

Do Demographic Variables Dominate the Awareness of Consumer Rights: An Analytical Purview

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A. Anusuya

Full-Time PhD Research Scholar. PG & Research
Department of Commerce, Rani Anna Government College for Women, Tirunelveli
Manonmaniam Sundaranar University
Abishekapatti, Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu, India

V. Darling Selvi

Head and Assistant Professor
PG & Research Department of Commerce
Rani Anna Government College for Women, Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu, India

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1344-401X>

Abstract

Consumer rights are the rights given to a consumer to protect them from unethical malpractices and unfair trade practices. The main objective of this study was to test the formulated hypotheses. Thus, the hypotheses were formulated that there is no relationship between gender, marital status, age, educational qualification, sources of awareness and level of awareness of consumer rights. For the purpose of this study the primary data from 150 respondents is collected by using convenient sampling method. Chi-square test have been used to test the hypotheses. As a result of chi-square test, except marital status all are significant with level of awareness towards consumer rights. Gender has significant with level of awareness towards consumer rights. Age, Educational qualification and Sources of awareness have highly significant with level of awareness towards consumer rights.

Keywords: Consumer Awareness, Consumer Rights and Consumer Protection

Introduction

Consumers are the largest economic group in any country. They are the central point of all economic activities. The ultimate aim of production, storage and distribution is to ensure consumption of goods and services to the satisfaction of the consumers. Consumer awareness means being conscious of having knowledge about the various consumer protection laws, redress mechanism and the consumer rights which include right to protection of health and safety from goods and services that the consumer buy, right to be informed about the quality, price, potency, purity and standard of good, right to choose the best from a variety of others, right to get representation if there is any grievance or suggestion, and right to seek redress against unfair trade practice or unscrupulous exploitation.

The Consumer Protection Act was enacted in 1986 to protect consumers. But even after 30 years, the Consumer Protection Act still faces some problems and consumer protection is still a question mark in India. Lack of awareness about their rights is a drawback. Even educated people are not fully aware of their rights as consumers and how to protect themselves from exploitation. In case of any defects in the goods, traders and manufacturers blame each other but none of them provide any relief to the consumers. In such a situation, it is necessary to create awareness and education among the public regarding the rights of consumers. They should know about their rights and how to make them meaningful (Natarajan et al., 2018).

Consumer Rights: An Overview

The Consumer Protection Act aims to safeguard the rights of the consumers by establishing authorities for sensible and dynamic administration and settlement of consumers' disputes. The Consumer Protection Act (CPA) states the basic rights of consumers as

- **Right to Safety** - It is the consumer's right to be protected against goods and services which is harmful to wellbeing or life.
- **Right to be Informed** - Consumer Protection Act guarantees the right to be informed about the quality, quantity, purity, standard, and price of goods he consumes from the market. So, the producer must give adequate information about the product, its ingredients, date of manufacture, price, and measures to safeguard in the label and package of the product
- **Right to Choose** - The consumer should be assured of freedom to choose from a variety of products at competitive prices on his free will to satisfy his needs.
- **Right to be Heard** - The consumer has the right to register dissatisfaction with any product and get his complaint heard and take appropriate steps to redress their grievances.
- **Right to Seek Redressal** - It is the right to receive redressal for any defect in goods or unfair trade. If the quality and performance of a product fall short of the seller's claims, the consumer has a right that the product must be repaired, replaced, or withdrawn by the seller.
- **Right to Consumer Education** - It means the right of acquiring knowledge and being a well-informed consumer throughout his life, aware of his rights and the remedies.

