

Mind Mapping of Consumers : A Study to Explore the Role of Religion

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Abstract

This paper aimed to explore the religious practices adopted by Hindu consumers and reveal the significant decisions affected by following these practices. With culture, decisions differ, so an effort was made to understand why these religious practices were adopted. It was empirical research for which an open-ended semi-structured questionnaire was used. Hindu consumers filled out the questionnaire in a face-to-face interaction. Responses from 30 individuals were collected in descriptive form. NVivo 12 software was used to analyze the data. The word cloud and themes indicated that many religious practices were followed during festivals and other religious events. Consumers follow religious practices at festivals, weekdays, and other events. We observed that major decisions affected by adopting these religious practices were consumption, purchasing, services, and color preference. Consumers' religious beliefs influenced all decisions. They followed religious practices due to their belief in God, religion, family teachings, myths, superstitions, health concerns, and family pressure. This study could be generalized by quantifying it in future research. The study also provided insights to companies about the significant role of religious practices in consumer decision-making. Companies can understand the religious practices followed and create a better consumer experience. The study was limited to Indian Hindu consumers, so an analysis of other religions is needed. The study is unique, providing a new perspective on understanding Hindu consumers.

Keywords : consumer decision-making, religious practices, Hindu, consumption, purchasing, services, color indication

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Culture is such a significant part of human life that it becomes important to understand every aspect affecting consumer psychology. One such major aspect of culture is religion, the spine behind many thoughts. Religiosity has been conceptualized as the degree to which individuals of a particular religion follow the beliefs of that specific religion and to what extent their attitude, beliefs, views, and consumption are affected by it (Delener, 1990; Jamal, 2003; Shyan Fam et al., 2004). Religion guides certain religious practices that influence consumer decision-making, causing them to reconsider whether or not to purchase, consume, and avail services from the market. Religious practices are a component of religion, and religion shapes culture. Culture means the shared values learned from one generation to another and then passed on to the successors (Deresky, 2003). The market gets segmented into many parts based on several criteria, among which culture is the most prominent and is further divided into subcultures. Shah Alam et al. (2011) subdivided culture into four parts: religious groups, geographical regions, nationality groups, and racial groups, among which religion is the root factor affecting consumer behavior.

Religion affects shopping, purchasing, and consumption behavior. It even plays a role in the buyer-seller dyad

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(Essoo & Dibb, 2004; Iqbal & Nisha, 2016; Mohd Suki & Mohd Suki, 2015; Swimberghe et al., 2011). Religion has the power to affect ethical behavior in an organization and consumers, too (Arli, 2017; Weaver & Agle, 2002). Religion may not put certain obligations on the consumers but generally sets various beliefs, values, and practice requirements (Worthington et al., 2003). Highly religious consumers analyze the world based on their religious values. They are stability-seeking consumers and have the sense to maintain stability during uncertain situations (Minton & Cabano, 2021). In this globalized world where the concept of “no walls” is trending, the walls of religious practices of every religion create different market opportunities for companies and direct them to understand religiously-affected consumer behavior. This highlights the need to explore the religious practices followed by Hindu consumers.

Consumers perform several ritualistic activities at work and home. These religious practices are the drivers for the interpretation of consumer behavior. They are followed widely throughout India and affect the Indian market, too. But the existing literature does not focus on religious practices followed so widely. The area is so understudied that the need to explore practices has been raised. According to Pillania (2021), it is important to understand the Indian context of spirituality before studying marketing and spirituality. Even after such a significant impact, the literature on this topic is starving for research (Rook, 1985). Many companies understand the importance of religion in consumer's life and use it as a tool in marketing communication (Sarofim & Cabano, 2018). Religion comprises a core part known as religious practices, which will be explored in this study. Religious practices are the cluster of traditions, customs, and rituals that consumers follow. This study will explore consumers' religious prospects behind adopting religious practices and whether these affect the market. Consumer religiosity can give insight into consumers' mental makeup and religious practices. Religion is one factor that seems to be immortal in every person's life, as every individual directly or indirectly follows some religion. The existence of religion for the foreseeable future makes this research prominent and needed. Religious practices not only affect the market but also create the market. Consumers' views regarding religious practices also play a significant role. This research will study religious practices adopted by consumers and the reason behind their adoption. Religion has a significant role in consumer's life; it cannot go unturned, untouched, or unexplored by companies if they want to compete in the market.

