

POST- PURCHASE DISSONANCE OF CONSUMERS AND TRADERS’ RESPONSES IN KERALA

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ABSTRACT

Consumers are exploited in the market and due to several reasons they are ignorant of the exploitation to which they are subjected to. The purpose of the study is to ascertain the reasons of post- purchase dissonance and whether there is any correlation between the demographic variables and post-purchase dissonance. Data were collected from 238 samples from the consumers, who have filed petitions in various forums in Kerala. Similarly, data from 205 manufacturers, traders and service providers were collected. The data collected using questionnaire were analyzed using Mean, Kruskal Wallis Test, Mann-Whitney U Test and Friedman Test. The result shows that there is a relationship between reasons for post purchase dissonance and demographic variables and it varies on the basis of location and gender of the consumers.

KEYWORDS: *Consumer Awareness, Consumer Behavior, Consumer Protection Act 1986, Customer, Dissonance, Post- Purchase Dissonance*

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INTRODUCTION

It is a well - known fact that all markets depend upon consumers. The consumer is the person who initiates and consumes the products and services that has been purchased. The ultimate consumer is one who purchases for himself or his household. Consumer behavior controls the decision-making process and the activity of individuals involved in evaluation, acquisition, use and disposal of goods and services (Myneni, 2010).

Consumers are exploited and they are ignorant of the exploitation to which they are subjected to. Two most important reasons for such exploitation are: sustainable use of products has given place to “use and throw style”, and majority of the consumers are unaware of the available consumer remedial measures. Consumer behavior is guided by the changes in marketing strategy. There may be confusion among the consumers regarding the purchase made by them and this might be the reason for post- purchase dissonance (Loudan, 2013).

Post purchase dissonance is the uncomfortable feeling we described above and it occurs following a high involvement decision. The dissonance occurs because choosing one alternative requires you to commit to its features and

benefits, requiring you to give up the attractive features or other possible choice. Post purchase dissonance is most often associated with high involvement purchases (David, 2013). Purchase dissonance is almost like a scale, the likelihood you will experience those feelings and the stronger they will be based on a) The decision permanence, b) The cost of the decision, c) The importance of decision and d) The difficulty of choosing between options. (www.dictionary.com)

Kerala is out and out a consumer state. The study initially tries to ascertain whether there is any dissatisfaction among the consumers with regard to the products and services that they purchase, and whether they suffer any dissonance after the purchase. The study also tries to ascertain how the consumers are satisfied with the manufactures, traders and service providers (MTSPs). Subsequent tries to ascertain attitude of MTSPs towards the consumers who are dissatisfied and have filed petition against them.

If the consumers are dissatisfied, they will immediately respond in a rough manner and share their bitter experience with others. They will not repurchase the same product in the future, and may file a complaint against the MTSPs regarding products and services and may result in post-purchase dissonance. Dissonance is due to any of the following, lack of tolerance, the customers are in an irrevocable situation, the unselected and unexpected features of alternatives available in the market, the dissimilarities of the available alternatives, the psychological traits like the consumers taste, philosophy, lifestyle and his ego, etc. That is, if the consumer does not get the expected enjoyment with the product or service, he will immediately experience the post purchase dissonance. The factors influencing dissonance are, the attraction of rejected alternatives, considering the negative aspects of purchase, the numerous alternatives, the overlap of cognate element, the cognition of consumers regarding the product or services, the inducement of the purchaser, the negative action of the customers, the available information, the expectation of possibilities of dissonance which may happen in future and the familiarity or knowledge regarding the product or service which the consumer buys (Loudan, 2013). The post purchase dissonance or cognitive dissonance is due the discrepancies in the decision of the consumer and his evaluation of the product and service.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sharma, Kumar Manoj (2014) described that in this competitive world the service organizations should adopt strategies to reduce dissonance related with purchase. The study recommended increasing the belief that dissolves the dissonant behavior, trying to reduce the contradictory belief and focus on more encouraging beliefs.

Olejniczak Tomasz (2017) emphasizes that, in addition to identify the determinants it is significant from the perspective of suppliers of consumer products and services to determine the possibilities of effective devices to control the post purchase dissonance.

Hassan Usman et al. (2014) made an attempt to find out the link of post purchase dissonance and it is found that psychological behavior and personality are the basic reasons. The study reveals that on-the-spot decisions leads to anxiety about the performance and utility of the things and it may lead to post purchase dissonances.

Hassan Usman et al. (2012) opined that if any customer is not more personally involved in purchase decision confusion may develop which may tend to the feeling of dissonance. Allowing more time to make a decision leads to less post- purchase dissonance.

