

The Impact of the GC Trifecta Model of Influence on Consumer Purchase Decision: An Empirical Investigation in Indian Context

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Abstract

GC (Ganguly & Chakraborty) Trifecta framework is a proposed model to validate various influencing agents on consumer buying decisions in a general context. The model has three major measurement constructs, and each construct has been further understood by some industry-tested methods. The constructs are – Emotional Anchoring, Use of Power Words, and Body Language & Communication Mirroring.

The hypotheses were based on the assumptions of the three constructs. Various validated scales have been used to test the hypotheses. The review of the literature has provided solid support for the hypothesis design. It has also said about the studies conducted to date in the domain.

Survey research methods have been followed to collect the item responses. IBM SPSS tool has been used to perform multiple linear regression. The findings stood to be statistically significant for the model and the B-coefficients have been found significant having a positive predictive power over the dependent variable. At the end, theoretical and managerial implications of the study have been discussed followed by a further direction of research on the framework.

Keywords: GC Trifecta model; consumer behavior, NLP, consumer buying process; emotional anchoring; Use of power words; Body language; statistically significant, marketing management

1. Introduction

The purchasing behaviour of consumers is influenced by both external incentives and their buying consciousness, which may lead to a change in behaviour. According to Dawson et al. (2006), buying behaviour is a collection of attitudes that define the patterns of decisions made by customers.

Consumer behaviour encompasses the actions associated with obtaining, using, and discarding products or services, as well as the decision-making process both before and after the event (Blackwell, 2001). The elements influencing consumers' decision-making processes are categorised in a variety of ways by the literature. Koudelka divided them into three main categories: personal, psychological, and social variables, and classified them into inner and exterior components (Koudelka, 1997). Subsequently, Kotler (2001) included cultural influences in the independent category. Situational factors can be classified as the following categories of factors. We make decisions regarding all facets of our lives constantly; typically, we do this without pausing to consider the process of making those decisions or the factors involved (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010).

The marketing four Ps and sociocultural influences are examples of external stimuli that function as informational sources about a specific product and have an impact on a consumer's values, attitudes, and behaviour related to it. When internalised, these factors can have an impact on a consumer's decision to buy (Lawan & Zanna, 2013). Motivation, perception, positions, knowledge and abilities, personalities, and lifestyle choices are examples of psychological factors (Brown, 2006).

Consumer buying is majorly dependent not only on individual factors but also on the trifecta of emotional anchoring, effective words and body language (C J Leon 2008). The shared impact of the trio on consumer buying decisions creates a systematic push in the perceived value among consumer minds. A recognisable and specific event that elicits an emotional response is known as a trigger or emotional anchor. Stated differently, an emotional anchor is a signal that re-creates specific feelings and situations in our subconscious mind. It may, nevertheless, have a variety of shapes, functions, and traits. Emotional Anchors are divided into three major categories:

Visual Anchors - A particular emotion is evoked by almost every sight or visual image that we perceive. Emotions can also be evoked by specific hues, trademarks or insignia, gestures, furnishings, and other elements. When discussing "human" visual anchors—that is, anchors that an individual possesses for others—They are mostly talking about facial characteristics, accessories, haircuts, and scents. For example, if one were to visualise their employer at some moment, what would happen if you could picture your loved one in front of you, how would things be different? Why did they respond differently to both images? They both have additional visual anchors, which is why! As a result, they also elicit various associations and feelings (Pivetti et. al 2017)

Auditory Anchors - Similar to visual anchors, audio anchors are equally prevalent, potent, and impactful on our subconscious minds. They may be irritating noises or bring back happy memories (like tunes). Pitch, tone, intonation, pronunciation, and voice timbre are also regarded as auditory anchors. That's why one could find it repulsive and uneasy to hear some people they know speak (Shigeno, S. (2002))

Kinaesthetic Anchors - These anchors are undoubtedly the strongest of all, yet they are more difficult to identify and perceive. They consist of tastes, smells, and touches as well as sensations. For example, the cuisine of grandmother in childhood would always bring back memories of a good moment in life. But an aggressive boss's cologne would make feel irritated, anxious, and worried. Similarly, tendering. A person can find an anchor in tactile stimuli such as a pat on the shoulder, a hand brush, or anything else (Karunaratne, M. (2010))

Power words are extremely powerful words that smart copywriters and marketers utilise to elicit a strong psychological or emotional response from their audience. There are majorly three types of power words