Theoretical Framework

Religion and Consumer Decision-Making

Religious psychology plays a significant role in consumers' mental makeup as it is the main component of the subculture, one of the major dimensions of consumer market segmentation. Religion is not just a matter of consumers' lifestyle, which affects the whole market, consumers, and their decision-making. An investigation revealed that religious commitment is a significant antecedent to brand involvement decisions (Abdur Razzaque & Nosheen Chaudhry, 2013), indicating the role of religion in consumers' purchase decisions. The connectivity between religion and consumer behavior is still starving for research. Religious laws worldwide affect consumers' conduct and buying behavior; the degree of religious adherence of the consumers also varies (Assadi, 2003). Islam and Chandrasekaran (2020) studied the effect of religiosity on consumer decision-making styles, quality, and price consciousness, which are positively related to religiosity. Religion affects a consumer's eating habits, purchasing patterns, attitudes, and behavior (Pettinger et al., 2004). Individuals' food consumption decisions depend on their religion and religious teachings and to what extent they follow them (Iqbal & Nisha, 2016).

Similarly, a study on Bangladeshi consumers revealed that consumers' religiosity affects their intention to purchase imported goods (Haque et al., 2015). Religion and moral identity are considered factors affecting the attitude and decision-making of consumers. The question for which answer is looked for is “what is the role that

culture plays in shaping consumer attitudes and opinions, and, more specifically, how does this impact the roles of religion and moral identity in moral attitudes?" (Vitell et al., 2016). Consumers' attitudes and behavior have its root in religious beliefs, which finally lead to ethical and unethical behavior. An individual's ethical behavior comes out because of their religiosity, shaping the value system (Magill, 1992). Religion is interconnected with ethics, food consumption, attitude, and behavior of consumers. In all aspects, religion is the spine. Religion relates to fashion cloth purchasing (Rahman et al., 2018). It is found that highly religious people are least involved in fashion cloth purchasing.

Religion and its effect on the consumer decision-making process have several dimensions. In some areas, it is the direct influencer and otherwise an indirect influencer. For example, the decision to insure has been related to religious beliefs and spirituality. A positive relationship has been found between the decision to insure and the level of religious and spiritual connectedness (Gill et al., 2018). Further, it is also found that religious practices discourage unethical, illegal behavior, for example, riding a vehicle without getting it insured. In organizational culture, religion and spirituality have found a special corner. Understanding religion, culture, and the humanistic approach is necessary as they play a keen role in ethical decision-making (Ananthram & Chan, 2016). The study further developed a framework for ethical decision-making. It has been further found that only traditional individuals follow the rule and regulations, not the mainstream population. Bergan and McConatha (2001) concluded that religious attendance could not merely measure religiosity, as it would be an injustice to measure only on this basis. Thus, it would be wrong to say that individuals following religious practices are high in religiosity, as following the practices might be a way to avoid isolation or daily routine. Marketers also consider religiosity a factor in the market segmentation of their goods and services (Essoo & Dibb, 2004). Other than rural and urban segregation of population, it can also be segregated based on religions followed by people. Religion plays a major part in how people perceive the messages broadcast through advertisement (Michell & Al-Mossawi, 1999; Shyan Fam et al., 2004), and it also impacts consumer loyalty (Al-Hyari et al., 2012).

