

MEASURING CONSUMER AWARENESS IN A DEVELOPING COUNTRY

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ABSTRACT

This article describes the measurement and comparison of different levels of consumer awareness observed in an empirical investigation in Bophuthatswana. The findings confirm the existence of five factors of consumer awareness viz. bargain hunting, general consumer knowledge, product knowledge, information search and price consciousness. Different levels of consumer awareness emerged from the sample. These differences can be attributed to demographic variables of which education and location seem to be the most important.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie artikel beskryf die meting en vergelyking van verskillende vlakke van verbruikersbewustheid soos waargeneem in 'n empiriese ondersoek in Bophuthatswana. Die bevindinge bevestig die bestaan van vyf faktore van verbruikersbewustheid nl. winskopie-jagter, algemene verbruikerskennis, produk-kennis, inligtinginwinning en prysbewustheid. Verskillende vlakke van verbruikersbewustheid kom na vore uit die steekproef. Hierdie verskille kan toegeskryf word aan demografiese veranderlikes waarvan opvoeding en gebied skyn die mees belangrike te wees.

Consumer awareness can be described as the extent or alertness of individual consumers of their rights and responsibilities in the market place. Consumer rights are defined by the International Organization of Consumer Unions as the right to satisfaction of basic needs, the right to be heard, the right to redress, the right to consumer education and the right to a healthy environment (Meyer, 1992). Consumer responsibilities entails the ability to form independent opinions regarding ones own consumption behaviour which can be argued for and acted upon. This implies acquiring knowledge and skills to make responsible choices which will benefit both the individual consumer and society. It also involves awareness of perceived risks associated with purchase decisions such as financial risks i.e. unaffordable products, physical risks i.e. unsafe or unhealthy products and ecological risks, that is products which are hazardous to the environment. (Van der Hammen & Van Rijn van Alkemade, 1990).

Rousseau (1992) investigated consumer awareness amongst the South African population. The author identified five criteria or factors of the construct viz bargain hunting, price consciousness, general consumer knowledge, product knowledge and information search. Results showed different levels of consumer awareness for the sample population. Bargain hunting differed significantly between low and upper income groups with low income groups being the greatest bargain hunters. General consumer knowledge differed significantly between various age groups in importance, with middle aged groups regarding it to be the most important means for redressing complaints. Product knowledge was also seen by middle aged, middle income consumer groups with higher education as a preventative measure against being exploited in the market. The findings support the literature stating that willingness to redress complaints may be linked to income and education. Elderly respondents obtained the lowest scores on general consumer knowledge and product knowledge.

Price consciousness featured prominently amongst larger households in the low income category and amongst those

with only a primary education. These results support the literature stating that lower income, less educated shoppers may be more price sensitive. Upper income groups were the least price conscious. Highly significant differences were also observed between middle and upper income groups on information search. Upper income groups did the least pre-purchase information search. Findings of this study imply that there is a serious need for more consumer education amongst all consumer groups in South Africa.

In another study Rousseau and Venter (1992) measured and compared different levels of consumer awareness observed amongst two independent samples of consumers in terms of the identified criteria of the construct. Respondents from a national sample obtained significantly higher factor mean scores on bargain hunting and price consciousness than did respondents from a regional sample. With regard to general consumer knowledge, product knowledge and information search respondents from the regional sample obtained higher factor mean scores than did those from the national sample. Multiple analysis of variance confirmed the assumption that the regional sample was more homogeneous compared to the national sample in terms of consumer awareness factors. In the former only one demographic variable (education) significantly influenced two factors of consumer awareness while in the latter four demographic variables played a significant role in all the factors identified. The authors hypothesized that the higher factor mean scores observed on general consumer knowledge, product knowledge and information search observed in the regional sample, could be caused by consumer education, resulting in a higher level of consumer awareness. This implies that an educational intervention would probably enhance consumer awareness.

The assumption that consumer education is an important factor in increasing consumer awareness is further supported by other researchers. Cole and Gaeth (1990) investigated consumer's ability to use nutritional information in breakfast cereal choice tasks. The authors conclude that consumer educational programmes would enhance the cognitive and perceptual skills of elderly and disadvantaged consumers. In another study by Moorman (1990) the effects of consumer characteristics on the utilization of product information were researched. Once more the role of consumer education is em-

phasized. The author suggest that multiple educational programmes need to be developed to meet consumers' differing needs for information.