Review of Literature

Jayasubramanian and Vaideke (2012), studied the attitude towards consumer awareness and consumer protection measures. Their study revealed no significant correlation between gender and awareness meetings. They also examined the relationship between age and attendance at awareness meetings. The study also found a correlation between age and attendance at awareness conferences. Sundaram and Balaramalingam (2012), Portraying Women's Awareness of Consumer Rights-A Study Refers to Vellore City. The result

shows that female consumers have shown less awareness about consumer rights. Low education and low socioeconomic status are the main reasons for low awareness of consumer rights among female consumers. Goowalla (2013), Researched under a Study on Consumer Protection: Its Awareness among Rural People in Assam: A Case Study with Special Reference to Jorhat District, Assam. 400 consumers were surveyed. 90% of those surveyed felt exploited by a salesperson or others at some point. 75% people were aware of Consumer Protection Act and 25% were not aware. 40% graduate respondents and 30% postgraduates were aware of the products and their quality. Mohan and Suganthi (2017) conducted to know the awareness level of rural consumers about the consumers' rights. The study revealed that there is a significant association between age, educational qualification, marital status and monthly income of rural consumers and their awareness about consumer rights and there is no significant association between gender, type of family, occupation and monthly income of rural consumers and their level of consumer rights awareness.

Hypotheses of the Study

- There is no association between Gender and Level of Awareness towards Consumer Rights
- There is no association between Marital Status and Level of Awareness towards Consumer Rights
- There is no association between Age and Level of Awareness towards Consumer Rights
- There is no association between Educational Qualification and Level of Awareness towards Consumer Rights
- There is no association between Sources of Awareness and Level of Awareness towards Consumer Rights

Research Methodology

The main objective of this study was to test the formulated hypotheses. Thus, the hypotheses were formulated that there is no relationship between gender, marital status, age, educational qualification, sources of awareness and level of awareness of consumer rights. The primary data were collected from the general consumers through a well-structured interview schedule with the help of Google Form. A

sample of 150 respondents were taken on the basis of convenience of the researcher. They were selected from Tirunelveli City. Chi-square analysis is used to test the formulated hypotheses.

Data Analysis and Discussion

H_0 : There is no association between Gender and Level of Awareness towards Consumer Rights

Table 1 Chi-square Test for Association between Gender and Level of Awareness towards Consumer Rights

Gender	Level of Awareness towards Consumer Rights			Total
	Low	Moderate	High	
Female	26 (20.3) [81.2]	74 (57.8) [92.5]	28 (21.9) [73.7]	128 (100.0) [85.3]
Male	6 (27.3) [18.8]	6 (27.3) [7.5]	10 (45.5) [26.3]	22 (100.0) [14.7]
Total	32 (21.3) [100.0]	80 (53.3) [100.0]	38 (25.3) [100.0]	150 (100.0) [100.0]
Pearson Chi-square value		7.830		
d.f		2		
P value		0.020*		
Hypothesis		Rejected		
Cramer's V Coefficient		0.23		
Level of relationship between variables		Weak		

Source: Primary data

- Note: 1. The value within () refers to Row Percentage
- 2. The value within [] refers to Column Percentage
- 3. * Denotes significant at 5% level

Pearson Chi-Square value of the above table is 7.830 at 5% level of significance. P value is less than 0.05, hence null hypothesis is rejected. It concluded that there is association between Gender and Level of awareness towards consumer rights.

Cramer's V Coefficient has been used when number of row is not equal to column. Now the computed value of Cramer's V Coefficient is 0.23 which is above 0.20. This means that there is a weak

relationship between level of awareness towards consumer rights and gender.

H_0 : There is no association between Marital Status and Level of Awareness towards Consumer Rights

Table 2 Chi-square Test for Association between Marital Status and Level of Awareness towards Consumer Rights

Marital Status	Level of Awareness towards Consumer Rights			Total
	Low	Moderate	High	
Single	24 (21.1) [75.0]	64 (56.1) [80.0]	26 (22.8) [68.4]	114 (100.0) [76.0]
Married	8 (22.2) [25.0]	16 (44.4) [20.0]	12 (33.3) [31.6]	36 (100.0) [24.0]
Total	32 (21.3) [100.0]	80 (53.3) [100.0]	38 (25.3) [100.0]	150 (100.0) [100.0]
Pearson Chi-square value		1.916		
d.f		2		
P value		0.384		
Hypothesis		Accepted		

Source: Primary data

- Note: 1. The value within () refers to Row Percentage
- 2. The value within [] refers to Column Percentage

Pearson Chi-Square value of the above table is 1.916 at 5% level of significance. P value is more than 0.05, hence null hypothesis is accepted. It concluded that there is no association between Marital Status and Level of awareness towards consumer rights.

