

# A Study on Consumer's Preference for Days of the Week for Special Occasion Purchases

## Key words :

*Consumer Behavior, Consumer Preference, Retailing, inventory management, special occasion purchases.*

*Retail store management has become important not only due to increase in consumer demand but also due to change towards cosmopolitan structure of population in major cities leading to diversity in consumer choices. One of the issues is to understand consumer behavior from the perspective of the days the customers choose to buy their products for special occasions such as marriages, religious functions, etc. This paper analyzes the consumer's preference of days of the week for special occasion purchases, such as marriages, religious functions, etc. and statistically tests the relationship between consumer's region of origin (North, South, East, and West) and their preference for days of the week. It has been found through analysis that while there is significant relationship between age, gender, marital status, annual income and region of origin, there is no significant relation between preference and education. The paper concludes that there is a predominance of consumer's preference for Wednesday for special occasion purchases.*

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## 1. Introduction

As result of soaring household income in sync with economic growth rate at over 6%, the retail demand has increased tremendously in the past 2 to 3 decades. Additionally the emergence of the new middle class has increased the demand further. A McKinsey report published in 2007 has predicted that the household income in India will increase at a rapid rate and the household disposable income will grow at a CAGR of 5.3%. This not only means that there will be concomitant reduction in poverty but also indicates an increase in household consumption. Given this scenario retailing will become all the more important and the consumer will be more demanding in terms of availability of products in the retail outlets, which is directly linked to efficient inventory management, replenishment, and store management. This paper is an attempt at relating consumer behavior to efficient inventory management not only to satisfy customers but also to retain customers and hence increase sales revenue and competitiveness. One aspect of consumer behavior is the choice of days of the week on which to make purchases specifically for special occasions such as religious functions. This element of consumer behavior gains importance in view of the ubiquitous cultural intensity/diversity in India and the needs to be evaluated statistically. The next section provides a literature review of consumer behavior elements that have been published so far.

## 2. Literature review

Consumer behavior and its relation to retail purchasing have been studied extensively. In the recent years post purchasing activities have received attention of researchers and in these studies the emphasis has been on customer satisfaction, dissatisfaction, repeat purchases,

and customer retention. Little attention has been given to the relation between consumer behavior and retail store management. Consumer behavior as result of cultural affiliations have also received very little attention from researchers. Rogers and Williams (1987) and by Willamsetal. (1989) have studied the relation between consumer's personal values and consumer behavior. Personal values have been studied and listed by Rokeach (1968). Personal values have been defined by elements such as needs, beliefs, desires, social requirements, etc. Rokeach has studied personal values in depth and classified them as shown in table 1. Vinson etal (1977) have studied how consumer's personal values can assist retailers in determining consumer choices. They have analyzed how familial, socio-cultural, and economic environment influence shapes the development of personal values. Further they have said that beliefs are central and important to evaluation of choices. They also contend that consumers develop personal values through experience, familial/peer group interactions, and religious instructions. They have asserted that differences in product/brand preference is due to different personal values. Wall etal (1977) have studied prediction and profiling of consumers with reference to satisfaction/dissatisfaction and complaining behavior. William etal(1987, 1989) have studied the relationship between consumer's personal values and satisfaction with household appliances. Daniel etal(1984) have studied influence of personal values on advertising effectiveness. Camacho and Angelina (1983) have studied the cross cultural comparison of consumers complaining behavior. Vinson and Munson (1976) have studied the segmentation of customers based on personal values. Slamaetal (1985) have studied the relationship between personal values and retail

shopping behavior of consumers. Pitts and woodside (1983) have studied the influence of personal values on consumer product class and brand preferences. Howard and woodside have studied the influence of personal values on consumer's psychology. Henry (1976) has studied how personal values correlate with consumer behavior. Morganoskyetal (1987) have analyzed the consumer complaining behavior in terms of demographics, lifestyle, and consumer's values.