Hutchinson and Alba (1991) investigated situational determinants of learning simple rules for classifying products and estimating prices. The authors conclude that learning from multi attribute information is difficult and that the resultant information is often imperfect and biased. Consumers tend to rely on a small subset of available information, making them prone to being influenced by a single misleading claim. Consumers are therefore at considerable risk to being misled by any particular selling proposition if not educated to learn product knowledge and investigate new items in a holistic manner so that all information has at least some impact on the final decision. According to a recent study on consumer satisfaction carried out in Sweden (Fornell, 1992) satisfaction was found to be higher when industries sold differentiated products aimed at heterogeneous customer tastes and standardized products aimed at homogeneous customer tastes.

Consumer organizations consider education to be one of their main activities. It is perceived to be one of consumers' basic rights and a means of enhancing overall consumer awareness (Westendorp, 1992). The International Organization of Consumer Union states that consumer education not only benefits individual consumers but also countries as a whole. By exercising free choice based on knowledge of facts, consumers are able to make the best use of resources, money, time, and abilities. They therefore contribute to the proper functioning of an economy by stimulating effective and fair competition. Educated consumers benefit a government of a country in that they act in a responsible critical manner, thereby reducing government reliance on protective legislative and regulatory measures (Hellman, 1990). Based on these assumptions a resolution was passed at the International Organization of Consumer Union Conference held in Hong Kong during July 1991 to increase international commitment to consumer education at the United Nations and to promote education on environmental aspects of consumption (Cook, 1991).

Price consciousness and bargain hunting have also been identified as important criteria of consumer awareness. (Rousseau, 1992). In this regard the value of time spent on price comparison shopping was extensively investigated by Marmostein, Grewal and Fisher (1992). The authors state that many consumers value the information acquired while shopping because it enables them to serve as both opinion leaders and sources of information for their acquaintances. The researchers conclude that respondents in their study incorporated both income (money saved) and perceived enjoyment of price comparative shopping into their subjective value of time. Price comparative shopping is therefore perceived by many consumers as enjoyable instead of a pure loss of leisure time.

Two types of reference prices have further been identified in consumer behaviour literature. These are internal reference prices and external reference prices. The former relate to prices stored in the memory on the basis of perceptions of actual fair price concepts while the latter relate to observed stimuli in the store such as point of purchase shelf tags of different brands. Mayhew and Winter (1992) investigated the influence of both internal and external reference prices on purchase decisions and found that both were significant. One of the primary reasons why price conscious consumers use both may be the fact that external reference prices only contain information specific to a particular store whereas internal reference prices include price comparisons from other stores in which the consumer shops.

In another study by Rao and Sieben (1992) the effect of prior knowledge on price acceptability and the type of information examined, were investigated. The authors suggest that knowledgeable consumers should be less willing to pay prices

that are not commensurate with the quality of the product compared to consumers who are not knowledgeable. This tendency should occur because knowledgeable consumers are likely to be more aware of the actual quality and hence the value of the product. Results of the study provide substantive support for the claim that increasing prior knowledge is accompanied by an increase in acceptable price limits as well as the width of plausible price ranges. Consumers who were well informed on the quality and value of a product were willing to pay more for the item.

With regard to the tendency to bargain hunt Kalwoni and Chi Kin Yim (1992) explored the impact of price promotions on consumers' price expectations and brand choice. An interactive computer-controlled experiment was used in the study. As hypothesized, both promotion frequency and depth of price discounts were found to have a significant impact on price expectations. Furthermore the researchers observed that the presence of a promotional deal when it is not expected or the absence thereof when it is in fact expected, may have a significant impact on consumer brand choice. It could therefore be assumed that bargain hunters may be highly vulnerable to price promotions and inclined to persist in bargain hunting when experiencing unexpected promotional deals.

In addition to the criteria of consumer awareness reviewed thus far, the role of information search leading to product knowledge and general consumer knowledge should not be ignored. Gathering information and knowledge implies various costs and effort for the consumer aware individual. Fornell (1992) refers to search cost, learning cost, cognitive effort and emotional cost. These costs linked with financial, social and psychological risks on the part of the buyer all add up to switching barriers – a tendency not to switch to another product, brand or store as a result of new knowledge gained through search and comparative shopping. Many firms today try to enhance repeat business and keep customers loyal through a combination of superior service, product satisfaction and economic incentives. In so doing, they are in fact discouraging comparative shopping, limiting the scope of clients product and general consumer knowledge and effectively applying a strategy of erecting customer switching barriers. It is believed that these short term profit incentive strategies will do more harm to a product or store image in the long run as consumers will eventually be exposed to alternative brands and stores through competition. Comparative shopping in a free market where consumers can judge products on a quality base will lead to true customer satisfaction and less complaints. In fact Fornell (1992) observed that satisfaction was lower in industries where the supply was homogeneous and the demand heterogeneous.

