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An impact of consumer buying behavior in decision making process in purchase of electronic home appliances in Chennai (India): an empirical study S.Vijayalakshmi^{1,*} and V.Mahalakshmi²

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ABSTRACT

Consumer behavior is the study of individuals, groups, or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society. It blends elements from psychology, sociology, social anthropology and economics. It attempts to understand the decision-making process of buyers, both individually and in groups. It studies characteristics of individual consumers such as demographics and behavioral variables in an attempt to understand people's wants. It also tries to assess influences on the consumer from groups such as family, friends, reference groups, and society in general. This empirical study contributes to a vital comprehension of the impact of dissimilar factors on consumer buying behaviors. The numerous independent variables in electronic home appliances market in India are deeply analyzed. The factors that are affecting the consumer behavior in electronic home appliances markets in India have been taken as the empirical study of this research. The key findings of this study designates that, overall, the set of self determining variable are weakly associated with the self determining variable. The profound analysis institutes those social and physical factors along with marketing mix elements are sturdily associated with consumer buying behavior. The consumer decision making rules discovery is made possible through these analyses. The results shall support the manufacturers and electronic home appliances retailers in comprehending consumer behavior and enhancing the satisfaction of the consumers.

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Introduction

Consumers or the Customers are valuable assets for any organization. Consumer is an individual or group of individuals who select, purchase, use, or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy needs and desires. In other words, Consumers are the eventual destination of any products or services. The study of these individuals, groups, or organizations is what we call Consumer behavior. The processes by which these organizations select, secure, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society. It blends elements from psychology, sociology, social anthropology and economics. It attempts to understand the buyer decision making process, both individually and in groups. It studies characteristics of individual consumers such as demographics and behavioral variables in an attempt to understand people's wants. It also tries to assess influences on the consumer from groups such as family, friends, reference groups, and society in general. Customer behavior study is based on consumer buying behavior, with the customer playing the three distinct roles of user, payer and buyer (Anju Thapa, 2012). If the company in India wants to attain commercial success in the electronic home appliances market, it is important that its managers have to comprehend consumer behavior. The association between consumer behavior and marketing strategy is accentuated because the success of companies' marketing strategies depends understandings of consumer behavior. upon managers'

Consumer buying decisions point out how well the company's marketing strategy fits market demand. Consequently, marketing begins and ends with the consumer. Research has shown that consumer behavior is difficult to predict, even for experts in the field (Armstrong & Scott, 1991). Consumer behavior analysis helps to determine the direction that consumer behavior is likely to make and to give preferred trends in product development, attributes of the alternative communication method etc. consumer behaviors analysis views the consumer as another variable in the marketing sequence, a variable that cannot be controlled and that will interpret the product or service not only in terms of the physical characteristics, but in the context of this image according to the social and psychological makeup of that individual consumer or group of consumers (Proctor and Stone, 1982) Consumer behavior research allows for improved understanding and forecasting concerning not only the subject of purchases but also purchasing motives and purchasing frequency (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007).

One of the existing basic assumptions in consumer behavior research is that individuals often purchase products for their subjectively professed values rather than their primary functions (Stávková, Stejskal & Toufarova, 2008). Habitually, consumers do not rate products according to their core attributes (i.e., the primary utility they provide) but, above all, according to the socalled real product (i.e., a particular products' qualities) and the extended product, which represents the set of insubstantial factors that bestow a preferred apparent advantage on the

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consumer – including image, consultancy, and after-sale service (Foret & Procházka, 2007). In totting up, contemporary marketers first challenges to comprehend consumers and their responses and then study the basic characteristics of their behavior. Studying consumer behavior facilitates to determine who the customers are, what they desire, and how they employ and respond to the product. The needs of the customer are cautiously studied by conducting empirical study on consumer behavior.