- Seductive Power Words
- Emotional Power Words
- Sensory / visuals

Mirroring is a nonverbal communication strategy in which an individual mimics the demeanour, tone of voice, or body language of another individual. It is typically done unconsciously and may convey attraction or even interest. Mirroring can happen frequently during social interactions and is frequently ignored (Pines, M. (1984))

GC Trifecta model propose the trio of these above-mentioned factors and its significant impact on general consumer buying behaviour. The model is as follows:

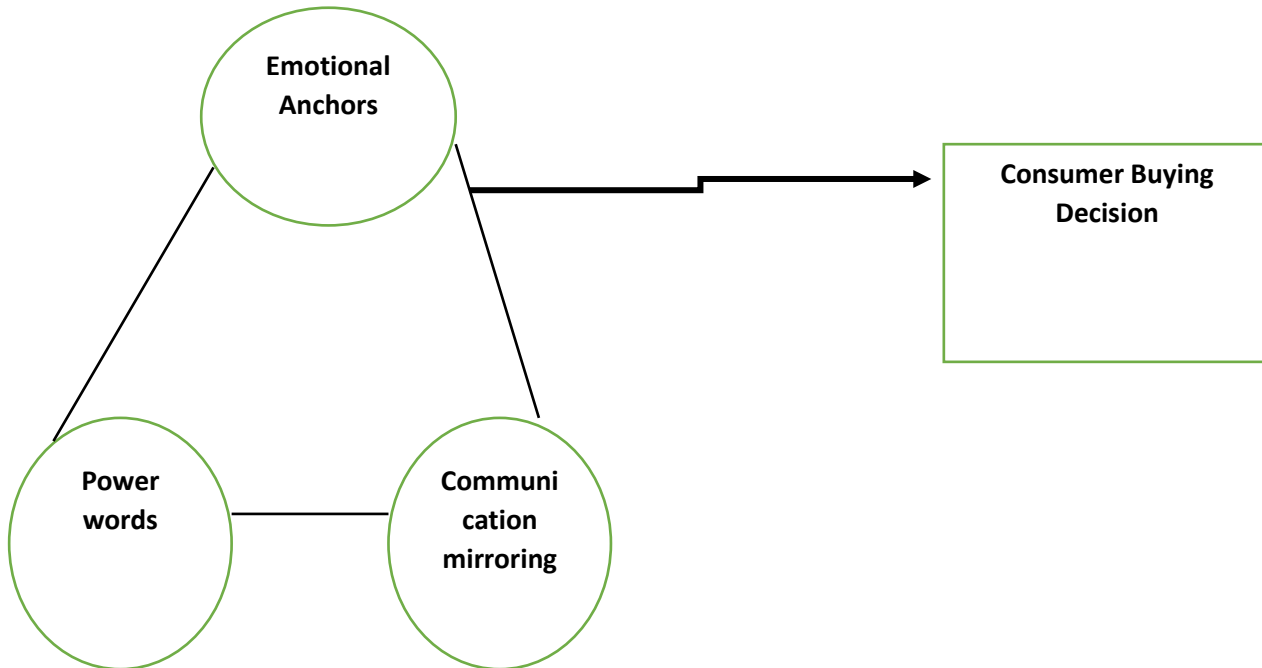


Fig 1. Proposed GC Trifecta Model of Influences

2. Review of Literature & Hypothesis Development

The body of knowledge of consumer decision-making is dated back to the 60s. The seminal models perfected the area to date. The models are:

Simon Model (1960) - According to Simon, choosing decisions is a cognitive process that can be broken down into easy, sequential phases. The intelligence activity, design activity, and choice activity are the three stages of activities that this paradigm divides decision-making into.

Nicosia Model (1966) - This model focuses on the exchange of information that takes place between a brand and a customer. It makes use of an events-flowing, field-identified series of stages.

Engel, Kollat & Blackwell model (1968) - The input, information processing, decision process, and variables influencing the decision process are the elements that make up the decision process of this consumer model. The five steps that make up the decision process component are need awareness, search, alternative evaluation, purchase, and results.

Theory of buyer behaviour by Sheth J. & Howard J.A., (1969) - The idea of this model explains people's purchasing habits throughout time. More precisely, the buyer's brand-choice behaviour. The authors describe the components of the consumer decision process, which include a set of motivations, many alternative courses of action, and decision mediators that help match the alternatives with the motivations. They also note how these components change over time due to repetition and demonstrate how a combination of decision elements influences search processes and the integration of data from the buyer's social and commercial environments. Three stages of consumer decision-making are proposed by this model: comprehensive problem-solving, limited problem-solving, and habitual response behaviour.

