

# **Factors that influence consumer behavior in the purchase of durable household products**

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## **Abstract**

Manufacturing organizations strive to be the industry leaders with regard to the products and services they offer. In order for these organizations to become industry leaders, they should master the requirements of their customers. The purpose of this study was to identify the major factors which affect consumer buying behavior of durable household products in the Kempton Park region, which is located in the East-land of Johannesburg, South Africa. The findings of the study will provide the manufacturer of durable household products with an indication of influencing factors when designing and developing their products. The influencing factors that were identified in this study include product quality, products features, cost of the product, brand reputation, advertisement and previous experience. Questionnaires were used as a method for data collection and a non-random sample of 60 respondents were considered. This study was utilized as an opportunity to determine whether gender had an impact on purchasing behavior. Hypothesis testing was used as a method of analysis, wherein it was found that product quality, product features and cost price are the most common determinants of consumer buying behavior. The findings further indicated that gender has no significant effect on their buying behavior. Manufacturers could utilize the outcomes of this study and translate them into better, improved products in order to stay competitive.

## **Keywords**

Consumer behavior, durable products, decision -making, purchasing behavior

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Consumer behavior**

Consumer behavior is the practice used when individuals, groups, or organizations select, use, or dispose of the product, service, ideas or experience to fulfil their needs and requirements (Solomon, 1993). Organizations study consumer behavior to obtain information on how customers make decisions and choose their products. Organizations should understand consumer behavior in order to attain industrial success. The relationship between the consumer behavior and marketing strategy is stressed because successful marketing strategy is dependent on the managers' understanding on consumers' behavior (Furajji et al, 2012 and Haghshenas et al, 2013). The focus of the marketing department is to understand the needs and demands of the consumer and translate those needs into superior quality products. The consumers buying decision serves as an indication of how well the organizations' marketing suits the market demand. Therefore marketing starts and end with consumers. In this study, the consumer plays three distinctive roles such as the user, payer and buyer. Armstrong (2000) has emphasized the difficulties experienced in predicting consumer behavior. Consumers are exposed to a diversity of durable products, which varies in price, quality, features, appearance and size (Gizaw, 2014).

### **1.2 Factors influencing buying decision.**

The factors known to influence consumers buying decision includes cultural factors, social factors, personal and psychological factors and marketing mix.

### **1.2.1 Cultural factors**

Cultural factors include consumers' culture, sub-culture and social class. Consumers' culture refers to a set of basic values, wants and behavior learned by a member of society from the family and other important institutions. Each culture contains a smaller sub-cultures. Sub-cultures include nationalities, regions, racial groups and geographic regions. Social class refers to society's relatively permanent and ordered divisions, members sharing similar values, interests and behaviors. Social class can be determined by a combination of education, income, occupation, wealth, etc.

### **1.2.2 Social factors**

The sub-factors for social factor are family, roles and status, and age and lifecycle stage. Family members have a strong impact on consumers' behavior. Marketers are interested in the roles and influences of the wife, husband and children. Age and life cycle stage affects buyers' behavior because peoples' purchasing style changes with times (Furajji, 2012).

### **1.2.3 Personal factors**

Personal factors include occupation, economic situation and motivation. A motivated person is ready to act. The occupation of a person and economic situation have an effect on the goods and services purchased.

### **1.2.4 Psychological factors**

Psychological factors include perception, leaning and the brand. Perception is the process by which consumers selects, organize and interpret information to form a meaningful picture of the world. Three categories of consumers' perceptions are perceived price, perceived quality, perceived value and perceived risk.

### **1.2.5 Perceived price (cost)**

The amount of money a consumer sacrifices to attain the product is called price (Zeithaml, 1988). Price has two categories which are perceive price and objective price. Perceive price is an individual belief of how much an item cost based on its quality while objective price is the actual price of the item. Most of the time consumers will have a different perspective on the price of an item. There are consumer who considers price as an indication of quality. Therefore to them, low price is associated with low quality and high price is associated with high quality.