Sarker Sandip et al. (2012) identified that norms, religious values, cultures, customs, etc. are the important factors that influence the cognitive dissonance.

Scope and Significance of the Study

Even though there are problems between the consumers and the business agents (manufacturers, traders and service providers) some kind of relation between them. The study tries to find out the relation between the consumers and business agents and the relationship between demographic and other variables with post purchase dissonance. Various issues are affecting the consumers and diminishing their satisfaction leading to post purchase dissonance. Hence it is high time to know the nature and cause of post- purchase dissonance and the remedial approach to be adopted by the business agents.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify the various post purchase dissonance faced by the consumers.
- To examine the approach of manufacturers, traders and service providers (MTSPs) to resolve the grievances of the consumer.

HYPOTHESES

- There is no difference in responses regarding the reasons for filing petitions against the manufacturers, traders and service providers by location.
- There is no difference in responses regarding the reasons for filing petitions against the manufacturers, traders and service providers with Gender.
- There is no difference in attitude by the MTSPs towards the consumers who have or have not filed any petition against them.

METHODOLOGY

The study attempts to understand the nature and causes of post-purchase dissonance of consumers and the responses of the business agents from among the various districts of Kerala. The present study is descriptive in nature. To collect the primary data field survey was conducted using a structured schedule to interview the respondents (Gupta, 2013). The study attempts to identify the causes of post-purchase dissonance of consumers. Examine the correlation between post – purchase dissonance and unfair trade practices faced by consumers and responses of traders. The problems have been identified and analyzed by applying statistical tools.

Pilot Study

The researcher conducted a pilot study with the help of a structured questionnaire to test the reliability, validity, to avoid unnecessary questions and to add some new questions. The process was to simplify the questions by adopting qualitative analysis with the support of a panel of learned lawyers, social scientist and the research guide. Initially the questionnaire was prepared and administered among twenty consumers in a ward of Thiruvillwamala Panchayat, in Thrissur district. The response was analyzed, necessary corrections were made and the very same tool has been restructured. After fifteen days the restructured questionnaire was again administered among the very same consumers. The correction was carried out and finally the interview schedule was prepared for the data collection.

Sampling Procedure

The present study adopted a simple random sampling technique. The sample was considered on the bases of gender, age, education, employment, income, location, and size of population with random approach. For the purpose of the study 250 respondents from the manufacturers, traders and service providers were considered, but the data were collected from 238 respondents. From the part of litigant consumers who filed petitions before various CDRFs in Kerala 225 respondents has been considered and information was collected from 205 respondents. The secondary data was collected from State Consumer Protection Council, District Consumer Redressal Forums and from various sources of available literature. Primary data were gathered with the help of structured questionnaire. The gathered information was regarding the cause of post-purchase dissonance of the consumers and the attitude of MTSPs.

Data Analysis

Hypotheses were tested; the independent variables identified were the demographic factors - gender, education, employment and income. Appropriate tools were used to analyze the collected data.

Statistical Tools Used

The data were analyzed by applying appropriate tools such as Mean, Kruskal- Wallis Test, Mann-Whitney U Test and Friedman Test. The SPSS Ver.16 software package was used for data analysis.

LIMITATIONS

The random sampling method was adopted and the sample collected may not be exhaustive and all inclusive. There are chances of incorrect information received from the respondents like consumers, traders, manufacturers, and service providers. Another specific limitation is that the respondents of the study are from Thiruvananthapuram, Alappuzha Eranakulam, Thrissur, Palakkad, Malappuram, Kozhikode and Kasaragod, in Kerala.

ANALYSIS

To analyze the reasons to approach Consumer Dispute Redressal Agencies the study specifically had some questions regarding the post purchase dissonance. The questions were related to defective goods, defective services, low weight and high price, low quality and high price, misleading advertisements, unhealthy competition, mental agony, physical injuries, monetary and time loss, dissatisfaction, other unfair trade practices.

The responses were analyzed and duly considered among the consumer groups by applying Kruskal- Wallis test, as the category, location of employment consist of more than two groups.

The Hypothesis is:

H₀: There is no difference in responses regarding the reasons for filing petitions against the manufacturers, traders and service providers by location.