Evoked Set model by Narayana C.L. & Markin R.J., (1975) - The phrase "evoked set" is used to describe and categorise all the brands that could fall into the consumer's "awareness set," "inert set," or "inept

set," to explain consumer behaviour. They offered a theoretical framework for likely consumer conduct in the presence of a variety of brands.

Keeney's (1982) four-stage decision-making model - This four-stage model adopts a step-by-step methodology, structuring the choice problem (generating alternatives and defining objectives), evaluating and comparing options, determining the preferences (values) of decision-makers, and assessing the implications of each alternative. The expected complexity at each level is represented by this model.

Rassuli & Harrell model (1990) - The viewpoint put forward here is that decisions and purchases can be seen as tools rather than just the results of a consumer's decision-making process. One can identify the feedback in this way, ranging from decisions to other aspects of customer conduct.

Sheth, Newman & Gross model (1991) - This paradigm outlines five consumption values—functional, social, conditional, emotional, and epistemic—that affect how consumers make decisions. Any or all of the five consumption levels could have an impact on the choice.

Court D., Elzinga D., Mulder S. & Vetnik O.J., (2009) model - This model is more circular than sequential and has four primary phases: initial consideration; active evaluation, or the process of researching potential purchases; closure, when the consumer buys brands; and post-purchase, when consumer experience them.

Kotler & Keller (2012) in their book describe the traditional five-stage model of the consumer decision-making model in detail and explain one additional stage of the model - the disposal stage. Also, they discuss Moderating effects on consumer decision-making (like consumer involvement). After their research, now it has become a 6-stage model of –

Need Recognition → Information search → Evaluation of alternatives → Purchase → post-purchase behaviour → Disposal stage.

The amount of work that goes into a decision each time it needs to be made is how *Solomon et al. (2006)* defined the decision-making process. They discovered that it was useful to consider a continuum that begins with routine decision-making and concludes with in-depth problem-solving. A lot of decisions are characterised by mediocre problem-solving and are in the middle. An extended phase of problem-solving is comparable to the previously mentioned traditional decision-making procedure. Solving limited problems is typically easier and more direct. Instead, people select among options using straightforward decision-making guidelines. Habitual decision-making is the process of choosing choices that are automatic, low-effort, and devoid of cognitive control. It involves little to no conscious thought.

According to a study by *Jorge E. Araña and Carmelo J. León* in 2008, people's preferences and financial behaviour might be influenced by their emotions. The link between emotions and anchoring effects in non-market valuation is examined in this research. The results demonstrate that while anchoring effects are important, evoked preferences are coherent—that is, they adapt to shifts in the good's dimension. It is also discovered that there is a U-shaped link between the degree of anchoring and emotional intensity, with anchoring decreasing until a minimum is attained as emotional intensity increases. Therefore, if emotional intensity veers away from extreme values, anchoring effects may have a significantly smaller impact on preferences. Ultimately, it is discovered that the emotional burden associated with the evaluation task affects the sensitivity to scope.

According to *Li, Maniadis, and Sedikides (2021)*, anchoring—sometimes referred to as the anchoring-and-adjustment heuristic—is one of the most prevalent biases in decision-making. It is also one of the

biases that are studied the most in laboratory research (Beggs & Graddy, 2009). Tversky and Kahneman (1974) initially theorised the anchoring effect, pointing out that people frequently modify their estimates based on reference material that is supplied to them and do not always make logical conclusions. In general, anchoring happens when someone is trying to predict the future value of a phenomenon (Peña, & Gómez-Mejía, 2019) without having access to all pertinent data other than the anchor, which is a particular piece of knowledge presented before a decision (Furnham & Boo, 2011). When the adjustment process begins, an entity's worth is estimated by mentally moving it away from the anchor and then progressively modifying the estimation (Kahneman, 2011). Therefore, anchoring is predicated on the observation that individuals frequently give particular pieces of information excessive weight when evaluating a value throughout the decision-making process (van Exel & van den Berg, 2006; Hess & Orbe, 2013).