### **1.2.6 Perceived quality**

According to Zeithaml (1988) Quality is the evaluation of excellence and superiority of services or products. The service quality is not simply measured compared to product quality. The two categories of quality are objective of quality and perception of quality. In the objective of quality, product is evaluated on basis of physical characteristics and in perception of quality subjective notation product is considered and judgment on basis of some features.

### **1.2.7 Perceived value**

Value differs from consumer to consumer, some consumers consider value as quality product at a reasonable price while some considers value as obtaining the product that suits its intended use.

### **1.2.8 Perceived risk**

American Marketing Association defines a brand as a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them intended to signify the goods or services of one supplier or group of suppliers and to differentiate them from those of rivals. Some consumers will only buy a specific brand of a product because is known to be the best.

## **1.3 Research Problem**

Retail stores are filled with the same products of different brands, prices, features, quality and packaging and as a result, some brands do not get sold. Retail manufacturers require their products to be recognized and purchased, in order to sustain their businesses and keep providing jobs. When the organization becomes liquidated, it has an effect on the economy of the country. Retailers need to determine what are the factors affecting consumers' buying decision in order to develop an effective and efficient marketing strategy. Therefore the objective in section 1.4 have been developed.

#### **1.4. Objective of the study**

- a) To analyze the consumer buying behavior of frequently purchased durable products.
- b) To determine the main factor/s that contributes to consumers' buying behavior when purchasing durable products.

## **2. Literature review**

A rational number of studies were conducted in order to analyze the customer behavior and identify the major factors influencing their buying decision. Most studies examined consumer behavior in association with demographic and socio economic characteristics. Though behavioral characteristic and attitude are also emphasized as significant determinates than socio-economic and demographic characteristic (Baltas, 1997). Consumer choice or intentions can be classified by distinguishing between those that are coherent and those that are purely emotional such as dependability, low-cost, durability and etc. Emotional motives includes buying out of pride in personal appearance or fear of accident (Garga. 2016).

Nguyen and Gizaw conducted a study in 2014, to determine factors which influence consumers' purchasing decisions of private label food products. In their study, the authors did not specify their sampling strategy, sample size and the population of their sample. In a situation where the population size is not determined, it is always advisable for the researcher to obtain a greater sample size for more accuracy and precision. Nguyen and Gizaw used surveys and interviews as their data collection method and got approximately 150 responses from their survey.

After the analysis was conducted, it was found that consumers buy products based on their lower prices compared to other similar brands. Although some of the target groups thought price is not the most important factor in making a decision to buy and other aspects such as taste, /package and size ingredient of the products were considered. It was also discovered that most of the consumers buy the products they think the quality is good. Product quality contributes the most in their buying decision. Few consumers wanted a bit of both, which in their eyes is considered as value for money. In this case, perceived value was their most determinant factor which leads to a conclusion that psychological factors are the major factors influencing consumer buying decision in this case.

Johar (2015) undertook a study entitled "The consumer decision making behavior to purchase durable goods". The objective of the research was to study female's purchasing behavior and to know the role of female in purchase decision making process. In his study, 125 respondents from LONI in Ghaziabad were considered. His study revealed that 71% of the respondents considered quality as their most inducing factor in their buying decision. It was also observed that the respondents were aged between 18-30years and they have attained graduation status. On the 71% of the respondents who considered quality as their major factor in their buying decision, majority were married females. It was also found that 10% of the respondents considered convenience as their inducing factor in their buying decision, 7% considered brand, 6% focuses on service, and 4% are influenced by the cost. This study revealed that more consumer want the best quality in durable goods compared to the cost price.