### 3. Research Methodology

A convenience sampling of 400 customer visiting several stores were asked to answer questions relating to demographics and their preference of day of the week on which they would like to make purchases for special occasions. Out of the 400 responses only 100 were usable since the rest of them were either incomplete or contained contradictory responses. The survey responses were collated and tested for significance using  $\chi^2$  test of independence to see if the consumer's preferences were related to demographic variables such as age, education, annual income, marital status, and gender. The profile of the sample is given in table 2, 3, and 4. The following null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis were tested:

1. H<sub>0</sub> – region of origin has no relation to consumer's choice of days of the week for special occasion purchases

Ha – region of origin has a relation to consumer's choice of days of the week for special occasion purchases

2. H<sub>0</sub> – Annual income of consumer has no relation to consumer's choice of days of the week for special occasion purchases

Ha – Annual income of consumer has a relation to consumer's choice of days of the week for special occasion purchases

3. H<sub>0</sub> – Age of consumer has no relation to

consumer's choice of days of the week for special occasion purchases

Ha – Age of consumer has a relation to consumer's choice of days of the week for special occasion purchases

4. H<sub>0</sub> – Level of education of consumer has no relation to consumer's choice of days of the week for special occasion purchases

Ha – Level education of consumer has a relation to consumer's choice of days of the week for special occasion purchases

5. H<sub>0</sub> – Gender of consumer has no relation to consumer's choice of days of the week for special occasion purchases

Ha – Gender of consumer has a relation to consumer's choice of days of the week for special occasion purchases

6. H<sub>0</sub> – Marital status of consumer has no relation to consumer's choice of days of the week for special occasion purchases

Ha – Marital status of consumer has a relation to consumer's choice of days of the week for special occasion purchases

### 4. Results and Discussion

The summary statistics of the survey responses are given in tables 2, 3, 4, and 5 from which it can be inferred that 23% of the total respondents prefer Wednesday for special occasion purchases. Additionally it is also clear that consumers prefer different days of the week for their purchases. From Table 3 that shows distribution of respondents by region of origin, it is clear that 40 % of respondents whose origin is north prefer Tuesday for the shopping for special occasions and 31% of respondents from southern region prefer Wednesday. From table 5 that gives the percentage distribution respondents by gender it is clear that majority of women (30%) prefer Wednesdays for shopping. Further from table 5 it can be inferred that majority of respondents in the age group greater

than 35 (27%) prefer Wednesdays for shopping and most respondents in the age group less than 35 (28%) prefer Saturdays or Sundays for shopping. To get a clearer picture of how these preferences are related to demographic variables the survey responses were segregated based on the demographic variable and days of the preferences.

Cultural, social, and familial affiliations have been shown to shape consumer behavior in marketing research studies. While people of India follow similar culture across regions (North, South, East, and West) and many similarities are found in their beliefs, but some difference can be commonly observed particularly with respect to festivals, marriages, and preference for days of the week. For example, marriages in the northern states of UP, MP, Bihar with the exception of Punjab (where it is held during day time) are held during early hours of the day (past midnight) but in the southern states of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Kerala marriages are held during day time. Similarly the festival of Diwali is celebrated across India but the northern parts celebrate in the evening while in the southern states it is celebrated in the morning. Further in the north Tuesdays are considered auspicious but in the south Tuesdays are considered inauspicious. Similarities such as avoidance Saturdays to buy Oil and metal articles is common across India. There are many such difference among the populations mainly due to cultural background. There are explanations available for these differences but in this paper we are looking at only the differences and not on why they are so. Moreover our interest is in finding out whether such differences are manifest in consumer behavior also. The summary statistics of the survey response shows there does exist some difference day of the week preference. In order to establish this difference the following hypothesis was tested for statistical significance.