Mirroring is the practice of mimicking the spoken and nonverbal behaviours of people we are interacting with. This method fosters empathy and understanding among communicators. Put another way, it facilitates interpersonal connections. Mirroring the listener's body language mimics their mannerisms. The second part of this strategy is to mirror the style. This refers especially to sales and marketing, where it entails paying attention to what the customer or listener is most interested in. Do they have a preference for discussing statistics and numbers? Or do they focus more on the details? As a result, one can change what to say and what they find interesting. Gesture-mirroring is the practice of mimicking specific motions, like nodding or shoulder shrugging, that the listener employs to indicate agreement or comprehension (C Navarretta 2016)

By the summarisation of the above studies, we came to know that both seminal and contemporary research on the influences on consumer decision-making redirects to a scope of making the trifecta model viable. Based on the study gaps of earlier studies, hence, the following hypotheses can be made –

- H1: Visual content has a positive impact on customer buying decision
- H2: Customer satisfaction has a positive impact on the customer buying decision
- H3: Appealing content has a positive impact on the customer buying decision
- H4: Customer engagement has a positive impact on the customer buying decision
- H5: Customer reviews have a positive impact on the customer buying decision
- H6: Customer loyalty has a positive impact on the customer buying decision
- H7: Proxemics has a positive impact on the customer buying decision
- H8: Kinesics has a positive impact on the customer buying decision
- H9: Paralanguage has a positive impact on the customer buying decision
- H10: Physical Appearance has a positive impact on the customer buying decision
- H11: Brand attachment(emotional) has a positive impact on the customer buying decision