The test results are presented in the following Table. 1 and Table 2

Table 1: Mean Ranks of Reasons with Location

Location of Employment	Panchayat	Municipality	Corporation
N – 238	143	90	35
Defective Goods. (DG)	115.85	118.57	133.70
Defective Services (DS)	120.25	116.21	125.54
Low Weight and High Price (LWHP)	112.09	118.77	145.29
Low Quality and High Price (LQHP)	118.14	110.91	145.99
Misleading Advertisements (MA)	115.38	113.75	147.54
Unhealthy Competition (UC)	119.50	108.73	147.17
Mental Agony (MA)	116.67	111.98	147.97
Physical Injuries (PI)	118.23	119.12	124.60
Monetary and Time Loss (MTL)	115.23	113.92	147.66
Dissatisfaction (DISS)	111.45	117.47	150.73
Unfair Trade Practices (UTP)	105.69	121.23	159.63

Source: Primary Data

Table 2: Kruskal Wallis Test

	DG	DS	LWHP	LQHP	MA	UC	MA	PI	MTL	DISS	OUTP
Chi-Square	1.891	0.592	6.759	6.827	9.200	8.816	9.520	0.243	9.264	####	###
Df	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
Asym. Sig	0.388	0.744	0.034*	0.033*	0.010*	0.012*	0.009*	0.886	0.010*	0.005*	0.000*

Grouping variable: Place of Employment Source: Primary Data

*Significant at 5 per cent level of significance

Eleven factors as shown in Table 1 were identified and the location wise impact of these factors was analyzed. In the Panchayat area Unfair Trade Practice is more with a mean rank of **105.69** than other factors followed by dissatisfaction and low weight with high price. The value of the mean is low which shows the rank is high. It is inferred that among the respondents belonging to the municipal area Unhealthy Competition is found to be more with a mean rank of **108.73** than the other factors followed by Low Quality and High Price and Mental Agony. In the corporation area Physical Injuries is more with a mean rank of **124.60** than other factors followed by Defective Services and Defective Goods..

The statistical significance of the reasons analyzed and mentioned in Table 2 states that the hypotheses of low weight and high price, low quality and high price, misleading advertisements, unhealthy competition, mental agony, monetary and time loss, dissatisfaction, unfair trade practices are significant and the hypotheses is rejected as their *p values are 0.034, 0.033, 0.010, 0.012, 0.009, 0.010, 0.005, 0.000 where (p < 0.05)*. While the null hypotheses related to others are not rejected as their *p values are more (p > 0.05)*. It may be concluded that there is significant variation between the respondents in panchayat, municipality and corporation area regarding the reasons for filing petitions against the manufacturers, traders and service providers.

Testing the significance of reasons to approach Consumer Dispute Redressal Forums gender wise is very important from the consumer's point of view. It will be helpful to find out whether these responses show any difference between gender wise. Since data provide ranks given by respondents, a non – parametric test Mann – Whitney U test was applied.

The Hypothesis is:

H0: There is no difference in responses regarding the reasons for filing petitions against the manufacturers, traders and service providers with Gender.

The test results are presented in the following Table 3 and Table 4

Table 3: Mean Ranks of Reasons to File Petitions with Gender

Reasons for Filing Petitions	Gender			
	Male (n - 173)		Female (n -65)	
	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Defective Goods	115.36	19957.50	130.52	8483.50
Defective Services	118.10	20430.50	123.24	8010.50
Low Weight and High Price	115.18	19926.50	130.99	8514.50
Low Quality and High Price	118.93	20575.00	121.02	7866.00
Misleading Advertisements	116.15	20093.50	128.42	8347.50
Unhealthy Competition	115.90	20051.50	129.07	8389.50
Mental Agony	114.72	19846.50	132.22	8594.50
Physical Injuries	121.84	21077.50	113.28	7363.50
Monetary and Time Loss	114.57	19820.50	132.62	8620.50
Dissatisfaction	115.45	19973.50	130.27	8467.50
Unfair Trade Practices	115.68	20012.50	129.67	8428.50

Source: Primary Data

Reasons were analyzed and considered among the consumer groups by applying Mann-Whitney U test as the category (Gender) consists of more than 2 groups. The test results are presented in the following Table 4

Table 4: Man Whitney Test

	DG	DS	LWH P	LQH P	Mad	UC	MA	PI	MTL	DISS	OUT P
Mann-Whitney	4906.5	5379.5	4875.5	5524.0	5042.5	5000.5	4795.5	5218. 5	4769.5	4922.5	4961.5
Wilcoxon	19957. 500	20430. 500	19926. 500	20575. 000	20093. 500	20051. 500	19846. 500	7363. 500	19820. 500	19973. 500	20012. 500
Z	-1.541	-.566	-1.644	-.211	1.422	1.392	2.002	-.871	-2.091	1.609	-1.480
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.123	0.572	0.100	0.833	0.155	0.164	0.045	0.384	0.036	0.108	0.139

Grouping variable: location of Employment Source: Primary Data

*Significant at 5 per cent level of significance

Table 3 shows that among the selected respondents the level of reason found to be higher in the case of males regarding is monetary and time loss with a mean rank of 114.57. Regarding female the level of reason found to be high is physical injury with a mean rank of 113.28. Table- 4 reveals that among the selected respondents the hypothesis as to mental agony and monetary and time loss is rejected as its *p value is 0.045 and 0.036 (p<0.05)*, while that of others the null hypotheses is accepted as their *p values* are more ($p > 0.05$). It may be concluded that there is significant variation between the male and female respondents with regard to the reasons for monetary loss and mental agony.