H_0 : There is no association between Age and Level of Awareness towards Consumer Rights

Table 3 Chi-square Test for Association between Age and Level of Awareness towards Consumer Rights

Age	Level of Awareness towards Consumer Rights			Total
	Low	Moderate	High	
Upto 20 years	8 (40.0) [25.0]	9 (45.0) [11.2]	3 (15.0) [7.9]	20 (100.0) [13.3]

21-40 years	9 (11.0) [28.1]	47 (57.3) [58.8]	26 (31.7) [68.4]	82 (100.0%) [54.7]
41-60 years	13 (31.0) [40.6]	23 (54.8) [28.8]	6 (14.3) [15.8]	42 (100.0) [28.0]
Above 60 years	2 (33.3) [6.2]	1 (16.7) [1.2]	3 (50.0) [7.9]	6 (100.0) [4.0]
Total	32 (21.3) [100.0]	80 (53.3) [100.0]	38 (25.3) [100.0]	150 (100.0) [100.0]
Pearson Chi-square value	17.272			
d.f	6			
P value	0.008**			
Hypothesis	Rejected			
Cramer's V Coefficient	0.24			
Level of relationship between variables	Weak			

Source: Primary data

Note: 1. The value within () refers to Row Percentage

2. The value within [] refers to Column Percentage
3. ** Denotes significant at 1% level

Pearson Chi-Square value of the above table is 17.272 at 1% level of significance. P value is less than 0.01, hence null hypothesis is rejected. It concluded that there is association between Age of the respondents and Level of awareness towards consumer rights.

Cramer's V Coefficient has been used when number of row is not equal to column. Now the computed value of Cramer's V Coefficient is 0.24 which is above 0.20. This means that there is a weak relationship between level of awareness towards consumer rights and age of the respondents.

H₀: There is no association between Educational Qualification and Level of Awareness towards Consumer Rights

Table 4 Chi-square Test for Association between Educational Qualification and Level of Awareness towards Consumer Rights

Educational Qualification	Level of Awareness towards Consumer Rights			Total
	Low	Moderate	High	
Upto SSLC	7 (35.0) [21.9]	9 (45.0) [11.2]	4 (20.0) [10.5]	20 (100.0) [13.3]
Higher secondary	1 (12.5) [3.1]	6 (75.0) [7.5]	1 (12.5) [2.6]	8 (100.0) [5.3]
Under graduate	9 (14.8) [28.1]	43 (70.5) [53.8]	9 (14.8) [23.7]	61 (100.0) [40.7]
Post graduate	15 (24.6) [46.9]	22 (36.1) [27.5]	24 (39.3) [63.2]	61 (100.0) [40.7]
Total	32 (21.3) [100.0]	80 (53.3) [100.0]	38 (25.3) [100.0]	150 (100.0) [100.0]
Pearson Chi-square value	19.493			
d.f	6			
P value	0.003**			
Hypothesis	Rejected			
Cramer's V Coefficient	0.26			
Level of relationship between variables\	Weak			

Source: Primary data

Note: 1. The value within () refers to Row Percentage

2. The value within [] refers to Column Percentage
3. ** Denotes significant at 1% level

Pearson Chi-Square value of the above table is 19.493 at 1% level of significance. P value is less than 0.01, hence null hypothesis is rejected. It concluded that there is association between Educational qualification of the respondents and Level of awareness towards consumer rights.

Cramer's V Coefficient has been used when number of row is not equal to column. Now the computed value of Cramer's V Coefficient is 0.26 which is above 0.20. This means that there is a weak relationship between level of awareness towards consumer rights and educational qualification of the respondents.