3. Conceptual framework of the study

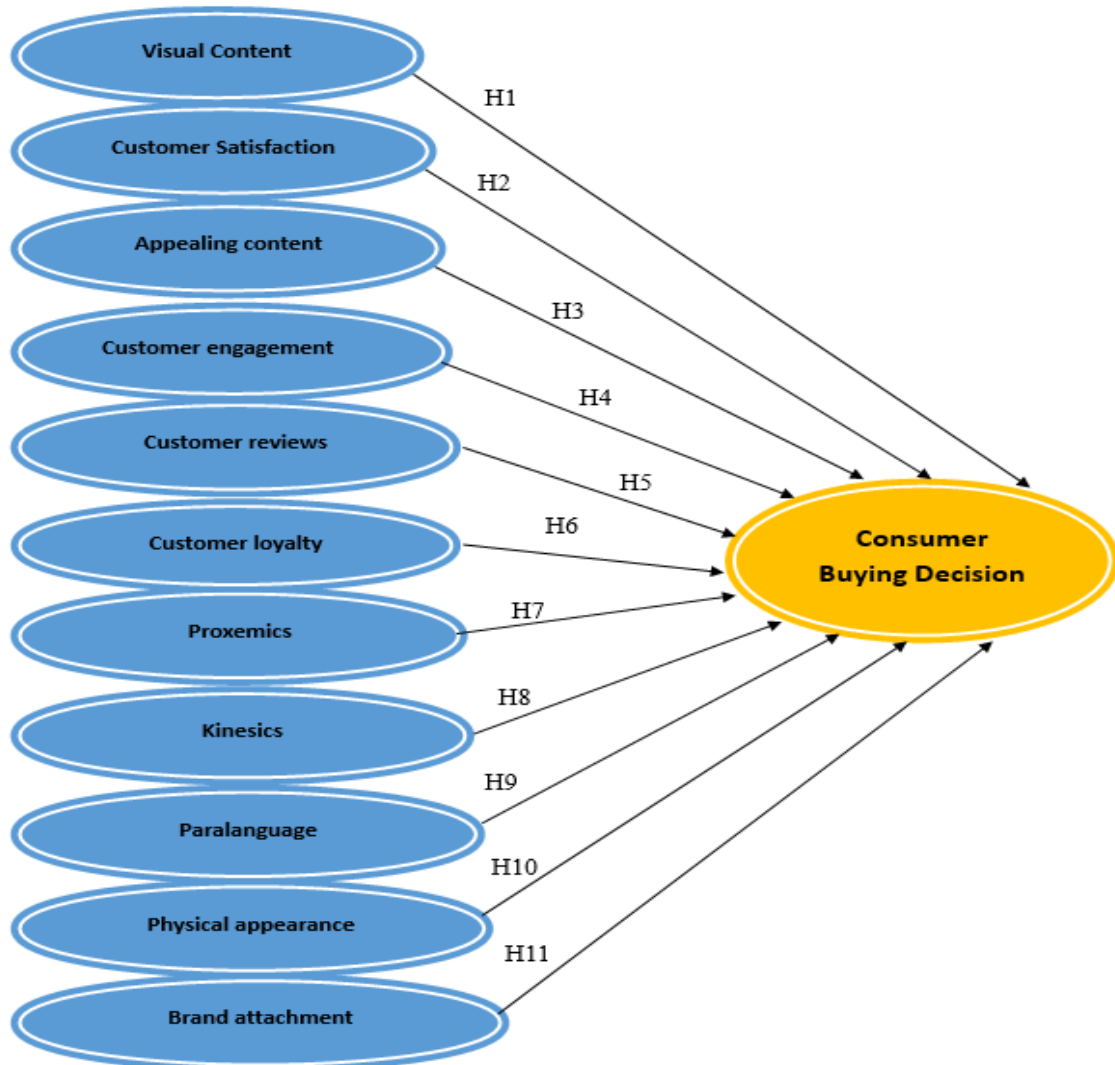


Fig 2. Conceptual Framework of GC Trifecta Model Study

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Instrument design

To measure each construct, they have been further divided into operational variables. The study uses different scales to measure the effectiveness of these variables and also to assess the impact of these variables on customers buying, through a large respondent survey across the corners of the country.

Emotional anchoring measurement tries to capture the status of positive consumer affirmations towards the brand. The measurement is based on VES scales, Weiss & Kivela Scale, etc.

The use of Power words, also called appealing content creation tries to capture the influence of relevant content towards buying decisions. Its measurement is based on Obermiller & Spangenberg's (1998) scale, Van Reijmersdal et al. (2016) scale, Vashisht & Royné (2016) scale, etc.

The body language and communication mirroring try to capture the importance of verbal cues for the consumer. Its measurement is based on a questionnaire that includes various dimensions like proxemics, kinesics, paralanguage, and physical appearance that lead to positive or negative emotions and finally to purchase intention. The scale is based on Hyo Sun Jung & Hye Hyun Yoon's research.

4.2 Sample Profile

The population of this study is limited to consumers in the age group of 18 to 48. The sample replies have been collected online, majorly from Google link. The convenience sampling method was used to collect the data. The reason for choosing convenience sampling is the study surveyed through an online survey. It is a low-cost and easy method to reach a wider network of respondents. The total responses received were 225 and out of that 200 were found to be fit for analyses based on the post-survey error treatment.

4.3 Data Analysis Method

The collected responses are included and coded in the IBM SPSS tool. After having the descriptive statistics data, the multiple linear regression method is used to test the hypotheses. There are 11 independent variables (IDVs) and a single dependent variable (DV) in consumer decision-making. All the scale items' reliability scores have been obtained from the Cronbach Alpha method and the score satisfies the threshold. The multiple regression method results in model fit summary and *b*-coefficient tables.

5. Results

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Case Statistics							
		Age	gender	income/month	Occupation	Educational level	Marital Status
N	Valid	200	200	200	200	200	200
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 1 shows that there is no missing value in the entire data analysis process. The 200 fiot responses are all recorded for further analysis.

Table 2. Age statistics

Age					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18	6	3.0	3.0	3.0
	19	12	6.0	6.0	9.0
	20	37	18.5	18.5	27.5
	21	25	12.5	12.5	40.0
	22	12	6.0	6.0	46.0
	23	6	3.0	3.0	49.0
	24	6	3.0	3.0	52.0
	25	12	6.0	6.0	58.0
	26	18	9.0	9.0	67.0
	27	12	6.0	6.0	73.0
	30	12	6.0	6.0	79.0
	33	6	3.0	3.0	82.0

	35	6	3.0	3.0	85.0
	42	12	6.0	6.0	91.0
	45	6	3.0	3.0	94.0
	48	6	3.0	3.0	97.0
	69	6	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 shows that most of the respondents are young adults and fall between 20-26 years of age.

Table 3. Gender Stats

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	36	18.0	18.0	18.0
	Female	91	45.5	45.5	63.5
	Prefer not to say	73	36.5	36.5	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 shows the gender diversity of the respondents. Most of the respondents are female (45%) followed by prefer not to say categories

Table 4. Income Profile

Income/month					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	less than 15000	30	15.0	15.0	15.0
	15000-25000	91	45.5	45.5	60.5
	25000-35000	30	15.0	15.0	75.5
	35000-45000	18	9.0	9.0	84.5
	45000 & above	25	12.5	12.5	97.0
	60000 & above	6	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 shows the income profile of the respondents. Most of the respondents (45.5%) monthly income is between Rs 15000 to 25000.