**Hypothesis 1** – Region of origin and days of the preference

H<sub>0</sub> – region of origin has no relation to consumer's choice of days of the week for special occasion purchases

H<sub>a</sub> – region of origin has a relation to consumer's choice of days of the week for special occasion purchases

The chi square test results are given in table 6 and it indicates that the difference is significant at an alpha of .05 with a low p value indicating that the significance is real. The observed chi square statistic (22.72) is greater than the table value of chi square statistic (12.59). Hence the null hypothesis that region of origin has no relation to consumer's choice of days of the week for special occasion purchases is rejected which is in consonance with the generally observed fact that in the northern states Tuesdays are considered auspicious and consumers would generally prefer to make purchases on Tuesdays than other days of the week. Similarly Wednesdays are considered auspicious and would prefer to make purchases on Wednesdays than on other week days. Moreover the p (0.000896) value is very small and less than the level of significance (0.05) used for the test, which indicates that the difference is real.

**Hypothesis 2** – Annual Income and days of the preference

H<sub>0</sub> – Annual income of consumer has no relation to consumer's choice of days of the week for special occasion purchases

H<sub>a</sub> – Annual income of consumer has a relation to consumer's choice of days of the week for special occasion purchases

The chi square results from table 6 show that the observed chi square statistic (15.28) is greater than the table value of chi square

statistic (12.59) at significance level of 0.05 and hence we can safely reject the null hypothesis that Annual income of consumer has no relation to consumer's choice of days of the week for special occasion purchases. Additionally the p (0.018165) value being less than 0.05 (level of significance at which the test is done) indicates that there is indeed a difference in days of the week preference with respect to annual income. This further this is supported by the fact as the length of employment increases the income level also increases and differences in days of the week preference for special occasion purchases will continue irrespective of the income level.

**Hypothesis 3** – Age and days of the preference

H<sub>0</sub> – Age of consumer has no relation to consumer's choice of days of the week for special occasion purchases

H<sub>a</sub> – Age of consumer has a relation to consumer's choice of days of the week for special occasion purchases.

As evinced in table 6 the chi square statistic (28.99) for this demographic variable is greater than the chi square critical (21.03) at a significance level of 0.05 and hence the null hypothesis that Age of consumer has no relation to consumer's choice of days of the week for special occasion purchases stands rejected. More over the P (0.003942) value being much less than  $\alpha = 0.05$  we can safely conclude that there is a difference in days of the week preference with respect to age groups. This is also corroborates the generally observed trend that most younger consumers do not give much importance preferences based on traditional beliefs and tend make purchases as per their conveniences.

**Hypothesis 4** – Age and days of the preference

H<sub>0</sub> – Level of education of consumer has no relation to consumer's choice of days of the week for special occasion purchases

H<sub>a</sub> – Level education of consumer has a relation

to consumer's choice of days of the week for special occasion purchases

It is clear from table 6 that there is no significant relationship between level of education and days of the week preference for special occasion purchases. The calculated chi square statistic (21.53) is less than the table value of chi square statistic (28.87) hence the null hypothesis that Level of education of consumer has no relation to consumer's choice of days of the week for special occasion purchases is accepted. Additionally the p (0.253688) value is greater than  $\alpha = 0.05$  indicating that there is indeed no relationship.

**Hypothesis 5** – Gender and days of the preference

H<sub>0</sub> – Gender of consumer has no relation to consumer's choice of days of the week for special occasion purchases

H<sub>a</sub> – Gender of consumer has a relation to consumer's choice of days of the week for special occasion purchases

The chi square test for this hypothesis (table 6) shows that the difference is significant at  $\alpha = 0.5$  and the fact that the p (0.034692) value is smaller than  $\alpha = 0.05$  indicates there is definite difference between male and female members in the choice of days of the week for special occasion purchases. This is supported by the general observation that women are more religious and family oriented despite of their professional responsibilities and education. This is a point to be appreciated, for women are able to achieve a better work life balance than men and they are naturally adept at playing multiple roles.