H₀: There is no association between Sources of Awareness and Level of Awareness towards Consumer Rights

Pearson Chi-Square value of the above table is 15.664 at 1% level of significance. P value is less than 0.01, hence null hypothesis is rejected. It concluded that there is association between Sources of awareness and Level of awareness towards consumer rights.

Contingency Coefficient has been used when number of row is equal to column. The upper limit value is 0.471. Now the computed value of Contingency Coefficient is 0.307 which is approximately 65 percent (0.307/0.471) of the upper limit. This means that there is a moderate relationship between level of awareness towards consumer rights and sources of awareness.

Total	32 (21.3) [100.0]	80 (53.3) [100.0]	38 (25.3) [100.0]	150 (100.0) [100.0]
Pearson Chi-square value	15.664			
d.f	4			
P value	0.004**			
Hypothesis	Rejected			
Contingency Coefficient	0.307			
Level of relationship between variables	Moderate			

Source: Primary data

Note: 1. The value within () refers to Row Percentage

2. The value within [] refers to Column Percentage

3. ** Denotes significant at 1% level

Table 5 Chi-square Test for Association between Sources of Awareness and Level of Awareness towards Consumer Rights

Sources of awareness	Level of Awareness towards Consumer Rights			Total
	Low	Moderate	High	
Media	16 (28.6) [50.0]	28 (50.0) [35.0]	12 (21.4) [31.6]	56 (100.0) [37.3]
Voluntary consumer organization	1 (12.5) [3.1]	26 (78.8) [32.5]	3 (9.1) [7.9]	33 (100.0) [22.0]
General public	12 (19.7) [37.5]	26 (42.6) [32.5]	23 (37.7) [60.5]	61 (100.0) [40.7]

From among the above variables, Age, Educational Qualification and Sources of Awareness have highly significant at 1% level with level of awareness towards consumer rights. Gender has 5% level of significance with level of awareness towards consumer rights. Marital Status is not significant with level of awareness towards consumer rights. Consumer Awareness towards Consumer Rights have weakly relationship with Gender, Age and Educational Qualification. Consumer Awareness towards Consumer Rights has moderately relationship with Sources of Awareness.

Table 6 Consolidated Analysis for Level of Awareness towards Consumer Rights

S.No	Variables	P value	Conclusion	Level of Significance	Interpretation	Relationship
1	Gender	0.020	Rejected	0.05	Significant	Weak
2	Marital Status	0.384	Accept	NS	Not Significant	-
3	Age	0.008	Rejected	0.01	Highly Significant	Weak
4	Educational Qualification	0.003	Rejected	0.01	Highly Significant	Weak
5	Sources of Awareness	0.004	Rejected	0.01	Highly Significant	Moderate

Conclusion

It was concluded from the above analysis age, educational qualification and sources of awareness have highly significant (1% level) with the level of awareness towards consumer rights. Gender has significant (5% level) with the level of awareness towards consumer rights. Marital Status has not significant with the level of awareness towards

consumer rights. Hence, level of awareness towards consumer rights is significantly associated with gender, age, educational qualification and sources of awareness. As per Cramer’s V Coefficient, level of awareness towards consumer rights have weakly relationship with gender, age and educational qualification. As per Contingency Coefficient, there is a moderate relationship between level of awareness

towards consumer rights and sources of awareness. Level of awareness towards consumer rights is not significantly associated with marital status of the respondents.

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Author Details

A. Anusuya, Full-Time PhD Research Scholar. PG & Research, Department of Commerce. Rani Anna Government College for Women, Tirunelveli, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Abishekapatti. Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu, India, **Email ID:** anusuyaanumantha@gmail.com

V. Darling Selvi, Head and Assistant Professor of Commerce, PG & Research Department of Commerce, Rani Anna Government College for Women. Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu, India, **Email ID:** prof.darling selvi@gmail.com