Role of Brand Characteristics and its Impact on Consumer Buying Behavior A Comparative Study of Middle and Lower Social Classes for Mobiles Handset Purchase

Dr. Shahzad Khan[1]

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Abstract

Social classes can affect the behavior of consumers towards the product or services with respect to the features of product like brand image, price and quality of services. Consumer buying behavior is highly dependent on two variables income and brand characteristics. Sometimes consumers are not willing to buy a product or avail a service but for his/her status symbol the buying behavior of that consumer gets affected, here the social status retention shows the impact of brand characteristics on different social classes buying behavior. Globally there are three main classes I.e. Upper. Middle .and Lower classes. Each class of people have different behavior, attitude, preferences, interest, standard of living and income power, these are the variations that segments the individuals personality into distinct classes which are mentioned above. This study analyzed that how brand characteristics like brand image, price and quality can affect the buying behavior of middle and lower social classes for cell phone purchase.

Index terms— Consumer buying behavior, Social Classes, Brand image, Price, Quality and Cell phones purchases.

1 Introduction

he concept of social classes was introduced into the marketing subject in 1950s according to marketing scholars, the concept of social classes is considered as the main factor for consumer buying behavior, the scientists have analyzed from a general market survey that the change in buying behavior of consumers is due to social classes there is a quite relation in the market behavior and social classes both are influencing by other factors of social life, social classes is the more important factor influencing buying behavior but along with it brand characteristics also influence different social classes buying behavior Williams, TG.(2002).

According to Gerard J et all (1990) throughout the world there are three types of social classes. These are Upper, Middle and Lower social class. Each and every class has it own characteristics regarding for the purchase of products. There attitude, brand preferences, interest, personality, income power and standard of living vary from class to class . Its not Author : Lecturer City University of Science & I-T Peshawar Pakistan. E-mail : Shahzadkhan.lecturer@gmail.com necessary that for each and every item the buying behavior will be different may it be same but it depends upon situation and time.

According to Loudon & Della Britta (1993) they have presented their theories about the Consumer Behavior: Concepts and Applications. The people of upper group consume goods in an organized way more than the lower status. They are more knowledgeable as they collect information about the goods (such as organic food, car, furniture, soap. electronic products etc).They buy product more selective and wide ranging.

According to Loudon & Della Britta (1993) people belonging to middle level of income they buy product regarding to their income power they demand for low prices product as they have low level of income. They think rationally and best buy for the money to which they indicate shopkeepers to patronize discount houses.

According to Loudon & Della Britta (1993) lower group buys products largely on impulse. This tendency results in the necessity to rely heavily on credit. These people can be poor credit risks because of their lower income status. This often forces them pattern of dealing with local merchants who offers tailor made credit terms.

According to Sujan Mita (1985) factors like price and quality service creates motivation. But how this motivation created in different social classes and how they take their purchase decision in their buying process is important to find. But one thing is sure that this motivation is different in different social classes. According to Shahzad khan (2011) there is a significant relationship between price and consumer buying behavior.

Owais Mufti et al (2011), explains in his study the basics of rationality and discussed that a person is known to be rational; if he is capable of drawing logical inferences, overpowering emotions and utilizing normal mental process of weighing pros and cons of an actionchoice-decision (ACD). According to Park (1992)

2 Theoretical Frame work of the study

In this study consumer buying behavior is dependent upon three independent factors. These three factors are brand image, price and quality. All these factors are independent. But it is important to find which factor has greater impact on consumer buying behavior in middle and lower class.

3 INDEPENDENT VARIABLE DEPENDENT VARIABLE

It is obvious that each and every social class affected by different variables and their purchase decision varies on brand characteristics. For the purpose it is taken under consideration the buying behavior of lower and middle classes for mobile purchase.

4 II.

5 Methodology

Comparative Analysis refers to the analysis of different factors affecting each other and relation between them. In this case it is the comparative analysis of consumer buying behavior and its dependency on brand characteristics.

Data had been collected through Questioners, to find which brand characteristics has more impact on consumer buying behavior in each target class. For the purpose of analysis a sample of 100 is taken. Among 100 respondents 50 belongs to middle social class and 50 belong to lower social class. The total number of responded contacted were 100. The response rate of the respondents was 100%. On the basis of the response of respondent's correlation and regression analysis is conducted for each class.