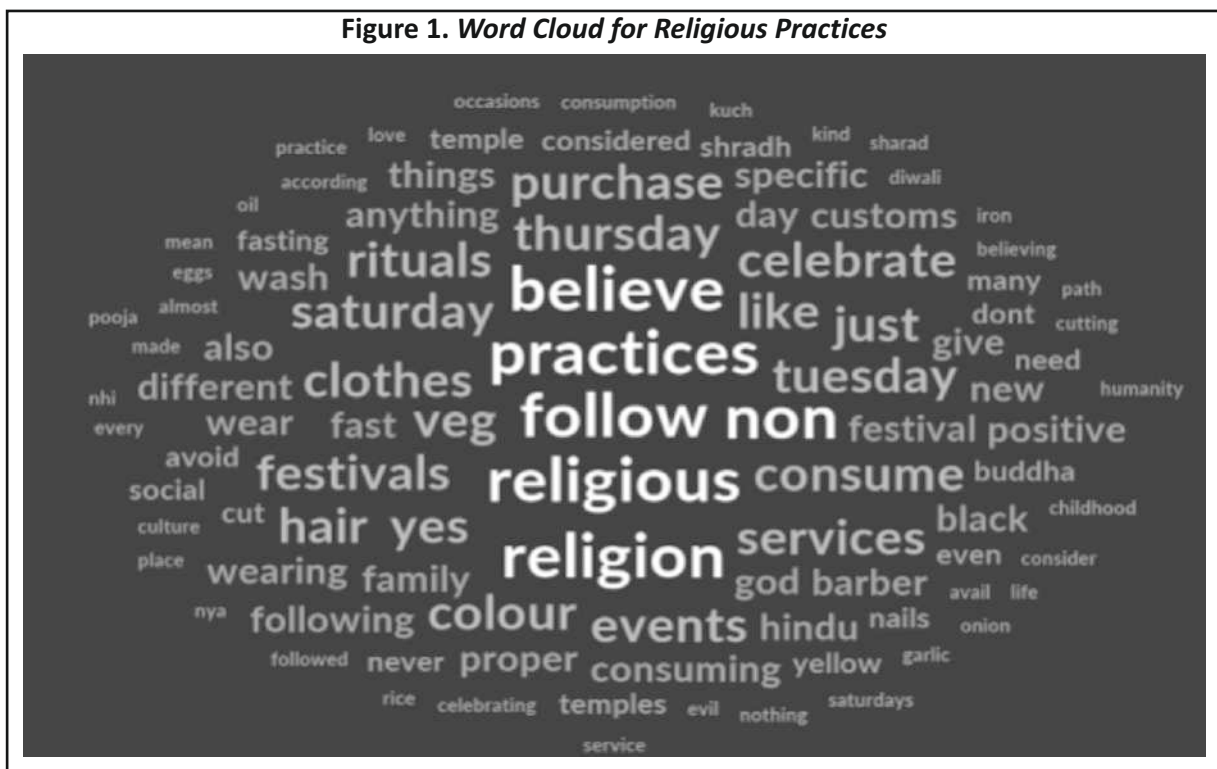
Religious Practices and Consumers' Decision-Making

The decision-making style of millennials is completely different from other generations (Mahalakshmi & Munuswamy, 2022). So there is a dire need to understand the role of religiosity in consumer decisions. Religious practices cluster heterogeneous activities comprising customs, beliefs, rituals, and traditions that vary from religion to religion. Even religious beliefs and traditions are affected by a person's education and vary across religious traditions (Schwadel, 2011). Mathras et al. (2016) stated that religion with a higher religious community exhibits greater interdependence (vs. independence), differentiating the product's preference and making a consumer stand out than fit into a social group. Religion creates a religious marketplace that is considered a place where religious ideas can be selected independently by religious consumers and a place where religious competition creates an environment of innovation and adaptability (Koenig, 2016). Religion differs with culture, and intra-national cultural studies have become a recent topic of interest (Choudhary & Shree, 2021). Religious activities, such as attending religious prayers and services, meditating in an isolated place, reading religious books or literature, and serving supper in the Church, affect the health of human beings (Maselko & Kubzansky, 2006). A person's personality decides his/her religious commitment and adoption of religious practices. Rituals that form part of religious practices are the repetitive activities performed at various events, and family rituals have been divided into two dimensions: Meaning (Importance) and Routine (Continuous) (Fiese & Tomcho, 2001). Religious practices affect the consumer's decision-making as their religious commitment persuades them to follow the religious practices that affect the market. Religion, consumer society, and religious changes have evolved in a diverse community and are emerging fields (Martikainen & Gauthier, 2013).

Research Methodology

The study explored the major consumer decisions affected by adopting different religious practices. The study also focused on the reasons behind following these practices. Four religions were considered for the study, i.e., Hindu, Islam, Christianity, and Buddhist. Still, at an early stage of the study, it was realized that religious practices for every religion are so vast that studying all the religions would complicate the study. So finally, the practices of the Hindu religion were decided to be explored, as India's major population is Hindu (Pew Research Center, 2015). A qualitative research design was used to conduct the study as the research was exploratory. An open-ended questionnaire was used to collect the data. Before collecting the data, it was conveyed to the respondents that the study was on religious practices. The study was merely for research purposes, and there was no intention to hurt anyone's religious feelings. This helped in smooth data collection.

The semi-structured questionnaires were filled out by consumers affiliated with the Hindu religion in Delhi NCR. The data was collected from the consumers between October 2021–November 2021. The open-ended questionnaire was filled out by 30 respondents in a face-to-face interaction. A sample size of 30 was more than enough in a qualitative study as it could bring out the necessary information (Boddy, 2016). Respondents conveyed their religious practices and the reasons behind the adoption. The qualitative data analysis software NVivo 12 was used to analyze the collected data. The descriptive transcript was analyzed in NVivo 12 to draw the required codes and themes. Word cloud was used to indicate the frequency of a word in the transcript. The word cloud represents the words in different sizes; the words' position and size highlight their frequency and importance (Ragbir et al., 2018). The small words are least used and appear at the end of the cloud, whereas the frequently used words are larger and appear in between. In this study, the word cloud helped to locate the religious practices followed and affected consumer decisions (Figure 1).