Thangasamy and Pakitar (2014) indicates that for marketers to understand how buying decisions are made by the consumer, they should first identify the person who makes the buying decision. Marketer should also be constantly watchful on what types of types of buying decisions are made. The consumers' decision to make a purchase on soap, a television, a new vehicle or a cricket bat will not be the same. The authors conducted a study on factors influencing consumer buying behavior in 2014. The study was not focused on any industry or sector but on durable products. The population of the research included only three out of eight districts of Nagaland and the sample strategy was random to give every individual a chance to take part in the survey. After a careful analysis of the survey, it was determined that psychological factors such as perceived quality and perceived value and marketing mix were predominantly the major factors influencing the consumers' decision to buy. These was based on durable goods, such as televisions fridge, motor vehicle and etc. Kotler and Armstrong (2007) conducted a research to study factors affecting consumer buying behavior. Amongst all the factors, physical factors, social factors, cultural factors and personal factors were found to be the major factors affecting consumer buying behavior. Personal factors such as occupation, economic situation and motivation becomes the common factor as it's not ideal for consumers to spend more than what they have.

Chamhuri and Batt (2007) also carried out a research aiming at discovering the key factors influencing the consumers' choice of retail stores for fresh meat. In this study, people who participated made an indication that their decision to buy from either traditional or modern retail was influenced by eight themes. The eight themes identified are convenience, having a good relationship with the retailer, good quality meat, competitive price, freshness, assurance, product varieties and shopping environment (Chamhuri and Batt, 2007).

The study was conducted on the focus groups and four groups were interviewed in a period of two months (October – November 2007). In their findings it was discovered that all the eight themes plays a significant role in the consumers' decision to buy. Although perceived price and perceived quality are factors which had more impact in making a buying decision compared to others. A research of the similar nature was done by Pride and Ferrel (2000) to determine the factors affecting consumer buying behavior. In their findings, social factors, physical factors and attitudinal factors were found to be the major determinants in the consumers buying behavior. The table below is the summarized findings of various author on the factor affecting consumer behavior and their buying decisions.

Table 1. Literature review on consumer behavior and buying decision

Author(s)	Year of Publication	Key factors
Nguyen and Ayolao Gizaw	2014	Psychological factor (perceived price and perceived quality)
Kotler and Armstrong	2007	physical factors, social factors, cultural factors and personal factors
Pride and Ferrel	2000	social factors, physical factors and attitudinal factors
Thangasamy and Pakitar	2014	psychological factors and marketing mix
Chamhuri and Batt	2007	Perceived price and perceived quality
Furaji, Latuszyriska and Wawrzyniak	2012	social factors, physical factors and marketing mix
Seema Johar	2015	Perceived quality, convenience and brand.
K. Veerakumar.	2017	Cost price, Brand preference and brand image
E Garga	2016	Perceived quality, Features and durability

### 3. Research Design and Methods

#### 3.1 Research design

Qualitative research is an exploratory research. It is used to gain an understanding of the underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations. It also provides insights into the problem or helps to develop ideas or hypothesis for potential quantitative research. These methods aim to provide answer to questions about the 'what', 'how' or 'why' of a phenomenon rather than 'how many' or 'how much', which are answered by quantitative methods. The objective of this research is to find out "what" are the factors influencing consumer buying behavior and for that nature, qualitative method was chosen. Quantitative method was utilized to analyze the hypothesis associated with the factors influencing consumer buying behavior and the impact on purchasing durable products.

#### 3.2 Population and Sampling

A non- probability (non-random) sampling was applied in this study. Non-probability sampling is used when demonstrating that certain traits occurs in the population and it's a type of sampling where individuals from a population do not have equal chances of being selected to participate. It can also be utilized when the researcher aims to do qualitative, exploratory or pilot study.

The survey was conducted in Kempton Park which is located in the east-rand of Johannesburg. According to Brand South Africa (2017), Kempton Park has a population of 171575 individuals living in 53777 households. The survey was conducted in the retail stores with a sample size of 60 respondents. The survey was conducted over four days towards the end of the month and in the beginning of the months as these have been identified as peak shopping periods.