Some of the attitudes of manufacturers, trader and service providers towards the consumers are same attitude towards all consumers; treat them with different attitude; with a hostile attitude and move carefully against those who filed cases. The below tables helps in knowing the mean rank attitude of MTSPs against the consumers who have / haven't filed petitions. This has been analyzed by Friedman Test and the result has been discussed in Tables. 5 and Table. 6.

The Hypothesis is

H₀: There is no difference in attitude by the MTSPs towards the consumers those who have or have not filed any petition against them.

The test results are presented in the following Table 5 and Table 6

Table 5: Mean Rank of the Attitude of MTSPs against the Consumers

Attitude of MTSPs	Mean Rank	Rank
Same attitude towards all consumers.	1.50	1
Will treat them with a different attitude.	2.30	2
Will move carefully with those who filed petitions.	2.49	3
Will keep a hostile attitude.	3.65	4

Source: Primary Data

The analyses of the mean ranks obtained for the four attitudes of traders against the consumers who have filed / haven't filed petitions are shown in Table 5. The lower the mean ranks, the higher will be the preference. As per the table given above, the highest preference is given to "Same attitude towards all consumers." (Mean rank 1.50)

Table 6: Fried Man Test for the Attitude of Traders

N	205
Chi – square	309.692
Df	3
Asymp. Sig	0.000*

Source: Primary Data

*Significant at 5 per cent level of significance

The χ^2 statistics provide a value of 309.692, which is significant at 5 per cent level ($p = 0.000* < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there is variation in attitude by the MTSPs towards the consumers those who have or have not filed any petition against them.

FINDINGS

- By considering the demographic variable, location and post purchase dissonance it is inferred that: (1) In Panchayat area unhealthy competition and low quality and high price (2) In Municipal area the unfair trade practices and Low Quality and High Price (3) Incorporation area the physical injuries and Defective Services are the major reasons for post purchase dissonance.
- The common causes of post-purchase dissonance proved by the statistical significance are: unfair trade practices, dissatisfaction, low weight and high price, unhealthy competition, low quality and high price, mental agony, physical injuries, defective services and defective goods with location.
- Gender-wise, male respondents are of the opinion that dissonance due to monetary and time loss with a mean rank of 114.57 is more than mental agony and low weight and high price. While the female respondents are in the opinion that physical injury with a mean rank of 113.28 is more than low quality and high price and defective services. It shows that there is a relation between gender and the reasons of post purchase dissonance
- The analysis of the mean ranks obtained for the attitudes of traders against the consumers reveal that the highest preference is given to "same attitude towards all consumers" (mean rank 1.50) followed by "will treat them with different attitude." (mean rank 2.30).
- The null hypotheses "There is no difference in attitude of the business agents towards the consumers who have / have not filed any petition against business agents" is rejected. This indicates that there is variation. But the basic preference is to the same attitude and it is followed by Will treat them with a different attitude.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Recommendations Made Are

- The Government should appoint shop inspectors to inspect the business premises, including all the details.
- The CDRFs should have the authority to initiate Suo - motu action against the MTSPs as required.
- There should be a monthly consumer awareness program conducted by CDRFs at panchayat level.
- The consumers should be educated about their rights, duties, and responsibilities.
- The consumer should be educated to select suitable goods which give maximum satisfaction.
- Acts should be made more applicable and the consumers should be educated about other related laws.
- Regulations to control business agencies those who deny the proper after sale services
- It is advisable to constitute a separate department with the name “The Department of Consumer Welfare” and take steps to regulate all the CDRFs so that it can function effectively.
- The manufacturers, traders and service providers should be educated to follow customer friendly policies and to involve more in giving consumer satisfaction.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes by stating that there are conclusive proof and reasons for post purchase dissonance. It has correlate with the demographic variables like place of employment and gender. Only when consumers come across a problem, they think of the alternatives. If the government is ready to bring necessary changes in the system of CDRFs to concentrate on the Panchayat and Taluk level the post purchase dissonance can be effectively regulated to a great extent.

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