From the above overview it can be concluded that the criteria of consumer awareness identified and explored by various researchers in different contexts, all play an important role in making consumers aware of their rights and responsibilities. As part of a longitudinal research programme to measure consumer awareness in various countries, this study was conducted in Bophuthatswana. Two main goals were set. (i) To measure previously identified factors of consumer awareness and (ii) investigate the role of various demographic variables (i.e. education, age, income) on the construct. It is hoped that this information may serve as a guideline for developing consumer educational programmes in Bophuthatswana.

The following propositions were set:

- (i) Consumer awareness can be described in terms of five basic factors viz bargain hunting, general consumer knowledge, product knowledge information search and price consciousness.
- (ii) Demographic characteristics of consumers (i.e. age income education location gender) may differ on each of the identified criteria of consumer awareness, indicating varying levels of the construct.

METHOD

A questionnaire developed and used in a pilot study was refined by reducing items from 35 to 25 (five items per factor) retaining items with the highest loadings ($> 0,40$).

A reliability study employing Cronbach's coefficient alpha was performed on the item sample in addition to factor analysis as the former procedure is traditionally preferred. Reliability alpha coefficients in the order of 0,70, 0,66 and 0,55 were obtained on three of the factors identified from the factor analysis. Although relatively low alpha scores were obtained on the other two factors (0,52 and 0,49 respectively) an overall score of 0,75 was obtained for the total item sample. (See table 2a). Nunnally (1978) states that in the early stages of research on predictor tests one saves time and energy by working with instruments that have only modest reliability for which purposes reliabilities of 0,75 will suffice.

Sample: A stratified random sample ($N=630$) was drawn from all population groups in Bophuthatswana. The sample was stratified according to income distribution in various regions of the country. Eleven different regions were included viz. Moretele, Odi, Bafokeng, ManKwe, Lehurutshe, Molopo, Ditsobotla, Madikwe, Taung, Kudumane and Tha b' Nchu. The sample was predominantly representative of a rural environment as Bophuthatswana is a developing country. A small urban community is located in Mmbabatho in the district Moretele.

Table 1 shows that the sample was more or less evenly distributed amongst the eleven districts with the exception of Taung and Madikwe. These areas were difficult to survey due to their remote location. There are also no shopping centres in these districts. From Table 1 it can be seen that most of the respondents were representative of larger households (3 to 5 persons), falling in the middle aged and middle income categories with a high school or college technikon education.

TABLE 1
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS: THE SAMPLE

Area	N	%	Household size	N	%	Age	N	%	Education	N	%	Income	N	%	Gender	N	%
Moretele	70	11,1	1	16	2,6	-25	62	9,8	Preschool	90	14,3	Lower	153	24,3	Male	254	40,3
Odi	69	11,0	2	57	9,0	26-40	380	60,3	High School	275	43,7	Middle	444	70,5	Female	376	59,7
Bafokeng	61	9,7	3-4	261	41,4	41-55	154	24,5	College/Tech.	183	29,0	Upper	33	5,2			
ManKwe	62	9,8	5+	296	47,0	56-70	34	5,4	University	82	13,0						
Lehurutshe	51	8,1															
Molopo	63	10,0															
Ditsobothla	59	9,3															
Madikwe	30	4,8															
Taung	44	7,0															
Kudumane	61	9,7															
Thab'Nchu	60	9,5															

Total N = 630

Procedure

Field work was carried out by the research division of the Consumer Council of Bophuthatswana. All the fieldworkers were properly briefed on sample selection and interview procedures prior to entering the field. Households in the various regions were chosen on a basis of equal and unequal street numbers which were rotated consecutively. Only one respondent per household, either a husband or wife completed the questionnaire. Respondents from the selected households completed questionnaires in the presence of field workers who visited each home personally to ensure that the procedure was understood. Respondents were asked to rate each of the twenty-five items in the questionnaire on a six point Likert type scale ranging from agree completely to disagree completely. Field workers explained to respondents that there was no right or wrong answers to the questions in the questionnaire. The only answer which was important was the one which gave a true reflection of how the respondent felt about the question. The questionnaire was printed in English. Fieldworkers however translated questions into the vernacular where respondents had difficulty in understanding the statements. Demographic information was also obtained from respondents regarding household size, income, age, education and gender.