Influence of Consumer Behaviour: Model, Factors & Stimuli

The personality of consumer behavior centers on when, why, how and where people do and do not buy products, is exemplified by the black box model in Fig(1). The factors of stimulus-response model (or the black box model) are an intense and tested model of buyer behavior and it is recapitulated in the diagram below (see Fig. 1.). The black box model demonstrates how stimuli, consumer characteristics, decision processes and a consumer response interrelates. The stimuli can be illustrious between interpersonal stimuli or intrapersonal (Sandhusen, 2000, pp. 218-219). The black box model is associated to the black box theory of behaviorism, where the central point is not on the progression inside a consumer but the relationship between the stimuli and consumer reactions. Marketing stimuli are designed and created by firms, whereas the environmental stimulus is dependent on social factors, based on the economic, political and cultural circumstances of a society. The buyer's black box contains the buyer's perception and the decision process, which establishes the buyer's response and reaction. In the below model, marketing factors and other stimuli enter the customer's "black box" and produce certain responses.

The aim of the above model is to ascertain how customer perceives – the black box. The buyer's distinctiveness influence how the stimuli is perceived; the decision-making process determines what buying behavior is undertaken. The primary step in understanding buyer behavior is to focus on the factors that determine the buyer's characteristics in the black box model. There are numerous factors that influence a consumer's purchasing decisions and buying behavior. The literature classifies and configurations of these factors in various ways (Refer table 1.). Regardless of these dissimilarities, consumer behavior is generally predisposed by factors that can be classified into five groups: physical factors, personal factors, cultural factors, social factors, and the marketing mix. An explanation of the major factor groups is accessible in Table 2. These factors are acknowledged to discern the impacts they have on consumer behavior and help marketers with selecting consumer goal approach. As a result, these factors are used to fragment the market and aim explicit consumer groups. The aspiration of this research paper is to comprehend the influences of the factors that were analyzed in a study on purchasing behavior. The empirical study deeply illustrates the influence of consumer behavior in the consumer decision making process.

Types of Consumer Behavior

Consumer wants are limitless because there are different types of consumer buying behavior. To please these wants they need to buy goods and services. Buying salt is totally different from buying a diamond necklace. The more luxurious the good is the more information is needed by the consumer. There are four types of consumer buying behavior based on the buyer involvement in the purchase.

High involvement: - It means when the consumer is highly involved while buying a product. Generally this happens in case of expensive goods. Like while buying a car a consumer is highly involved in buying.

Low involvement: - It means when the consumer is not highly involved while buying a product. Generally this happens in case of low cost goods. Like while buying a salt a consumer is not highly involved in buying.

Significant differences between brands:- It means when there are many differences between brands.

Few differences between brands:- It means when there are very less differences between brands.

- 1) Complex buying behavior:- when the consumer is highly involved in the purchase and have the knowledge about significant differences between brands then it is called complex buying behavior. So in this case the consumer must get relevant information about the product attribute and the marketer must develop brand preference to provide detailed information regarding the product attribute. For eg. Consumer while buying a television or air conditioner it is highly involved in the purchase and has the knowledge about significant differences between brands.
- 2) Variety seeking behavior: in this case there is low involvement of the consumer regarding the product and there are significant differences between brands. Consumers generally buy different products not due to dissatisfaction but due to seek variety. Like every time they buy different soap just for variety. In this case the marketer must encourage the consumer to buy the product by offering discounts, free samples and by advertising the product a lot.
- 3) Dissonance buying behavior: sometimes consumer is highly involved in the purchase but there are few differences between brands. Highly involvement again means that the product is expensive, but due to few differences between brands consumer will buy the product frequently. Like consumer while buying a wall paints, buy them quickly as there are few differences between brands.
- **4) Habitual buying behavior:** in this case there is low involvement of the consumer regarding the product and there are few differences between brands. The consumer just goes to the market and buys the product. For eg. Salt.



Figure 3: The Buyer Decision Process. Elaboration based on Kotler and Armstrong, 2007

A Study of the Factors Influencing Consumer Behavior in the Electronic Home Appliances Market Study Goals and Objectives

The purpose of this study is to determine the factors that affect consumer preferences and behavior in the electronic home appliances market in India. There are few studies connected to these products, and this is the initial study that has attempted to investigate the growing electronic home appliances market in India. In India, there are researchers who are desirous in consumer behavior, and the studies in this area are meager and insufficient. Researchers functioning on the topic of consumer behavior and competition in the Indian market are Shainesh (2004), Mu.Subrahmanian (2011), Geethanjali et al., (2011).