#### 3.3 Data collection

A research paradigm chosen for this study is critical paradigm as the consumer behavior and purchasing decision can be socially influenced. Reality and knowledge are socially, culturally, psychologically constructed and

influenced by relations within the society. Therefore data collection technique that was used is administering written questionnaire because:-

- It is a less expensive way of data collection.
- It permits anonymity and may results in more honest respondents.
- It does not require research assistant and
- It eliminates bias due to phrasing questions differently with different respondents.

However this type of data collection cannot be used on illiterate respondents. Interviews were conducted using the questionnaire as a guideline in order to assist the illiterate respondents. Due to the nature of the study and unavailability of secondary data, only primary data will be used to achieve the research objectives stated in section 1.4 of this study. These method of data collection provides consistency in the questions asked. In the questionnaires, respondents were asked on how inducing factors such as better price, good quality, previous experience, reputation of the retailer, retailers’ recommendation and advertisement affects their buying decision.

### 3.5 Descriptive statistical analysis

Furaji, Latuszyriska and Wawrzyniak (2012) applied the regression method using SPSS for data analysis of factors influencing consumer behavior in the electrical appliance industry. However, a simple percentage and rating method was used in this study whereby a variable with high percentage was rated I and variable with low percentage rated VI. This tools for analysis were applied by both Veerakumar and Johar who conducted a similar study. F-test was conducted to prove which of the above hypothesis is correct.

Table 2. Ranking analysis for inducing factors on durable goods.

Factors influencing consumer behavior	Durable products							
	Television	Rank	Refrigerator	Rank	Stove	Rank	Furniture	Rank
Cost Price	18,33	III	31,67	I	18,33	III	25,00	II
Quality	26,67	II	30,00	II	30,00	I	31,67	I
Previous Experience	13,33	IV	13,33	IV	23,33	II	15,00	IV
Reputation of the brand	3,33	VI	3,33	VI	6,67	V	3,33	VI
Features	31,67	I	15,00	III	15,00	IV	15,00	III
Advertisement	6,67	V	6,67	V	6,67	VI	10,00	V

In table 2, four durable products were selected, as these were identified as frequently purchased products at the retail stores. There are six factors which influence consumer behaviour and table 2 depicts the ranking of the factors against each durable product. The following figures discusses the descriptive analysis for each durable product.

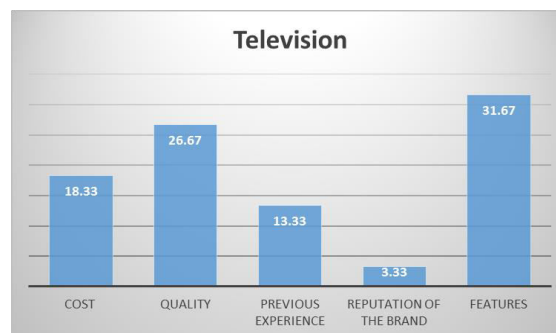


Figure 1. Factors influencing consumer buying behavior of a Television

In Figure 1, the purchase of a television was influenced by features, this indicates that consumer buying behavior is associated with the features which the television provides such as clarity of the picture, sound clarity, size of the screen, high definition, etc.

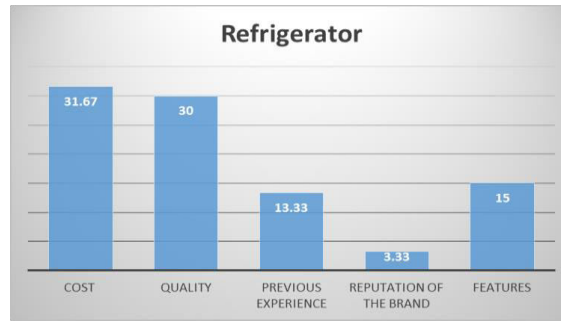


Figure 2. Factors influencing consumer buying behavior of a Refrigerator

In Figure 2, the purchase of a refrigerator was influenced by the cost of the product, this indicates that consumer buying behavior is associated with cost. Refrigerators are deemed highly expensive and provide the same features and functions, therefore purchasing decisions are based on the cost and affordability of the product.