Findings and Discussion

Consumption

Religious events lead to consuming and avoiding certain edible items, which creates a market for some items and restricts some. Consumers do not consume various items, such as non-veg, alcohol, onion, and garlic, at all or at certain events. On some occasions, a few specific items are only consumed by the consumers. Their consumption gets affected by several religious events and days. Even for some consumers, the consumption pattern is run by their religious beliefs and is practiced for a lifetime. Few respondents do not consume some items at all, not just at religious events (Table 1). The reason for their avoidance is their belief in God. It is evident from their responses how consumption switches between different items due to religious practices:

[...] I never consume non-veg, not even egg and egg products. Eating non-veg is no less than a sin for me, and even God gets unhappy when we eat living creatures. I can never do that. (R2)

It has been two years since we left the consumption of onion and garlic in our house, as they are also considered part of non-veg. During festivals, we make all traditional food items and consume these only [...]. (R19)

[...] I consume non-veg, but I avoid consuming on Tuesday and Thursday. I do not consume beef as the cow is considered pious in our religion. I do not consume alcohol, onion, and garlic in Navaratri [1] or when going to some religious place. (R29)

[...] Neither do I drink, nor do I have non-veg on Tuesdays. During Navaratri, we also do not consume non-veg; we only have fruits and fast-specific items. (R11)

Other than the respondents mentioned above, more respondents said they follow the same practices. For some respondents, the reason for the non-consumption of non-veg is empathy for living creatures, and the non-consumption of alcohol is due to their health concerns.

[...] I don't consume non-veg at all, but the reason behind that is not religion; it is due to my empathy with living creatures. (R9)

[...] Alcohol is harmful to health, so I do not consume it at all; my non-consumption of alcohol has nothing to do with religion. (R21)

Vegetarianism has become a core concept in India, originating from the notion of ahimsa, i.e., not harming living beings (Fischer, 2016). Respondents have various deep thoughts regarding the consumption and non-consumption of a few items. A few are consuming non-veg and alcohol in their daily routine and just avoiding a few weekdays or renowned religious festivals such as Diwali [2], and some are not consuming them at all. Religion directs consumers' consumption patterns, whereas fasting is one of the major practices affecting their consumption. Fasting brings significant ups and downs in consumers' consumption decision-making.

Fasting

Fasting is such an important part of the religion that consumers remain hungry and thirsty for long hours to make God happy and fulfill their wishes. At the same time, science considers fasting as an activity made for health improvement by losing weight and better functioning of health (Ajmera, 2023). Therefore, fasting is an important event in their lives, and it is highlighted through the respondents' views. Despite being an old concept, fasting

plays a keen role in various cultures and religions, and in recent dates, it has been one surge in status (Ajmera, 2023). Fasting means abstaining from food, drinking, and smoking from dawn to dusk. Fasting has different perspectives for different religions (Singh & Muhamed, 2010). One of the factors derived behind their fasting is faith in God, as evident from the responses:

[...] Yes, I follow almost every religious practice, such as fasting in *Navaratri*, on *Janmashtami* [3], and *Karva Chauth* [4]. We should fast as fasting is a way to make God happy, and we can get our wishes fulfilled. (R10)

[...] I fast fully as per the rules of fasting. I consume only fast-related items available in the market, and even I look for new and exciting items that can be consumed. (R28)

[...] In my family, everyone fasts. I also started fasting every Friday to get blessings and get rid of my problems. I fast because I believe in the power of God. On the day of the fast, I follow all the religious practices, like going to the temple and eating only the items which can be consumed on the day of Santoshi Mata [5] fast. (R25)

At the time of the fast, we consume only fruits or items consumed during the fast [...]. (R1)

Respondents fast for several reasons: religious and cultural commitment, mental peace, regulation of the body, and medical purposes. However, there is one more reason behind following this religious practice, i.e., family pressure initially, which later converted to belief. This became evident after R17 shared his experience.

[...] At an early age, only my family started guiding me toward religion and advised me to start fasting. In starting, I used to feel pressurized, but later I saw changes in my life and started believing in God and his powers, and finally, fasting became part of my routine. (R17)

Another reason which leads to fasting is health concerns. People who fast are less likely to be diabetic than those who do not regularly (Anton et al., 2018). Furthermore, fasting has various other benefits for health, as it regulates the body's metabolism. Different cultures have different customs, rituals, and reasons for fasting, as ethnocentrism differs with demographics (Das & Saha, 2018).