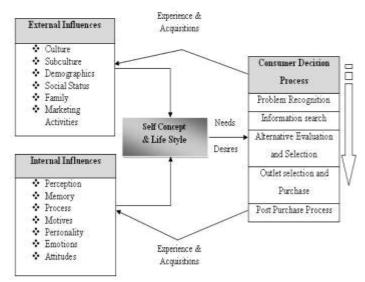


Figure 4: The Consumer Behavior Model (Hawkins et al., 1998). External and internal factors contribute to the formulation of self-concept and lifestyle, which affects the consumer decision process. During this process, experiences and acquisitions update the original external and internal influences.

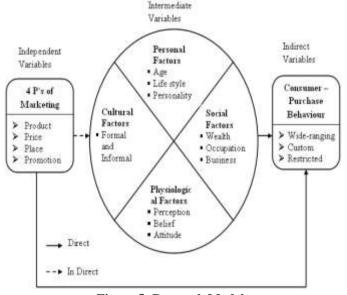


Figure 5: Research Model

Study Methodology

The aim of the survey was to obtain information regarding the influences of the above-mentioned factors (see table 2.) on consumer behavior when consumers purchase electronic home appliances. After implementing the literature review, the authors of the paper decided to create a research model (fig. 5.) and implement it to understand and analyze how Indian consumers made purchase decisions in the electronic home appliances market. The graphical research model can be written in mathematical form. The mathematical model of the research is stated below:

Factor Impact on Behavior $_{c, t}$ =

 $\begin{array}{llll} \alpha_0 & + & \beta_1 Cultural_{c,t} & + & \beta_2 Social_{c,t} & + & \beta_3 Personal_{c,t} & + \\ \beta_4 Psychological_{c,t} & + & \beta_5 Product,t & + & \beta_6 Price_{c,t} & + \\ \beta_7 Promotion_{c,t} & + & \beta_8 Place_{c,t} & + & \epsilon_{c,t} \\ & & \text{where:} \end{array}$

 α – constant.

 ε – model error,

c – consumer.

t – making a purchase at a particular time.

The hypotheses originated after evaluating the relevant literature are presented below:

H1: cultural factors have a firm involvement with consumer behavior.

H2: social factors have a firm involvement with consumer behavior.

H3: personal factors have a firm involvement with consumer behavior.

H4: psychological factors have a firm involvement with consumer behavior.

H5: the product factor has a firm involvement with consumer behavior.

H6: the price factor has a firm involvement with consumer behavior.

H7: the promotion factor has a firm involvement with consumer behavior.

H8: the place factor has a firm involvement with consumer behavior.

Tests of the hypotheses were confined to the primary data collected from the area of Chennai in India.

Mechanism and Study Illustrations

The data employed to analyze the factors persuading consumer's purchase decision-making processes were achieved through a marketing survey. The mechanism used to collect the primary data was a set of questionnaires. The authors selected this tool because of its supplementary advantages. It is because each respondent receives the same questions and an interviewer is not present, the process is identical for each respondent. One advantage of using a questionnaire is that it minimizes errors made by an interviewer while recording the responses. Questionnaires guarantee secrecy and hence, respondents act without any fright or humiliation. A further advantage is that the interviewer, whose personal look, frame of mind or behavior may influence the results of an interview, is not present when the questionnaire is being completed. Furthermore, a questionnaire is a rapid and an effectual way to obtain information from a large number of consumers. Nevertheless, designing a questionnaire is complex and time-consuming, and the quality of the data that are collected is determined by the quality of the questionnaire. The authors proposed that the questionnaire to be simple and the questions should be uncomplicated and to the point. The questions were divided into three segments as follows:

a) Questions on demographic information, including characteristics such as age, education, income, and gender.

b) Questions on the factors that impact consumers and consumer behavior.

The succeeding part of the questionnaire restricted to nine sections, and each section represented a variable in the research model (the independent, dependent, and intermediate variables). In this part responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from one (Certainly disagree) to five (Certainly agree). The survey was conducted in February 2013 in Chennai, a metropolitan city in Tamilnadu, India were 300 survey responses were gathered. However, after removing invalid data, 244 correctly completed, acceptable questionnaires remained for the analysis. The data were evaluated using dedicated free online software - the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) (www.qtcentre.org > Home > Qt Centre Download). The Chennai Respondents in this study were asked to complete the questionnaire on a deliberate basis. Regarding income, 21% of respondents had monthly incomes in excess of above Rs.50,000/- INR, 56% had monthly incomes between 15000 and 49000 INR and 23% received less than 14000 INR per month. Fig 1: The Black Box Model of Consumer Behavior