Figure 3. Factors influencing consumer buying behavior of a Stove

In Figure 3, the purchase of a stove was influenced by the quality of the product, this indicates that consumer buying behavior is associated with quality. Stoves are considered as robust and heavy duty and requires quality which are highly durable. Therefore, high quality is an influencing factor.



Figure 4. Factors influencing consumer buying behavior of Furniture

In Figure 4, the purchase of furniture was influenced by the quality of the product, this indicates that consumer buying behavior is associated with quality. Quality is considered a contributing factor as furniture should last a very long time.

### 3.5.1 Results and Discussion

Table 3. Demographic Profile

Demographic Variable	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	28	46.67
Female	32	53.33
<b>Age</b>		
17 – 27	22	36.67
28 – 45	22	36.67
Above 45	16	26.67
<b>Relationship Status</b>		
Married	22	36.67
Single	26	43.33
Co-habitation	12	20
<b>Occupation</b>		
Student	6	10
Unemployed	11	18.33
Employed	42	70
Entrepreneur	1	1.67
<b>Monthly Income</b>		
Less than R10k	11	18.33
R10k – R20k	11	18.33
R20k – R30k	12	20
More than R30k	9	15
Can't Disclose	17	28.33

Table 2 shows that most of the respondents are female (53%) which agrees with South African demographics. According to census 2011, South Africa has a population of 56 million people in which 51.3% are females. It was also found that most of the respondents were aged between 17 – 45 years. This age group covers a large portion of the economically active population which is between 15 and 65 years. Majority of the respondents were employed and unmarried individual with a percentage of 70% and 43.33% respectively. 17 out of 60 respondents couldn't disclose their monthly income for confidentiality purposes. However the questionnaire was designed in a manner that respondent don't provide the exact figure of their monthly income but a range that it falls within.

Table 4. Influential aspects on consumer preference.

Influential aspects	Percentage (%)
Family, neighbors, friends	13,33
Ads packages, sales people	21,67
Handling, testing or examining the product	38,33
Internet, consumer ratings, blogs	26,67

The above table indicates that most consumer rather examine or test the product before making any purchases than taking advise from family, neighbors and friends. The most influential aspect after examining the product is internet, consumer ratings and blogs. Thus manufacturers should ensure full customer satisfaction all times to avoid negative word of mouth from unhappy customers. When complaints arises, they should be resolved effectively to keep the customers hap

### 3.5.3 Hypothesis testing

#### a. Television

H<sub>0</sub>: Female purchasing decisions does not differs from male purchasing decision for television.

H<sub>1</sub>: Female purchasing decisions differs from male purchasing decision for television.

Table 5. Number of respondents on various inducing factors for television purchase.

ANOVA						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Gender	1,333333	1	1,333333333	0,377358	0,565892909	6,607891
Television	111	5	22,2	6,283019	0,032519662	5,050329
Error	17,66667	5	3,533333333			
Total	130	11				

F-value for gender (rows) is 0.377 which is less 6.60 (f-crit). Therefore the null hypothesis is not rejected, Female purchasing decisions does not differs from male purchasing decision for television at 95% confidence level.

### b. Refrigerator

H<sub>0</sub>: Female purchasing decisions does not differs from male purchasing decision for refrigerator.

H<sub>1</sub>: Female purchasing decisions differs from male purchasing decision for refrigerator.

Table 6. Number of respondents on various inducing factors for refrigerator purchase.

ANOVA						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Gender	1,333333333	1	1,333333	1,176471	0,327582	6,607891
Refrigerator	125	5	25	22,05882	0,00203	5,050329
Error	5,666666667	5	1,133333			
Total	132	11				

F-value 1.33<6.60. Therefore the null hypothesis is not rejected. Female purchasing decisions does not differs from male purchasing decision for refrigerator at 5% level of significance.

### c. Stove

H<sub>0</sub>: Female purchasing decisions does not differs from male purchasing decision for stove.

H<sub>1</sub>: Female purchasing decisions differs from male purchasing decision for stove.