[...] I read at many places that fasting is good for health as it keeps us fit and away from many diseases; that's why I started fasting once a week, and generally, I fast on Mondays as I believe in Lord Shiva [5]. (R16)

There are several reasons behind following these activities. For some, the answer is their superstitious nature (McNamara, 2002), which turned out to be positive. Superstitions are defined as peculiar beliefs (idiosyncratic or publically shared) that actions might be invoked to control bad or good luck and in which a consumer believes they can influence outcomes (Kramer & Block, 2011). Unfortunately, respondents fell prey to certain myths and superstitions under challenging situations in life. As a result, they blindly follow what priests and babas tell them. Some light was thrown on to this by R7:

[...] My family was going through a hard time some time back, so we went to many people as a ray of hope; different babas and pandits suggested that we fast on different days. These things may be superstitious, but they seemed like a ray of hope. Since then, we have been following the practice. (R14)

Color Preference

Colors also play a significant role in consumers' lives; they prefer different colors on different occasions. Respondents presented their views on different colors and the primary reason behind using or wearing that color. The reason behind preferring different colors on different occasions is the religious belief in colors' positive and negative indications:

Yes, I take care of the colors to be worn on some days and at some events. As I fast on Thursdays, I only wear yellow clothes that day. [...] (R11)

[...] I avoid wearing black while sitting in religious prayer. (R13)

[...] In marriages, there are different functions; on different functions, we prefer different colors; on Haldi [6] ceremony, we all prefer wearing yellow. (R10)

Red is a hue used at significant events such as weddings and festivals. It is a sign of purity, whereas white is used to show sorrow on different events :

[...] In marriage, the bride primarily wears red and avoids white, black, and blue, as red signifies love and luck in our religion. Even in prayers, we prefer to use red-colored items and clothes. (R24)

[...] White color signifies peace, so I mostly wear white or light color, and black is avoided in most religious activities during funerals. (R18)

The respondents link the days with different Gods and try to wear that God-specific color to get positive energy the whole day. They care for the colors in Indian weddings, funerals, festivals, and religious activities (Table 1). The difference in color regarding brightness and darkness is very well documented in the context of positive and negative indicators, evil and good. Colors are used in different cultures, expostulated in religion (Upanishad, Bible), and evaluated in psychological research (Meier et al., 2004; Sherman & Clore, 2009; Semin & Palma, 2014). Therefore, consuming colored cosmetics and clothes is affected by religious commitment.

Purchasing

Purchasing is one of the significant areas affected by religious practices (Table 1). In the Hindu religion, religious practices guide consumers' purchasing patterns. These practices bring a hike in purchasing certain goods and a ban for some. Therefore, religiosity is a precious indicator of consumers purchasing decisions and behavior (Delener, 1990; Essoo & Dibb, 2004; Siala, 2013). It is evident from specific responses of consumers that how their purchasing goes way around due to their religious beliefs:

[...] I never make purchases in Shradh [7] and Suthak [8] as they are not considered auspicious events. I believe in my religion's practices and ensure they are followed. (R26)

[...] Yes, I avoid purchasing in Shradh. I only purchase if it's an emergency; otherwise, I don't. I even never bought anything made of iron on Saturday. (R12)

I generally believe in all religious practices. So, I never purchase anything significant during Shradh and Suthak. No one in my family purchases during these days. [...] (R8)

Shradh is the period in every year when consumer purchases generally fall. Respondents consider it an

inauspicious period, so they do not consider buying anything new. It is considered the thanksgiving period to our ancestors. During this period, even the flourishing retailers do not consider doing something significant to counter the slumps, even by offering discounts, as they do not want to offend anyone (Narain, 2007). Suthak is the period after the death or birth of a person, which varies from 10–15 days and is different for different families as per the situation. On the contrary, there are certain religious events on which purchasing of items is on a hike :

[...] On festivals and especially on Diwali, we make lots of purchases from small things to major ones. Like we purchase home decor material, sweets, and even once we bought a car on Diwali. Diwali, in our religion, is one of the most auspicious occasions, so we make purchases at this event. (R15)

[...] Mostly, we make large purchases on festivals like Holi [9], Diwali, Navaratri, and many more. On Dhanteras, we purchase gold or silver. On Holi, we purchase colors, water guns, and sweets. (R7)

Auspicious and inauspicious occasions in the Hindu religion induce consumers' decisions to purchase and not to purchase. Consumers' commitment to their religion and its practices affects their purchasing decisions. Religious commitment may affect a consumer's behavior as a follower's involvement shapes the cultural dimension (Mathras et al., 2016). Consumers' commitment to religious practices brings a downfall in the market during Shradh and a hike during festivals. Some consumable items like non-veg and alcohol are not purchased during festivals and Shradh. Religious practices, time-to-time, give certain goods and marketers a platform to grab a more significant part of the market.