Marketing Factors		Buyer's Perception (Bla	Buyer's Feedback		
Marketing Factors	Marketing Factors Ecological factors Buyer		Decision Progression	Buyer's Responses	
Product Price Place Promotion	 External conditions External surroundings Encirclement Processing Environment 	NeedPersonalityCultureLife style	 Problem Awareness Information Search Evaluation of Alternatives Purchase Post Purchase Decisions 	 Product Choice Brand choice Purchase amount Purchase Frequency 	

Figure 2: The Buyer behaviour and involvement, Elaboration based on Source: http://www.winnerscience.com

	High involvement	Low involvement	
Significant differences between brands	Complex buying behavior(television)	Variety seeking behavior(soap)	
Few differences between brands	Dissonance buying behavior(wall paints)	Habitual buying behavior(salt)	

Table 1: Literature Review on Factors affecting consumer behavior

Chief Factors	Researcher	Year of study
Stanton	Attitudinal factors, Physical factors, social factors	1997
Lancaster and Reynold	Physical factors, social factors and cultural factors	1999
Straughan and Roberts	Life Style and Demographic factors	1999
Pride and Ferrell	Physical factors, Social factors and Attitudinal factors	2000
Kotler and Armstrong	Physical, social, cultural factor and Personal Factors	2007
Fatimah Furaiji, Malgorzata Latuszynska,	Cultural factors, social factors, personal factos, Psychological	2012
Agata Wawrzyniak	factors and marketing Mix	

Relating to sex, 52% of the respondents were male and 48% were female. Of the 244 people who completed our questionnaire, 8% were between the ages of 18-27, 31.5% were between 28-37, 37.5% were between 38-47, 18% were between 48-57 and 5% were over 58 years old. Regarding education level, the majority of respondents had received higher education (42.8%), 27.2% received secondary education, 15.5% received intermediate education, 5.2% received primary education and only 9.3% have no formal education.

Results and Discussion

Cronbach's alpha is the most common measure of internal consistency ("reliability"). It is most commonly used when you have multiple Likert questions in a survey/questionnaire that form a scale, and wish to determine if the scale is reliable. It was used to assess the inter-item reliability for each variable. As reported in table 4, Cronbach's alpha scores were over 0.75, suggesting that the items have a relatively high degree of internal consistency (note that a reliability coefficient of 0.70 or higher is considered "acceptable" in most social science research (Hair et al., 2006). These alpha scores are acceptable for an exploratory analysis, indicating that the factors within each variable are inter-related.

There was a relationship between each factor and type of consumer behavior. This procedure was divided into two parts as follows:

1. The authors found Pearson's correlation coefficients among the variables connected with questions answered on the Likert scale such as social factors, psychological factors, marketing mix and consumer behavior. As shown in Table 5, the Pearson's r for the correlation between each factor and consumer behavior was positive. This means that as one variable increases in value, the second variable also increases in value. Similarly, as one variable decreases in value, the second variable also decreases in value. The values of the Person's correlation coefficients in this study were rather low; there is not a strong relationship between the variables. The strongest correlation was between psychological factors and behavior -0.455. The significance (2-

tailed) values were less than 0.05. Therefore, we can terminate that there was a statistically noteworthy correlation between each factor and consumer behavior.

2. To find the relationship between cultural and personal factors and different types of consumer behavior, a one-way ANOVA was used. Data that represented these factors were divided into three groups: education (a cultural factor), age and monthly income (personal factors). The outcome of the ANOVA is presented in table 6. The results reveal that there is not a statistically significant difference between the influences of education and age on consumer behavior (p>0.05). Only monthly income has an impact on behavior, and only under routine response behavior. In this case, the F ratio is the highest (F=2.995) and the significance value was below 0.05 (sig. = 0.151).

