

Chapter 11

Religion and Consumer Attitude

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ABSTRACT

This chapter revolves around conceptual discussion on religion, culture, and consumer attitude already existing in literature and then how it has evolved and changed over time. This chapter further unfolds the cohesiveness of these three dimensions towards purchase intention of diversified range of products. It explains how business exploits the mind set of consumers by inculcating religious/cultural aspect to its product and promotion and how religious preaching set a boundary in the thought process of consumers for not adopting certain categories of products. Also, the role of religious beliefs in the decline of business or in increasing the market value of products or brands will be discussed with real illustrations. Overall, this chapter is about how religion impacts consumer attitude in adopting and consuming products along with the impact of innovation adoption on diminishing boundaries of religious practices.

INTRODUCTION

Living being draws inspiration and directions from religious literature, teachings, and practices. More than 10,000 distinct religions have been registered worldwide with only four of them being more prominent i.e., Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism. The key learnings from any religion mould and frames up practices, morals, beliefs, worldviews, texts, sanctified places, prophecies, ethics, or organizations and overall represents social-cultural system .It provides framework which makes life understandable and interpretable.

Religion, being a major aspect of culture, has considerable influence as stimulus to people's values, habits, and attitudes, and it greatly influences lifestyle. This in marketing terms represents a direct and

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influential correlation of religion with the consumer purchase habits. If we look at the major function of religion, then it is to provide a source of meaning and purpose for people, based on which consumer practices and adopts choices. This theory being qualitative in nature, its empirical relationship to have firm footings on this concept is yet to be drawn.

The direct correlation between consumer purchase attitude and religion can be analyzed based on consumer buying behavior. Impact of religiosity can be seen on consumer attitude towards purchase of clothes, food, insurance, jewelry, and many other products.

Majority of the world population is religious to some extent and now this religiosity is being used as a bait by many business houses. Based upon the literature, researcher can represent religious followers as pro-religious and non-religious which has huge impact on their purchase decision. As pro-religious being high-dogmatic i.e., closed-minded can be characterized as being more conservative, more traditional, and more dependent which makes them less tolerant, less flexible and more rigid with their purchase choices. In simple words, attitude towards not adopting to new technology and stick to old products and brands.

On the contrary, based upon the demographic's characterization, most of the people fall into the non-religious category i.e., low dogmatic (open-minded) which makes them less conservative, less traditional, and less dependent not being more tolerant, more flexible, and less rigid in their purchase decisions.

Attitude is the learned Predisposition of life, and when majority of population is religious to some extent this underlines the strong correlation between consumer purchase attitude and religious philosophy. Ancient scriptures depict that religion at one time was the only source of education that framed values, ethics, and all aspects of life. The impact of the ancient learning is still felt and sometimes intentionally manipulated by industries to attract a strong consumer base.

This chapter revolves around conceptual discussion on Religion, Culture and Consumer Attitude already existing in literature and then how it has evolved and changed over the time.

From historical perspectives, Religion is considered as a base body which direct the behavior of individuals in all perspectives of life, whether interpersonal dealings or consumptions, but with changing environment this century humans have started molding religion and culture on pretext of their own attitude. For example, religions have become tolerant towards consumption of drinks with less concentration of alcohol in it.

This chapter further unfolds the cohesiveness of these three dimensions towards purchase intention of diversified range of products. It explains how business, exploits mind set of consumers by inculcating religious/cultural aspect to its product and promotion. Secondly how religious preaching set a boundary in thought process of consumers for not adopting certain categories of product. Also, the role of religious beliefs in the decline of business or in increasing the market value of products or brands will be discussed with real illustrations.

Overall, this chapter would make its readers clear about how religion impact consumer attitude in adopting and consuming products along with the impact of innovation adoption on diminishing boundaries of religious practices.

INTRODUCTION

Roots for starting any business are intertwined deeply into the desire to mint money and make profit. Profits can only be earned if the strategies and efforts put in by any organization is well articulated by customer base. Larger the customer, larger be the market share and this would bring high returns to a

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