6 III.

7 Reliability

In order to measure the reliability of the scale a correlation coefficient was used in this study. Before reliability, a pilot study is also conducted for the conformity of errors in research instruments. After distributing 100 questionnaires 50 in each class the Cronbach's Alpha for variables is calculated. The following result in table 1 shows the reliability of brand characteristics and consumer buying behavior for middle and lower social classes. The scale of the research questionnaire was well established but reliability was calculated for conformity and for final analysis of the study.

8 Theoretical Framework of the Study

IV.

9 Correlation Analysis

To check the presence of relationship amongst the explanatory variables and explore the strength of associations between the variables, different guidelines have been suggested by statistician and they classify the strength of association between variables . As shown in table 2, there is a strong association between Consumer Buying Behavior and brand image in middle class with correlation coefficient (r = .672). While the same brand image has a correlation coefficient (r = .321) which mean that lower class has a weaker relation in their purchase decision of considering the brand image.

Survey demonstrate that there is a strong relation ship between middle class consumer Buying Behavior and price with correlation coefficient (r = .821). while on the other hand this relation is more strong in comparison of middle class, lower class has more dependency on price with correlation coefficient (r = .912) which mean lower class give more weightage to price in their buying behavior.

In case of middle class the correlation coefficient for quality is (r = .732). While in case lower class the correlation coefficient is (r = .618). which mean that both middle and lower class consider the factor of quality but this consideration is more dominant in middle social class.

10 Hypotheses of the study and Regression Equations

An overview of the hypotheses related to the relationship transactional, relational and turnover intention the following hypothesis has been generated. 3 below explains overall significance of the all three variables of the study along with summary statistics. Table 3 shows that the overall model is highly significant (P= 0.000) for middle social class. The over all model is significant which mean that there is a significant relationships exist between brand image and consumer buying behavior with (t-statistic = 29.113 and P-value= 0.000) which mean that brand image has a significant impact on buying behavior of middle class buying behavior.

Price is the second independent variable of the study. Results shows in case of middle social class there is a significant relationship between price and consumer buying behavior with (t-statistic = 24.839 and P-value= 0.000). The third variable of the study is quality of the product. In case of middle class there is a significant relationship between quality and consumer buying behavior with (t-statistic = 22.101 and P-value= 0.000).

Table 4 below shows that the overall model is highly significant (P= 0.000) for lower social class. There is a significant relationships exist between brand image and consumer buying behavior with (t-statistic = 21.031 and P-value= 0.000) for the lower class which mean that brand image has a significant impact on buying behavior of middle class buying behavior. Price is the second independent variable of the study. Results shows in case of lower social class there is a significant relationship between price and consumer buying behavior with (t-statistic = 29.441 and P-value= 0.000). The third variable of the study is quality of the product. In case of lower class there is a significant V.

11 Conclusion

As result show that for both middle and lower class the model is highly significant. The findings from analysis part of the study show that consumer buying behavior is dependent upon brand characteristics both in middle and lower social classes. Study show that in both lower and middle social classes the respondents consider price as a primary factor in cell phone [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

Figure 1:

1

2012	Brand Image Price Quality	Consumer Buying Behavior

[Note: CYear]

Figure 2: Table 1 :

2

S.No	Dependent variable	Independent variable	Middle Class		Lower Class	
			R	R 2	R	R 2
1	Consumer Buying Behavior	Brand Image	.672	.451	.321	.103
2	Consumer Buying Behavior	Price	.821	.674	.912	.831
3	Consumer Buying Behavior	Quality	.732	.535	.618	.381

Figure 3: Table 2 :

3

Middle Social Class

S.No	Dependent variable	Independent variable	Adjusted R 2	F	?	Standard error	T	P-value
1	Consumer Buying Behavior	Brand Image	.431	421.101	.764	.013	29.113	0.000
2	Consumer Buying Behavior	Price	. 614	861.115	.981	.028	24.839	0.000
3	Consumer Buying Behavior	Quality	.495	432.101	.743	.017	22.101	0.000

Figure 4: Table 3 :

4

Lower Social Class

S.No	Dependent variable	Independent variable	Adjusted R 2	F	?	Standard error	T	P-value
1	Consumer Buying Behavior	Brand Image	.100	314.109	.663	.015	21.031	0.000
2	Consumer Buying Behavior	Price	.817	679.117	.980	.026	29.441	0.000
3	Consumer Buying Behavior	Quality	.373	341.104	.764	.014	32.301	0.000

Figure 5: Table 4 :

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