



## DIFFERENCE IN CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR BASED ON RELIGION.

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### ABSTRACT

#### Keywords:

#### Introduction:

It is broadly recognized that religion impacts any individuals' conviction, character and esteem. Religion gives individuals an organized arrangement of convictions and qualities that serve as an implicit rule or manual for conduct. Religious customs may straight forwardly impact different decision conduct of its adherents by the tenets and taboos. understandable examples are the importance of fasting and feasting to designs of food acquisitions, faith in taboos on clothing styles and activities of women, practices of personal cleanliness related to purchases of toiletries and cosmetics and effects on housing and entertainment designs. Less understandable is the guidance of religion on the consumption of goods and services that are not directly regulated by spiritual laws. In such a case, spiritual values affect consumer performance by influencing the consumer's behaviour structure – his or her beliefs, values and behavioural propensities. These character structures, in turn, affect the consumption choices that consumers make.

Around the world there are many religions and cultures that exist. To highlight a countries aspect, Malaysia is a country that has more than three type of religions which also include many of the religions as well (Buddhism, Muslim, Christian). Different religion can impact on people values, habits or even lifestyles as well. Thus, companies need to consider well by understanding the religious practises that exist on that country. For example, Muslim is forbidden to consumer any pork or alcoholic drinks. They are forbidden to do so is all because of their religious belief. Without achieving an understanding of the market religion aspects, organisations might offense other religions or may even struggle to enter the market.

One good example showing the difficulty faced by firms to identify consumer behaviour is Zara, one of the largest fashion retailer faced difficulty in achieving success in Indian market. The major problem faced by Zara is their use of having a set of fashion designs that involve only a certain type of colour such as black, grey or white. However, the Indian traditional dress involves lots of different colour mix and match and the three basic colours was not regarded as a good start for Zara. So, ZARA faced difficulties to change the market preferences but to come out with all new set of fashion style for the Indian market.

#### Literature review:

Sheth's (1983) Shopping Preference Theory provides a useful agenda in understanding the effect of religion on shopping behaviour. Sheth suggests that religion has the most likely effect on shopping tendency through the demand side cause – personal features. In his theory, Sheth specifically cites religious variables in suggesting that personal elements (personal, social and epistemic values) shape an individual's shopping objects. The personal values reflect the consumer's character and are symptomatic of the influence of values on consumer performance. He predicted that private values might be linked directly and indirectly to religion and religiosity.

Bailey and Sood (1993) examined the effects of religious association on consumer performance of six religious groups in Washington DC: Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Catholic and Protestant. They found that Muslim consumers were relatively more impetuous shoppers but less likely to be informed or risky shoppers. Hindus were found to be in lucid shopper group while Catholics were less likely to be informed shoppers. Buddhists are the only minority religious members in the sample to report consumer behaviour similar to the societal norms.

Essoo and Dibb (2004) conducted a similar study in Mauritius with a nationwide sample of respondents from three different religions: Hinduism, Islam and Catholicism. The results confirmed that there were noticeable differences between Hindus and Muslims for all 7types of shopper: the difficult, practical, trendy, traditional, economic, thoughtful and innovative shopper.

Vassilikopoulou, Siomkos and Mylonakis (2006) examined micro-cultural differences in the consumers' insights, attitudes and purchasing behavior of electrical and home appliances in Greece. They found that micro-culture develops different patterns of behaviour for Christian and Muslim consumers, based on their religious favourites and social class. Differences were also found between Christian and Muslim consumers in their observations of the ideal store, as well as in their buying selection standards.

Tahir Ahmad Wani (2013) wrote an article titled "Buying Behaviour-An Ishlamic Perspective,An analysis of an ideal muslim buying behaviour" highlights the fact and ideology of Islam as a religion, the teachings of Islam and their buying behaviour. the main focus of

this paper is to uncover some important teachings from Quran and Sunnah regarding the buying behaviour. findings from this paper are that the islamic society have a higer saving patter and buying anything againts their law and religion is regarded as a crime. A muslim cannot consume anything he/she wishes if it is regarded unethcal by the society. They focus more on actual value than the brand value.

