

COUPLES DECISION INVOLVEMENT

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This paper identifies variables that influence husbands, wives, or couples involvement in appliance purchase decisions. Analyses indicates significant differences between husbands, wives, and couples involvement when collecting information, deciding price range, deciding features, and making the final choice.

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

In the past, personal attributes such as higher income, more education, and employment have been held primarily by husbands. These personal attributes influence marital power in decision making. Today, a greater percentage of married women are employed outside the home and are better educated. Limited research has been conducted on the variables that influence married couples decision involvement when making product purchase decisions. The purpose of the study was to identify variables that relate to couples decision involvement when purchasing appliances.

METHODS

A quota sample of names and addresses of recent appliance purchasers was obtained from cooperating retailers. Following one pilot test, the survey, cover letter, questionnaire, and stamped return envelope were sent to 817 appliance purchasers. Data were collected using Dillman procedure for mailed survey research. The response rate was 59%. However, this sample was further reduced because the analyses were limited to married respondents only. The sample consisted of 260 cases.

ANALYSES

Types of analyses used were analysis of variance and Krusal-Wallis. One-way analysis of variance was used to test for significant differences in decision making involvement and demographic variables. LSD, a multiple comparison test, was used to determine which means were significantly different from each other. A Krusal-Wallis test was used for one-way analysis of variances that violated tests for homogeneity of variance. The probability level accepted as significant was at the .05 level. The four decision involvement questions were categorized into: husband alone, wife alone, and both husband and wife.

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FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

For the who collected information variable, when the wife's mean family income was higher, she collected information alone. Perhaps in higher income families, the wives have more time to collect information. When the husband's and wife's mean family income was lower, the couple collected information together. Generally in lower income families, every penny counts, therefore husbands and wives may share in activities that result in financial decisions. When the wife's mean number of appliances purchased in a lifetime was higher, she collected information alone. Perhaps this finding indicates that the more experience the wife has, the more likely she is to collect information alone.

For the who decided price range variable, when the husband's mean number of adults living in the household was higher, he decided price range alone. Perhaps when there are more adults living in the household, there is greater strain on resources and greater need for husbands to make financial decisions alone.

For the who decided features variable, when the wife's mean appliance purchase price was higher, she decided features alone. When the husband's mean appliance purchase was lower, he decided features alone. Perhaps this has to do with decision importance. The wife may be the person using the appliance, therefore specific features might be more important to her.

For the who made the final choice variable, when both the husband's and wife's mean appliance purchase price was higher, they made the final choice together. When the husband's mean appliance purchase price was lower, he made the final choice alone. It seems that the higher the purchase price, the more couple involvement in the final choice. This may have something to do with reducing the risk of making a poor purchase decision.

CONCLUSIONS

In summary, wives were more involved when their mean income was higher, had more experience, had a lower number of adults living in the household, and the purchase price was higher. Husbands were more involved when the purchase price was lower and there were more adults living in the household. Couples were more involved when the mean income was lower and the mean appliance purchased was lower.