Data analysis

Data analysis employed the computer program BMDP 4M (Frane, Jenrich & Samson 1985) to perform factor analysis on the item sample. The method of principal component analysis was used with direct quartimin rotation. Based on the principle that only factors with eigen-values larger than one needs to be retained, factor analysis confirmed the existence

of the previously identified five factors with no further sub-divisions into secondary components, for each of the five consumer awareness factors, factor analysis confirmed that eighteen of the applicable items had significant loadings. (See Table 2a).

The structural equations program EQS was used to perform confirmatory factor analysis to substantiate the model derived by means of BMDP4M (Table 2a). The asymptotically distribution free method AGLS was selected as the appropriate method in order to obviate the assumption of an underlying multivariate normal distribution. Results for the maximum likelihood estimation method ML are also given for comparison purposes.

The BMDP program 1D was then used to calculate mean factor scores for the various demographic variables. These results are shown in Table 3a and b. Program 2V was subsequently used to perform multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) to investigate which of the demographic variables significantly influenced the various factors. These results are shown in table 4. To test the statistical significance of factor score differences between the various demographic groups, one way analysis of variance (ANOVA program 1V) was performed, the results of which are also summarized in Tables 3a & b. Finally Pearson product moment correlation coefficients (program 8 D1) were calculated on the new 18 items scale and the previously developed 25 items scale to determine the level of correspondence. These results are presented in Table 2b indicating all correlation coefficients to be significant at the 99 percent level of confidence.

TABLE 2(a)
OBLIQUE ROTATED FACTOR MATRIX: MEASURES OF CONSUMER AWARENESS

Criterion	Factor 1 Bargain hunting	Factor 2 General consumer knowledge	Factor 3 Information Search	Factor 4 Product knowledge	Factor 5 Price conscious- ness
Item					
25 I always compare prices of similar products on display in the store	0,76				
19 Before purchasing a particular product I usually compare various brands to choose the best	0,69				
24 Before deciding where to go shopping; I usually try to find out whether any specials are being offered	0,62				
4 I like searching for bargains at seasonal sales or auctions	0,55				
3 I always shop at more than one store to compare prices and take advantage of the lowest priced item	0,53				
6 Consumers in Southern Africa are not aware of their legitimate consumer rights when it comes to doing business or engage in shopping		0,75			
9 Bophuthatswana consumers are not aware of the laws available to protect their consumer rights		0,69			
8 Too few consumers in Bophuthatswana read consumer articles in newspapers and magazines		0,68			
7 More attention should be paid to consumer awareness programmes in school education		0,43			
1 I check newspapers each week for bargains			0,84		
2 When I see a special advertised on TV or the radio I always follow it up			0,75		
20 I usually read newspaper advertisements for obtaining product information prior to purchase			0,51		
13 It is important to share product information with friends and relatives				0,78	
17 Seeking information from relatives and friends prior to making a final choice is always a good idea				0,70	
14 Product knowledge is ones best guardian against exploitation				0,60	
22 Price is the most important factor to me in choosing an item					0,74
23 When a product is offered at a discount price I am more tempted to buy it					0,69
21 Choosing "no-name brands" is a good way to beat inflation					0,62
Eigen values	3,21	1,82	1,55	1,40	1,14
Percentage of variance per factor (Total 50,83)	17,88	10,15	8,62	7,82	6,36
Cronbachs coefficient alpha	0,70	0,55	0,66	0,52	0,49

RESULTS

Table 2a shows the five factors that were extracted from the factor analysis. The first factor explained, 17,88 percent of the variance and contains items with factor loadings in excess of 0,53 which relates to the tendency for bargain hunting. Factor two explains 10,15 percent of the total variance and contains items with factor loadings larger than 0,43 which relates to general consumer knowledge. Factor three focuses on information search and explains 8,62 percent of the variance reflecting items with factor loadings in excess of 0,51. The fourth factor explained 7,82 percent of the variance and includes items which relate to product knowledge. The fifth factor referred to price consciousness and explained 6,36 percent of the total variance.

Confirmatory factor analysis of the model (Table 2a) using the AGLS method showed an adjusted fit index AGFI=0,911 (AGFI in LISREL7) and using the ML method a comparative fit index CFI=0,893. According to Bentler (1989) the estimates that results from ML estimation will still be reasonable, even if multinormality is not a reasonable description of the varia-

bles, although in such cases the standard errors and chi-square tests may be incorrect and the fit indices then become a better guide as to the adequacy of the model.