**Hypothesis 6** – Gender and days of the preference

H<sub>0</sub> – Marital status of consumer has no relation to consumer's choice of days of the week for special occasion purchases

Ha – Marital status of consumer has a relation to consumer's choice of days of the week for special occasion purchases

It is evident from table 6 that there is a significant difference between consumer's marital status and the days of the week preference for purchases for special occasions. The test chi square statistic (12.82) is more than the table value of chi square statistic (12.59) and hence the null hypothesis stand rejected. Additional support for alternative hypothesis is that the p (0.045907) value is less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . This seems to be a justifiable result since it is common knowledge that married individuals tend to shop with their spouses in general and particularly for special occasion purchases and influence on choice of week day for making purchases is but natural.

The general take away from the survey are that people from the north have a greater preference for Tuesdays, people from the south have a greater preference for Wednesdays (Table 3). Additionally people in the age group above the age 35 seem to prefer Wednesday or Saturdays for their shopping (Table 5). Women prefer to shop on Wednesdays as compared to other days (Table 4).

## 5. Conclusion

The study brings out an important aspect of consumer behavior that not only helps in understanding how consumers shop with reference to choice of days of the week for special purposes but also gives managerial direction to retail outlets on inventory management, stock replenishment, and manpower planning. The survey results point out that the consumer's preference for days of week for special purchases is distributed over the week. The order of choice seems to be Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday, and Tuesday. Additionally consumers of different age groups seem to choose different

days for shopping for special occasions. Given this situation the demand is not uniform but lumpy and the store managers/owners need to profile their customers to understand when the demand lumps occur and plan their inventory accordingly. Individual stores would have to run their own analysis of their customer profiles to decide when the demand lump occurs.

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**Table - 1**

Personal values as listed by Rokeach (1968)
Ambitious – Hard working, aspiring
Broad Minded – Open Minded
Sense of capable – competent, effective
Cheerful – light hearted, Joyful
Clean – neat, tidy
Courageous – stands for beliefs
Forgiving – willing to pardon
Helpful – working for the welfare of others
Honest – sincere, truthful
Imaginative – Daring, Creative
Independent – self-reliant, self sufficient
Intellectual – intelligent, reflective
Logical – consistent, well mannered
Loving – affectionate, tender
Obedient – dutiful, respectful
Polite – courteous, well mannered
Responsible – dependable
Self-controlled – restrained, self-disciplined

**Table 2**

Day of the week	% of survey respondents
Sunday (SU)	16
Monday (M)	5
Tuesday (TU)	15
Wednesday (W)	23
Thursday (TH)	9
Friday (F)	13
Saturday (SA)	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3**

% Distribution of respondents by Region of origin (15% North, 67% South, 10% East, and 8% West)				
Region	TU	W	SA	SU
North	40	13	13	7
South	3	31	25	22

**Table 4**

Table 4							
% Distribution of respondents by Gender							
Gender	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA	SU
F	8	10	30	14	10	10	18
M	2	20	16	4	16	28	14

**Table 5**

Table 5							
% Distribution of respondent by Age (25% below 35 years of age, 51% between 35 and 50 years of age, and 24% above 51 years of age)							
Age Group	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA	SU
Up to 35	4	8	12	12	8	28	28
Greater than 35	5	17	27	8	15	16	12

**Table 6**

Region	% of survey respondents	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2$ critical	Significance at $\alpha = 0.05$	P value
Northern India	15	22.72	12.59	Yes	0.000896
Southern India	67				
Western India	10	Not tested because fewer respondent			
Eastern India	8				

Annual income range	% of survey respondents				
Less than 6 lakhs	39	15.28	12.59	Yes	0.018165
Greater than 6 lakhs up to 12 lakhs	61				
Age group	% of survey respondents				
Up to 35 years 25	25	28.99	21.03	Yes	0.003942
greater than 35 up to 50 years	51				
greater than 50 up to 60 years	24				
Education level	% of survey respondents				
Above Post graduation	40	21.53	28.87	No	0.253688
Post Graduation	21				
Under graduation	16				
Schooling	23				
Gender	% of survey respondents				
Female	50	13.58	12.59	Yes	0.034692
Male	50				
Marital Status	% of survey respondents				
Married	63	12.82	12.59	Yes	0.045907
Single	37				