Services

The service sector gets affected due to certain religious practices. Some religious practices affect the service market. Availing certain services or not depends upon consumers' religious beliefs:

[...] Tuesday is the day of Lord Hanuman, and it is very wrong to get a haircut or shaving done on this day. I never use barber services on Tuesdays. (R4)

[...] No, I never prefer availing services of a barber on Tuesday, during Navaratri, or any other festival. Even we do not start our journey on Tuesday and Saturday as they are considered inauspicious for traveling. (R27)

[...] I do not avail services of barber on Tuesday until and unless it's an emergency [...] even once I went to barbers' shop on Tuesday, but the shops were closed. (R20)

This is how belief in religion or God makes consumers follow certain religious practices. Consumers accepted these religious practices and did not avail themselves of barber services on Tuesdays and major festivals. Consumers' belief in God and religion makes them adopt certain religious practices that affect the consumer's decision-making and market. Service providers also follow religious practices and keep their services shut on specific weekdays and religious events. However, the respondents provide some services in religious organizations on some occasions (Table 1):

[...] I provide my social service in the religious organization on Guru Purnima. There I distribute food and sometimes even organize prasad distribution from my side. (R3)

[...] On Diwali, I also donate money to the temple and do social service at religious places. (R22)

Table 1. Consumer Decisions Affected and Religious Practices Followed

Consumption	Religious Practices Followed		
	Purchasing	Color Preference	Services
Consuming or not consuming non-veg on specific religious events.	Purchases during inauspicious occasions.	Wearing or avoiding specific colors at major events.	Avoiding barber services and traveling on some days.
Consuming or not consuming alcohol at specific religious events.	Purchases on auspicious occasions.	Bright on auspicious occasions and dull on inauspicious occasions.	Providing social service at certain religious events.
Consuming specific items at a particular religious event.	Purchases are made for some religious event.	Specific color on a day.	Providing religious offerings in religious organizations.

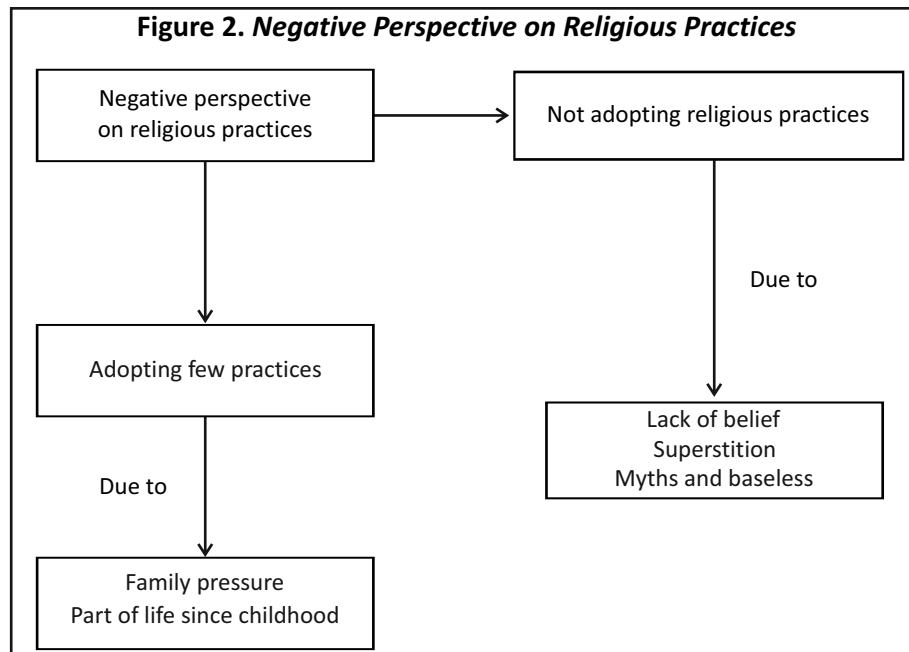
Negative Perspective on Religious Practices