TABLE 2(b)
PEARSON'S PRODUCT MOMENT CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS FOR THE 18-ITEM SCALE WITH THE ORIGINAL 25-ITEM SCALE

Factors	Rs
Bargain hunting	0,7082
General consumer knowledge	0,9736
Product knowledge	0,6113
Information search	0,5696
Price consciousness	0,8856

Tables 3a & b show matrixes of factor mean scores for demographic variables obtained from the sample. In the tables a low score indicates a negative response while a high score indicates a positive response. (The six point rating scale used

Table 4 shows which of the above demographic variables significantly influences factor scores while Table 3a also indicate which factor score differences between the various demographic categories are significant. From Table 4 it can be seen that only one demographic variable namely education significantly influences three of the identified factors viz. general consumer knowledge, information search and price consciousness. With regard to general consumer knowledge table 3a shows significant differences between respondents with a primary and high school education and between those with a primary and tertiary education. The table shows that respondents with a primary education scored the lowest on general consumer knowledge.

Significant differences were also observed between respondents with a primary and high school education and between those with a primary school and tertiary education on information search, (factor 3). Respondents with a primary school education were least inclined to engage in pre-purchase information search according to Table 3a. As for price consciousness, the table reflects the lowest level of price awareness amongst respondents with a high school education. Signifi-

cant differences were further observed between respondents with a high school and tertiary education and between those with a primary school and tertiary education.

Analysis of variance was performed for the various locations as reflected in Table 3b. Results confirmed that areas differed significantly with regard to all five factor mean scores. Those areas with significantly higher scores than the rest of the areas are indicated by an exclamation mark(!) and those with significantly lower scores are underlined. Table 3b shows that Odi scored significantly lower on bargain hunting than all other areas. Moretele and Taung scored significantly lower and Bafokeng significantly higher on general consumer knowledge than all other areas. Taung and Odi scored significantly lower and Moretele and Lehurutshe significantly higher on information search. Taung and Kudumane scored significantly lower on product knowledge and Mankwe, Madikwe and Bafokeng significantly higher.

On price consciousness, respondents from Moretele and Mankwe scored significantly lower and those from Bafokeng Tha b' Nchu and Odi significantly higher than all other areas.

TABLE 4
MULTIPLE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE (MANOVA) OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES INFLUENCING FACTOR SCORES

Demographic variables	Factor 1 Bargain hunting			Factor 2 General consumer knowledge			Factor 3 Information search			Factor 4 Product knowledge			Factor 5 Price consciousness		
	F	df	p	F	df	p	F	df	p	F	df	p	F	df	p
Household size	1,85	3	0,1377	1,52	3	0,2076	0,31	3	0,8147	0,76	3	0,5194	0,16	3	0,9264
Income	2,37	2	0,0939	1,09	2	0,3382	0,50	2	0,6063	1,22	2	0,2955	2,68	2	0,0695
Age	1,66	3	0,1739	0,90	3	0,4406	0,21	3	0,8904	1,63	3	0,1814	1,89	3	0,1304
Education	0,72	2	0,4878	3,89	2	0,0210	8,33	2	0,0003	0,19	2	0,8258	4,00	2	0,0189
Sex	2,71	1	0,0998	2,46	1	0,1168	1,60	1	0,2061	0,93	1	0,3358	2,30	1	0,1298
Error	612														

Proposition testing

From the empirical data discussed above it is clear that the propositions formulated to investigate consumer awareness in Bophuthatswana can be accepted in all the cases. Regarding proposition one the results confirm the existence of five valid criteria or factors of consumer awareness, identified in previous studies (Rousseau, 1992). Although the factor structure has changed in the sense that only eighteen items loaded significantly on the five scales, the same factors emerged from the factor analysis. One could therefore assume that the test is working slightly different in this group and that reliability coefficients will increase as factors tend to stabilize with more samples from the same group.

In the case of proposition two the study clearly showed that demographic characteristics (such as education and location) significantly influenced the identified criteria of consumer awareness which emerged from the empirical analysis. Furthermore, demographic groups within these categories differed significantly from one another on the various factors. This can be an indication of various levels of consumer awareness. Apart from significant differences observed between various educational categories and location, household size, income and age were also found to be significant for some factors. Empirical evidence suggests that education and location cannot be ignored as the most important demographic variables influencing varying levels of consumer awareness in Bophuthatswana. These variables should form the basis for any action programmes aimed at enhancing levels of consumer awareness in the country.