Table 7. Number of respondents on various inducing factors for stove purchase.

ANOVA						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Gender	1,333333333	1	1,333333	0,425532	0,542985	6,607891
Stove	77	5	15,4	4,914894	0,05267	5,050329
Error	15,66666667	5	3,133333			
Total	94	11				

F-value 0.43<6.60. Therefore we don't reject the null hypothesis. There's no difference in purchase decisions due to gender for refrigerator at 5% level of significance.

### d. Furniture

H<sub>0</sub>: Female purchasing decisions does not differs from male purchasing decision for furniture

H<sub>1</sub>: Female purchasing decisions differs from male purchasing decision for furniture.



Table 8. Number of respondents on various inducing factors for furniture purchase.

ANOVA						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Gender	1,333333333	1	1,333333	0,625	0,465023	6,607891
Furniture	94	5	18,8	8,8125	0,016084	5,050329
Error	10,66666667	5	2,133333			
Total	106	11				

F-value  $0.63 < 6.60$ . Therefore we don't reject the null hypothesis. There's no difference in purchase decisions due to gender for house hold furniture at 5% level of significance.

### 3.5.4 Correlation analysis

Correlation is a statistical measure that indicates the extent to which two or more variables fluctuate together. Strength of relationship between +/- 0.7 to 1.0 indicates strong, +/- 0.3 to 0.69 indicates moderate and +/- 0.0 to 0.29 indicates weak to none. A positive correlation indicates the extent to which those variables increase or decrease in parallel; a negative correlation indicates the extent to which one variable increases as the other decreases. R Square is the coefficient of determination. It expresses the proportion of variation in  $y$  which is explained by variation in  $x$ .

Table 9. Correlation matrix

Factors influencing consumer buying behavior	Durable products				
	Television	Refrigerator	Stove	Furniture	Overall analysis
Cost	$r = 0.774$ $p = *0.000$	$r = 0.765$ $p = *0.000$	$r = 0.778$ $p = *0.000$	$r = 0.767$ $p = *0.000$	$r = 0.775$
Quality	$r = 0.723$ $p = *0.000$	$r = 0.690$ $p = *0.000$	$r = 0.765$ $p = *0.000$	$r = 0.798$ $p = *0.000$	$r = 0.789$
Previous experience	$r = 0.772$ $p = *0.000$	$r = 0.628$ $p = *0.000$	$r = 0.716$ $p = *0.000$	$r = 0.702$ $p = *0.000$	$r = 0.721$
Reputation of the brand	$r = 0.609$ $p = *0.000$	$r = 0.702$ $p = *0.000$	$r = 0.753$ $p = *0.000$	$r = 0.771$ $p = *0.000$	$r = 0.723$
Features	$r = 0.701$ $p = *0.000$	$r = 0.773$ $p = *0.000$	$r = 0.714$ $p = *0.000$	$r = 0.727$ $p = *0.000$	$r = 0.765$
Advertisement	$r = 0.724$ $p = *0.000$	$r = 0.700$ $p = *0.000$	$r = 0.770$ $p = *0.000$	$r = 0.701$ $p = *0.000$	$r = 0.763$

\*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (1-tailed)

Table 9 shows that there is a significantly strong relationship between:

- Cost and Durable products ( $r = 0.775$ ,  $p = 0.000$ )
- Quality and Durable products ( $r = 0.789$ ,  $p = 0.000$ )
- Previous experience and Durable products ( $r = 0.721$ ,  $p = 0.000$ )
- Reputation of the brand and Durable products ( $r = 0.73$ ,  $p = 0.000$ )
- Features and Durable products ( $r = 0.765$ ,  $p = 0.000$ )
- Advertisement and Durable products ( $r = 0.763$ ,  $p = 0.000$ )