### **Conceptual paper: (with respect to the articles)**

Seth's shopping preference theory says that a consumer buying preference will most likely depend based on his/her religion. Most certainly, he believes that a consumer's demand and his personal willingness to buy a product is backed by his religious origin.

I believe, Seth's personal features and his demand preference depend in his previous and daily buying decisions. These decisions are greatly affected by his long term purchasing habit. This habit is permanently traced by his/her regular religious practices.

According to the study done by Bailey and Sood, they found that different religious groups have their own preference and buying behaviours. To substantiate, their study categorised Muslims as risky shoppers and difficult to understand their buying patterns. On the other hand, their study claimed that Hindus purchasing behaviours were easy to catch up. Whereas, Buddhist people purchasing patterns were similar to the rational member in a society.

In my opinion, this study can also be compared to the real world scenario based on nations perspective. We can observe the majority religion group in a country and learn about them in general. Example- India, mostly populated with Hindus have the same purchasing behaviour as explained by Bailey and Sood. Then, we have catholics in United States who comprise of the majority in populations, thus making westerners as less informed shoppers.

Esso and Dibb analysed different religious groups and figured out the different characteristics that different religions had. In this case, I believe that a consumers purchasing behaviours and their characteristics, not only depends on their religious origin but also place origin. Since the economic, political and other development factors have much to deal in this context, you can't categorise a Hindu in general to be a traditional shopper, or a Catholic to be a trendy shopper. Their characteristics greatly varies on their place of origin.

Vassilikopoulou, Siomkos and Mylonakis, invested their time to understand the purchasing behaviours in terms of electrical and home appliances. They did this with regard to the micro-cultural differences between two religion in Greece; Muslims and Christains. Their study found out that the differences lies between them in terms of social class and personal favourites.

And yes, their standard, the social class have a lot to deal with the purchasing behaviour. Not only they had the preference based on the quality of the product but also on the quality and standards of the store.

The study done by Tahir Ahmad Wani explains about the buying behavoiur of Muslims and Islam. According to his study, these two religious group dont spend much as such and they are not a risky shopper. The product they buy greatly depends on its actual value than brand value. Furthermore, the product they buy result from the teachings of their respective religious readings.

Here, these people are confined and have a huge limitations. Due to their religious origin, they dont have the freedom to buy according to their will. In this type of scenario, their purchase might even result into a crime among themselves. This makes a huge impact on their purchasing patterns and behaviour.

### **Conceptual paper. (summary)**

Religions and culture makes us similar to some people, but if you look into the outer world, it is the same culture that makes us different to rest of them. Religion comprises of factors such as language, everyday food habits and certain behavioral characteristics. The barriers created by the religion affects the demand of a person respective to the factors such as food, clothing and in other shopping criteria's. Furthermore, in some cases like in strict Hindu cultures forbid themselves having a meal prepared by an outsider, or dressing up with clothes that they find unacceptable according to their own norms and values.

Moreover, religious groups like Muslims and Jews practice the culture of keeping themselves away from having a blood in their meal. They must avoid meat and remain as vegetarian otherwise they're cursed. Henceforth, their preference and taste are greatly shaped by their regular rituals and religious following. As we all know, human beings at birth have no clue on what type of behavior they're going to set for themselves. Everything is shaped by the culture. All the set of rules are governed and taught by the culture.

Research and development is really necessary when it comes to learning the consumers buying behavior. There have been cases when a shoe company made a print of a famous sportsmen's autograph on a shoe. This led to the ban of that shoe company since it was considered as accusing that particular religion.

These factors are greatly affected by the religious tolerance. This depends on the basis of the difference in the religion worldwide. Moreover, it also has to deal with the difference in the culture in different countries. To substantiate, India has a less level of religious tolerance when compared to the United States or mostly any other western cultures.

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