Consumers have different perspectives regarding religious practices. Some of the perspectives are negative, where respondents do not favor following religious practices. The reasons behind it are that they consider these activities as superstitious, myths, and baseless. Their lack of belief in religion makes them avoid that (Figure 2):

[...] If there are ten practices, I hardly follow one or two, that too because of family pressure. I don't consider religious practices as these practices are made by people and are baseless. I just believe in God for the sake of positive energy, not for religious practices. (R23)

[...] Religious practices are superstitious, having no origin. I believe in Mahatma Buddha and his teaching for humanity. One should focus on humanity, not on religious practices. (R5)

[...] These all-religious practices are a myth; only those people will follow them who believe in these superstitions and myths. I live my life my way. (R30)



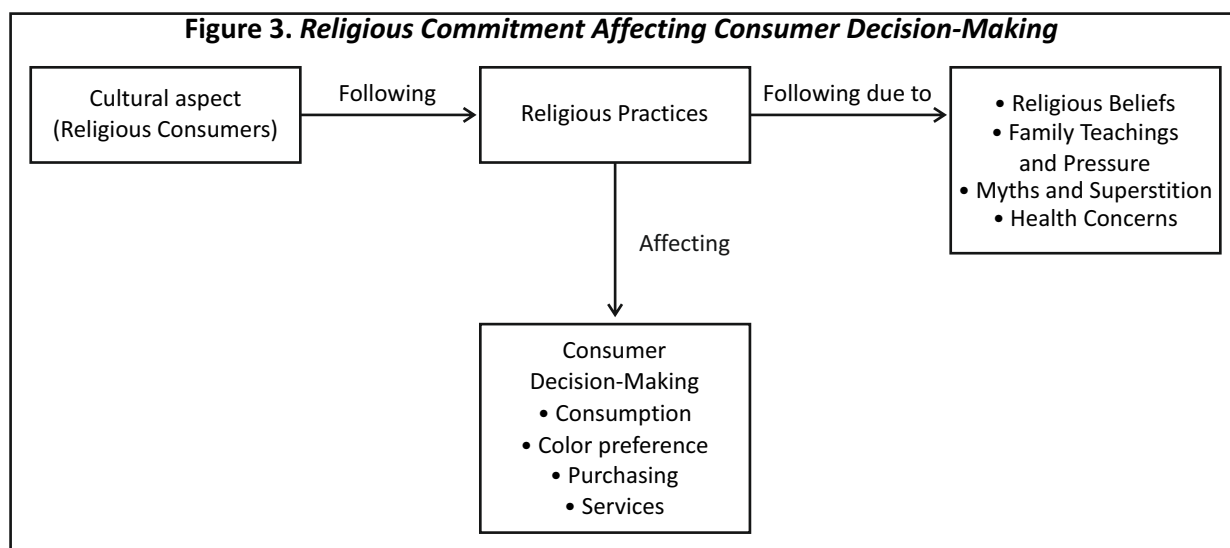
[...] I don't know the reason or origin behind following these practices. I only follow practices I have adopted since childhood or if they have some strong reason behind them. So, I rarely follow any practice. (R6)

Some respondents are committed to God but not to religious practices. Some of the respondents do not believe in religious practices. They do what they feel like doing or think is right or wrong. There are certain reasons for adopting or not adopting religious practices, but it is apparent that sometimes respondents are unaware of why they do not follow religious practices. In-depth interviews can play a major part in revealing the reasons; one should have the skills (Wansink, 2003).

Conclusion

Many studies are available on religion connecting it with various aspects, especially in corporate life, but its connectedness with the consumer has little research. This study is the first of its kind, focusing on religious practices followed by consumers affecting their decision-making. An effort has been made to explore the religious practices in the Hindu religion and how significant decisions get affected by these religious practices. The areas getting affected due to the adoption of religious practices are consumption, color preference, purchasing, and services (Figure 3).

Religious practices are the core of consumers' religiosity that plays the whole game in the market. Several reasons behind following religious practices are conveyed by respondents, like family pressure and teachings, faith in God, myths, and superstition to religious beliefs, which make them follow all practices (Figure 3). Some have negative thoughts regarding religious practices and do not follow them as they consider them superstitious, myths, baseless, and due to lack of belief. Whether working in India or planning to work in India, companies need to explore the intricacies of the Indian market as it is one of the dominant markets that cannot go unexplored (Iyer, 1999) and is keenly affected by the Hindu religion and its practices. Their faith and belief provide a great market to the marketers as these religious practices affect decisions directly affecting the market. Even we can say that religious practices create the primary market after basic needs as they affect the consumption, purchasing, services, and color preference at different events. Therefore, a marketing strategy from examining religious practices can reap better results and profits. Consumers follow many religious practices, but the irony is that most



follow them blindly without even locating the origin or reason behind them. This clearly shows the picture of human nature and how individuals follow each other, especially when the point concerns religion and faith. Religion and consumer decision-making are so correlated that their study together is fruitful.