It was found out that there is a multiple regression between behavior and all factors. The data presented in table 7 show the results of the multiple regressions, which was used to study more about the associations between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Testing the formerly developed hypotheses developed provided results that made it probable to amend the research model as follows:

Factor Impact on Behavior_{c, t =} α_0 - β_1 Cultural_{c,t} + β_2 Social_{c,t} - β_3 Personal_{c,t} + β_4 Psychological_{c,t} + β_5 Product,t + β_6 Price_{c,t} + β_7 Promotion_{c,t} + β_8 Place_{c,t} + $\epsilon_{c,t}$

These modifications of the mathematical model indicate that hypotheses 1 and 3 are rejected because the relationships between the variables are weak (p>0.05). The other hypotheses are accepted based on the strong association among the variables (p<0.05). Psychological factors strongly affected behavior. Psychological factors (β =0.543) influenced consumer behavior more than social factors (β =0.374) and marketing mix. The relationship between personal factors and consumer behavior was insignificant, with a p-value of 0.08. A similar result was obtained for the relationship between cultural factors and consumer behavior (p=0.06).

Table 2: Major factors Affecting Consumer Behavior

		Table 2: Major factors Affecting Consumer Behavior
Major Factors	Sub-factors	Description
	Culture	Consumer behavior is deeply influenced by cultural factors such as: buyer culture, subculture, and social class.
Cultural Factors	Sub culture	Each culture contains different subcultures such as religions, nationalities, geographic regions, racial groups etc. Marketers can use these groups by segmenting the market into various small portions. For example marketers can design products according to the needs of a particular geographic group.
	Social Class	Every society possesses some form of social class which is important to the marketers because the buying behavior of people in a given social class is similar. In this way marketing activities could be tailored according to different social classes. Here social class is not only determined by income but there are various other factors as well such as: wealth, education, occupation etc.
	Groups	Group refers to two or more individuals who interact to accomplish individual or mutual goals. A person's behavior is influenced by many small groups or reference groups. These group involves family, religious groups, friends circle and neighbors etc.,
	Reference group	Reference groups have potential in forming a person attitude or behavior. The impact of reference groups varies across products and brands. For example if the product is visible such as dress, shoes, car etc then the influence of reference groups will be high. Reference groups also include opinion leader (a person who influences other because of his special skill, knowledge or other characteristics).
Social Factors	Roles and Status	Each person possesses different roles and status in the society depending upon the groups, clubs, family, organization etc. to which he belongs. For example a woman is working in an organization as finance manager. Now she is playing two roles, one of finance manager and other of mother. Therefore her buying decisions will be influenced by her role and status.
	Family	Buyer behavior is strongly influenced by the member of a family. Therefore marketers are trying to find the roles and influence of the husband, wife and children. If the buying decision of a particular product is influenced by wife then the marketers will try to target the women in their advertisement. Here we should note that buying roles change with change in consumer lifestyles.
	Age	Age and life-cycle have potential impact on the consumer buying behavior. It is obvious that the consumers change the purchase of goods and services with the passage of time. Family life-cycle consists of different stages such young singles, married couples, unmarried couples etc which help marketers to develop appropriate products for each stage.
	Occupation	The occupation of a person has significant impact on his buying behavior. For example a marketing manager of an organization will try to purchase business suits, whereas a low level worker in the same organization will purchase rugged work clothes.
Personal Factors	Economical Situation	Consumer economic situation has great influence on his buying behavior. If the income and savings of a customer is high then he will purchase more expensive products. On the other hand, a person with low income and savings will purchase inexpensive products.
	Life style	Lifestyle of customers is another import factor affecting the consumer buying behavior. Lifestyle refers to the way a person lives in a society and is expressed by the things in his/her surroundings. It is determined by customer interests, opinions, activities etc and shapes his whole pattern of acting and interacting in the world.
	Personality	Personality changes from person to person, time to time and place to place. Therefore it can greatly influence the buying behavior of customers. Actually, Personality is not what one wears; rather it is the totality of behavior of a man in different circumstances. It has different characteristics such as: dominance, aggressiveness, self-confidence etc which can be useful to determine the consumer behavior for particular product or service.
	Motivation	The level of motivation also affects the buying behavior of customers. Every person has different needs such as physiological needs, biological needs, social needs etc. The nature of the needs is that, some of them are most pressing while others are least pressing. Therefore a need becomes a motive when it is more pressing to direct the person to seek satisfaction.
Psychological Factors	Perception	Selecting, organizing and interpreting information in a way to produce a meaningful experience of the world is called perception. There are three different perceptual processes which are selective attention, selective distortion and selective retention. In case of selective attention, marketers try to attract the customer attention. Whereas, in case of selective distortion, customers try to interpret the information in a way that will support what the customers already believe. Similarly, in case of selective retention, marketers try to retain information that supports their beliefs.
	Beliefs and Attitudes	Customer possesses specific belief and attitude towards various products. Since such beliefs and attitudes make up brand image and affect consumer buying behavior therefore marketers are interested in them. Marketers can change the beliefs and attitudes of customers by launching special campaigns in this regard.
Marketing Mix	Promotion	It represents all the communications that a marketer may use in a market place. Promotion has four distinct elements: advertising, public relations, personal selling and sales promotion
	Placement	A way of getting the product to the consumer and how easily accessible to its consumers