CONCLUSION

This study examined five factors of consumer awareness that has been linked theoretically to the construct and was used in previous research to measure consumer awareness.

Although the results of the study confirmed the existence of five factors of consumer awareness the factor structure varied somewhat. Only eighteen of the twenty five items from the original questionnaire loaded on the five factors. This may be due to a different interpretation and association of the questions in the questionnaire by respondents in Bophuthatswana in comparison to those in South Africa.

The five factors which emerged from the factor analysis viz. bargain hunting, general consumer knowledge, information search, product knowledge and price consciousness were significantly influenced by two demographic variables namely education and location. With regard to education respondents with a tertiary education obtained the highest factor mean scores on bargain hunting, general consumer knowledge and product knowledge. These results support the literature suggesting that educational levels may enhance consumer awareness (Westendorp, 1992; Rousseau & Venter, 1992). Respondents with a primary school education were most price conscious. This finding also confirms a previous conclusion from the literature (Rousseau 1992). Respondents with a high school education obtained the largest score for pre-purchase information search.

We proposed that location might be a significant variable influencing the factors of consumer awareness. This was based on the fact that the sample frame included all the districts of Bophuthatswana and was large enough to accommodate different levels of consumer awareness. Analysis of variance confirmed our proposition. Areas differed significantly with regard to all five factor mean scores. Respondents from Odi for instance scored significantly lower on bargain hunting than those from all other areas whilst respondents from Bafokeng scored significantly higher on general consumer knowledge than those from the remaining districts.

The low score observed on bargain hunting in Odi may reflect consumers sophisticated luxurious life style which is prominent in this area. A reason for the high score observed on general consumer knowledge by respondents in Bafokeng may be due to the fact that this district has the highest literacy rate and that home-economics is a prescribed subject, taught in schools in this area. On the other hand, the low score for general consumer knowledge observed in Taung and Moretele may be a consequence of the fact that the Consumer Council of Bophuthatswana only recently opened offices in the two districts.

These results have important implications for consumer organizations and business concerns operating in the respective regions, in terms of educational remedies to meet consumers differing needs for information, as suggested in the literature (Moorman, 1990).

Though we believe that our method is an improvement over those used in previous studies on consumer awareness, especially in terms of sample composition and representiveness, our study has revealed many potential pitfalls for this type of research. Firstly, factor analysis has demonstrated how cautious researchers should be when applying measuring instruments developed and validated for a specific population, with groups not so familiar with the issues of stake. The scales developed and used amongst urban cross-cultural samples in South Africa does not work in a similar manner when applied to a predominantly rural environment of a developing country.

Secondly, the rural environment in which respondents live may differ markedly from urban areas. For instance the lack of shopping centres in a particular rural area or the presence or absence of schools. Therefore these situational determinants could play a major role in the comprehension and accuracy levels of respondents answers to questionnaires. Researchers should therefore be more sensitive towards the cognitive and perceptual skills of rural, disadvantaged consumers when constructing questionnaires (Cole & Gaeth, 1990).

Finally, although English is a familiar and widely spoken language amongst all population groups in Southern Africa, it should be borne in mind that many respondents when presented with only an English version of a questionnaire are responding to a second language. Researchers choosing not to use translated versions of a questionnaire (due to interpretation problems of concepts leading to potential confusion) should take special care that fieldworkers are properly trained to access respondents ability to answer in a second language.

Despite these shortcomings our results are consistent with the notion that consumer education is one of the most important variables influencing consumer awareness. We tend to believe that it is even more crucial in a developing country such as Bophuthatswana. The other variable featuring strongly from our results is location. The latter paves the way for effectively implementing consumer educational programmes in those areas where it is most needed. In both these domains, consumer organizations and business can make substantial contributions.

Educating consumers in rural environments involves understanding and participation. The way in which consumer knowledge is presented influences who will be able to use such information effectively. Hence consumer organization need to understand explicitly the cognitive and perceptual skills of their target audiences as suggested in the literature. Visual material, practical demonstrations in simulated buying environments and role playing sessions may prove to be more suitable than printed media and formal lectures in enhancing the accuracy of product choice tasks for many unsophisticated and disadvantaged consumers.

Involvement and participation from the community can further be stimulated through attention getting aids like posters, drama, games and entertainment in the form of music and

dancing shows. These activities focusing on awareness and enjoyment may be sponsored by local business concerns. Self-surveys carried out by members of the community themselves will further help to formalize needs, problem areas and knowledge in the community. A participatory approach will guarantee co-operation and involvement and ultimately success in the implementation of consumer educational programmes.

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