Managerial Implications

This study plays a pivotal role in contributing to consumer decision-making literature. India comprises 79.80% (Census Commissioner, Ministry of Home Affairs, 2011) of the population belonging to the Hindu religion, and all over the world, it is 15.2% (Pew Research Center, 2015). This study provides a new direction toward understanding the Indian Hindu consumer and market. The term “religious practices” plays such a major role in consumers’ life is an insightful finding. This research focused on exploring the consumer decisions affected by following religious practices. The theoretical contribution of the research is valuable but needs further exploration.

The companies can move ahead with a strategy originating from a deep understanding of religion and practices adopted by consumers. In India, consumers abide by religious practices, which have perpetual existence. The study found that four major decisions, i.e., consumption, purchasing, services, and color preference, are significantly affected due to following religious practices. By analyzing these practices, online selling platforms can select the best time for their sales, discounts, and offers.

This study will help MNCs, specifically those involved in manufacturing businesses operating in India, as the research will create an understanding of Indian Hindu consumers’ decision-making. Religious practices majorly differ from religion to religion and decisions too. Companies need to understand every religion individually. More specifically, this research will provide a closer look at the religious practices followed by consumers, thereby enabling companies to understand the events on which the demand will likely increase and for which products.

Limitations of the Study and Scope for Further Research

In this study, endless efforts have been made to study the consumer decisions affected by religious practices. The connection between following religious practices and consumer decision-making has been derived, but still, there are limitations and further scope. The study can be conducted in different nations, states, and religions, as religious practices and decisions may vary. In further research, efforts can be made to study the relationship between religious commitment and consumer decision-making. Qualitative research provides a personal insight into the matter, but at the same time, the quantitative study provides the path to generalize the results. So, this study can be further generalized by giving it a quantitative touch. Country-wise definition of religion and religious practices changes, so this study can be conducted globally.

Authors’ Contribution

Swati Saini developed the idea to explore the religious practices followed by Hindu consumers. Dr. Rajiv Kumar and Swati Saini together developed the qualitative design to undertake the empirical research and developed the semi-structured questionnaire for data collection. Dr. Rajiv Kumar verified the analytical method and supervised the study. Swati Saini collected the data from Hindu consumers. The collected data were analyzed using NVivo 12 software by Swati Saini, and she wrote the manuscript in consultation with Dr. Rajiv Kumar. Dr. Rajiv Kumar concluded the manuscript and added value to the paper.

Conflict of Interest

The authors certify that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest or non-financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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Notes

(1) *Navaratri* is a Hindu festival celebrated nine days twice every year. Widely, it is celebrated for different reasons in India, but the main reason is to celebrate the victory of good over evil. It celebrates the Goddess and her power (Logan, 1988).

(2) *Diwali* is a festival of lights celebrated on a day between mid-October to mid-November. This festival is celebrated to mark the significance of the homecoming of Lord Rama after defeating Ravana (Jayasinghe & Soobaroyen, 2009).

(3) *Janmashtami* is also known as *Gokulashtami*, which is celebrated to mark the birth of Lord Krishna. On the day of *Janmashtami*, the temples are decorated; there are dances, dramas on Krishna's life, devotional singing, and fasting. Even a swing is made and decorated with flowers for Krishna and reading stories of Krishna's young age (Howard, 2009).

(4) *Karva Chauth* is a day celebrated in the Hindu religion by women, especially in North India. On this day, women fast for their husband's long life.

(5) *Lord Shiva and Santoshi Mata* are the essential idols of the Hindu religion, which people of the Hindu religion worship.

(6) *Haldi* ceremony is one of the functions in marriages where turmeric is applied to the bride and groom's bodies.

(7) *Shradh* is the death anniversary of our ancestors performed to pay homage to our forefathers. *Shradh* is generally for 15 days. During *Shradh*, food is offered to Brahmins.

(8) *Suthak* is a situation where one cannot perform ritual purification. It can happen in many situations, but it majorly occurs in the death of a family member or the birth of a new baby in the house (Baleri's_Milan, 2020).

(9) *Holi* is a festival of colors celebrated at the arrival of spring in March. According to *Bhagavata Purana*, it signifies the victory of good over evil.

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