Source: http:// Ezine Articles.com

Note: Elaboration based on Kotler and Armstrong, 2007; Fatimah Furaiji, Malgorzata Latuszynska, Agata Wawrzyniak, 2012.

Table: 4 Reliability Statistics

	/
Variables	Cronbach's Alpha
Cultural Factors	0.89
Social Factors	0.86
Personal Factors	0.83
Psychological Factors	0.76
Product	0.81
Price	0.79
Place	0.97
Promotion	0.94
Wide Ranging Behavior	0.95
Custom Decision Making	0.91
Restricted Decision Making	0.94

Table: 5 Pearson Correlations of Variables

Variables	Behavior					
	Pearson's Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)				
Social Factors	0.277	0.000				
Psychological Factors	0.455	0.004				
Product	0.259	0.000				
Price	0.298	0.000				
Place	0.287	0.000				
Promotion	0.255	0.000				

Table: 6 - One Way Anova

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Factors	Types of Behavior SS		df	MS	F	Sig.
	Wide Ranging Behavior	2.141	4	0.535	0.853	0.615
Qualification / Business	Custom Decision Making	2.745	4	0.686	1.381	0.391
	Restricted Decision Making	15.513	4	3.878	0.611	0.455
	Wide Ranging Behavior	0.354	4	0.089	0.140	0.694
Ranging of Age	Custom Decision Making	0.487	4	0.122	0.237	1.064
	Restricted Decision Making	13.166	4	3.292	0.551	0.789
	Wide Ranging Behavior	3.123	4	0.781	1.258	0.467
Monthly Earnings	Custom Decision Making	5.754	4	1.439	2.955	0.151
	Restricted Decision Making	19.134	4	4.784	0.805	0.586

Note: SS – sum of squares, df – degrees of freedom, MS – mean square, F – F ratio, Sig. – significance value.

Table: 7 – Results of Multiple Regressions

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Hypothesis & Relationship		Un standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	. 1	Sig.	Verification	
		В	Std. error	Beta	t-value	_	Results	
H1	Cultural Factor	-0.095	0.0500	-0.170	-2.408	0.070	Rejected	
H2	Social Factor	-0.226	0.0513	0.374	5.484	0.000	Accepted	
Н3	Personal Factor	0.069	0.0388	-0.154	-2.173	0.105	Rejected	
H4	Psychological Factor	0.388	0.0575	0.543	8.443	0.000	Accepted	
H5	Product	0.224	0.0575	0.336	4.905	0.000	Accepted	
Н6	Price	0.178	0.0413	0.366	5.379	0.000	Accepted	
H7	Place	0.198	0.0550	0.311	4.509	0.000	Accepted	
H8	Promotion	0.155	0.0525	0.258	3.698	0.004	Accepted	

Conclusions and Future Research

This research contributes to the perceptive of consumer buying behavior in the electronic home appliances market. The key findings of the study designates that the overall set of independent variables was weakly associated with the dependent variable. On the other hand, the profound analysis found that social factors, physical factors, and marketing mix elements were strongly associated with the buying behaviors of Indian consumers. These analyses compose it potential to determine consumer decision-making rules. Furthermore, our analysis facilitated us to recognize numerous noteworthy directions for future research. The principal goal of this future research will be to expand methodological bases for consumer behavior analysis using MATLAB simulation tests using the developed methodology. As an outcome of our research, we focus to build

up a computer simulation model that will allow us to examine the consumer behavior process. The simulation model of the electronic home appliances market will be elaborated with a Data mining tool approach.

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