigerator among sampled respondents in Durg and Rajnandgaon cities were similar which could be due to the fact that respondents want to buy a product that is worth their money. Whereas respondents in Raipur want proper and accurate information to evaluate the product and to arrive at a decision to buy a good product.
5.2 CONCLUSIONS

In the present study the reference group influence before buying and at the time of buying with respect to five products TV/LCD, DTH, Bike, Refrigerator and smart phone was examined across three cities in the state of Chhattisgarh. Also the consumers’ susceptibility to informational, utilitarian and value expressive influence of reference group was examined for these products across the cities. It can be concluded with the help of the findings that reference group influence was found more over females in recognizing need with respect to TV/LCD, DTH, Bike, Refrigerator and influence was same over males and females for smart phone. Females collected more information than males from reference group before buying for TV/LCD, Bike, and refrigerator where as males collected more information than females for buying DTH and Smartphone. With respect to evaluation of alternatives before buying females were more influenced by their reference group in comparison to males except smart phone. At the time of time of buying males were more influenced by their reference group in comparison to females in choosing TV/LCD, DTH, Bike and smart phone except refrigerator. Consumers’ susceptibility to informational influence of reference group was found maximum for TV and minimum for refrigerator. Consumers’ susceptibility to utilitarian influence of reference group was found maximum for bike and minimum for refrigerator. Consumers’ susceptibility to value expressive influence of reference group was found maximum for bike and minimum for TV/LCD.

5.3 LIMITATIONS

Following are the major limitations of the study:

- The data was collected from only three cities purposively. So the findings of the study are limited to these cities in particular and all the cities of the state in general.
- Consumer susceptibility to reference group influence was studied for only five products.
• Reference group influence was studied with respect to friends, family, relatives, virtual communities, celebrities and colleagues only.
• Susceptibility to reference group influence is also related to personal characteristics, e.g. self esteem and intelligence (McGuire, 1968). This study do not include personal attributes.
• Susceptibility to reference group influence was not studied with respect to diffusion and adoption of products.
• For the purpose of the study data was collected from 600 respondents who possessed the products considered in the study. The generalization of the findings depends on truthfulness of the respondents.
• Interpretations of the findings are based on the haunches and experiences of the researcher, so the generalizations of the findings are limited to the limit of haunches and experiences of the researcher.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the findings following are the recommendations to future researchers, academicians and marketers.

5.4.1 Recommendations to Future Researchers

• Present study was confined to study the reference group influence before buying and at the time of buying. Future researchers may study impact of reference group influence after buying particularly with respect to consumption and satisfaction with the product usages.
• As this study was confined only to three cities in the state of Chhattisgarh, the future researcher may include more cities of Chhattisgarh to compare the reference group influence.
• The study was confined to cities only, the future researchers may study the reference group influence in rural areas and may compare whether the reference group influence differs across cities and villages.
The study was based mainly on the scale of Park and Lessig (1977) to study consumers’ susceptibility to reference group influence. Future researchers may use the scale of other researchers in their study or devise their own instrument.

Future researcher may conduct research to study reference group influence for luxuries and necessities and may compare consumers’ susceptibility for those products.

Future researchers may conduct study to find out consumers’ susceptibility to reference group over teenagers, students, housewives, professionals and may compare them sex wise, level of education wise, income wise, age wise, area wise etc.

Future study may be conducted to include more number of products and demographics preferably from more number of cities across India.

Future researchers can also make an effort to check consumers’ susceptibility to reference group influence in services sector like medical services, legal services, tourism services etc.

5.4.2 Recommendations to Academicians

The finding of the study is helpful to the academicians in order to understand the reference group influence over respondent for selected products.

Academician can understand underlying reasons behind similarity and differences on the parts of consumers’ susceptibility to informational, utilitarian and value expressive influence of reference group and may explain to future researchers.
• They can correlate findings of the study with existing theories and may motivate future researcher to conduct similar kind of the study, considering same product or by choosing verities of products in the state of Chhattisgarh or outside Chhattisgarh

5.4.3 Recommendations to Marketers

• Marketers can segment market on the basis of consumer susceptibility to reference group influence which may vary consumer to consumer and product to product.
• Marketers may devise suitable marketing mix to target and position the information seeking consumers, approval seeking consumers and self enhancement seeking consumers.
• Marketer should conduct a follow-up study to confirm the consumers’ susceptibility to reference group influence different products, for a significant time frame to get specific results. It should not be more than one year as the thought and the circumstances of consumers changes time to time.
• The marketers should try to find out the genuine motivator and regulator of the consumer, by studding the psychology of the targeted consumes.
• Marketers should devise effective communication strategies to target the reference group associated with consumer to capture their view.