### 3.5.5 Research framework

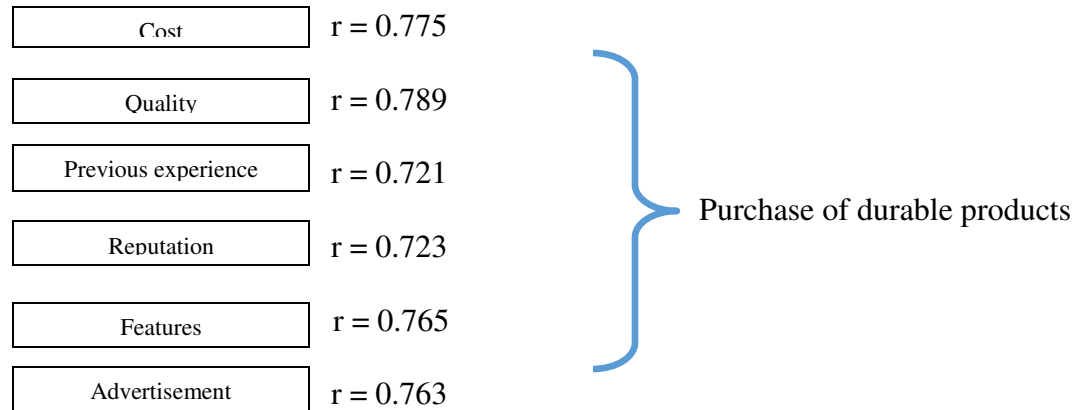


Figure 5 – Correlation between factors influencing consumer behavior and durable products

## 4. Conclusion and Recommendation

This study has proven that consumer preferences changes with a variety durable goods. The most important factors were founds to be features in television purchases, price in refrigerator purchases, quality in stove and other furniture purchases. For television purchases, 32% of the respondents considered features as their most inducing factor, 27% of the respondents want something that is durable and reliable (quality).

There's a bit of balance between cost price and quality as the considered factors when purchasing refrigerator. 32% of the respondents considered cost price whereas 30% considered quality. This makes both the variables equally important in this case. When making purchase on stove, 30% of the consumers considers quality as their most important factor. Consumers believe stove should always be in a functional state and last for longer period no matter the cost price.

For other household furniture such as lounge suits, bedroom suits, etc. quality plays an important role in the eyes of radurability and reliability of the item. Quality is not only limited to durability and reliability, but also after sales service such as guarantee and warranty forms part of it. Features, cost price and quality were found to be the most dominating factor that influence the consumer buying decision. Therefore manufactures should strongly consider these three elements in order to sustain their business, increase market share and gain market superiority. Therefore consumer buying decision of durable goods is influenced by product quality, features, and cost price .The findings of this study have also statistically proven that female purchase decisions does not significantly differ from those of male at 95% confidence level. Therefore manufacturers don't have to consider gender when designing their products.

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## **Biographies**

**Nita Sukdeo** is currently a full time senior lecturer in the field of Quality and Operations Management, and the BTech Quality programme leader in the Department of Quality and Operations Management, at the University of Johannesburg, Gauteng, South Africa. She obtained a Masters in Quality from the Durban University of Technology and a PhD in Engineering Management from the University of Johannesburg. She is an upcoming young researcher in the field of total quality management and operations management. Her field of expertise also include quantitative analysis, quality management systems, quality auditing and risk assessment. She is a qualified Lead Auditor, proficient in ISO standards and certification. She is one of the directors of the Society for Operations Management in Africa (SOMA), as well as a senior member of the South African Society for Quality (SASQ).

**Thabiso Mashao** is currently working as a quality control technician for a surfactants manufacturing organization based in the east of Johannesburg. He's also involved in other quality management aspects such as internal audits, analytical method validation and root cause analysis. He attained his National Diploma in Analytical Chemistry with Tshwane University of Technology and has recently completed his Bachelor of Technology degree in Quality with University of Johannesburg. Amongst the courses he completed includes Understanding and Implementation of ISO9001 facilitated by South African Bureau of Standards, Root cause analysis (Bureau Veritus) and Analytical Method Validation (Allan Frazer and Associates).