Table 5. Occupation Profile

Occupation					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	service	55	27.5	27.5	27.5
	business	36	18.0	18.0	45.5
	student	109	54.5	54.5	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Table 5 shows the occupation diversity of the respondents. Most of them are students (54.5%) followed by service holders (27.5%)

Table 6. Educational Profile

Educational level					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	School Pass	56	28.0	28.0	28.0
	Professional graduate	24	12.0	12.0	40.0
	Post-Graduate	30	15.0	15.0	55.0
	PG & above	36	18.0	18.0	73.0
	Graduate	54	27.0	27.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Table 6 shows the educational profile of the respondents. Most of them are school pass-outs (28%) and graduates (27%)

Table 7. Marital Status

Marital Status					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Single	140	70.0	70.0	70.0
	Married	54	27.0	27.0	97.0
	Divorced	6	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Table 7 shows that most of the respondents are single (70%) followed by married ones (27%).

Table 8. Item Reliability Score

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.643	12

Table 8 shows scale item reliability scores tested through the Cronbach Alpha method. For social science, the cut-off score is .6 and above. The result has achieved this threshold. So, it can be concluded that scale items indicate a good fit for the analysis and there is internal consistency among the scale items.

Table 9.1 Regression Summary

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.993 ^a	.985	.985	.39244	.985	1155.906	11	189	.000
a. Predictors: BA_M, VC_M, KN_M, CR_M, CL_M, PR_M, CS_M, PL_M, PA_M, AC_M, CE_M									
BA- Brand Attachment, VC -Visual Content, KN – Kinesthesia, CR – Consumer Review, CL- Customer loyalty, PR – Proxemics, CS- Customer satisfaction, PL – Paralanguage, PA – Physical appearance, AC – Appealing content, CE – Customer engagement									
b. Dependent variable: Consumer Buying Decision									

The model summary of Table 9.1 shows the multiple linear regression outputs of the model. For the dependent variable consumer buying decision the model explains 98% of the variance (R² value is .985 at 95% CI level) that may be explained by independent variables (BA, VC, KN, CR, CL, PR, CS, PL, PA, AC, CE) included. The F value is more than 2.5 ensuring a good variance in the data. The significance value is under .05, which ensures the model is statistically significance and the chosen predictors can best describe the predicted (CBD)

Table 9.2 Regression co-efficient

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	VC_M	.391	.043	.430	9.070	.000
	CS_M	.034	.054	.026	.414	.027
	AC_M	.067	.048	.080	1.027	.008
	CE_M	.092	.074	.067	1.010	.006
	CR_M	.458	.056	.489	8.167	.000
	CL_M	.271	.052	.333	5.239	.000
	PR_M	.056	.039	.052	.908	.000
	KN_M	.086	.047	.093	1.827	.039
	PL_M	.117	.062	.201	3.067	.000
	PA_M	.188	.042	.260	4.002	.000
	BA_M	.183	.039	.191	4.664	.000

Dependent Variable: CBD_M

Table 9.2 shows the coefficient table that depicts the predictive power of independent variables.

The effect size of VC, CR, CL, PL, PA and BA over CBD is greater, positive and statistically significant. The other predictors like CS, AC, CE, PR and KN have a positive and statistically significant impact but with a lesser effect size. So, we consider all these coefficients as good predictors. In terms of the highest positive effect size, the independent variable CR has the highest effect with a score of .489 and the lowest being the CS with a score of .026

Table 10. Hypothesis findings

Hypothesis	Standardized Co-efficient	Significance level	Supported / Not supported
H1: Visual content has a positive impact on customer buying decision	.430	.000	Supported
H2: Customer satisfaction has a positive impact on the customer's buying decision	.026	.027	Supported
H3: Appealing content has a positive impact on the customer's buying decision	.080	.008	Supported
H4: Customer engagement has a positive impact on the customer's buying decision	.067	.006	Supported
H5: Customer reviews have a positive impact on the customer's buying decision	.489	.000	Supported
H6: Customer loyalty has a positive impact on the customer's buying decision	.333	.000	Supported
H7: Proxemics has a positive impact on the customer's buying decision	.052	.000	Supported
H8: Kinesics has a positive impact on the customer's buying decision	.093	.039	Supported
H8: Kinesics has a positive impact on the customer's buying decision	.201	.000	Supported

customer's buying decision	.260	.000	Supported
H9: Paralanguage has a positive impact on the customer's buying decision	.191	.000	Supported
H10: Physical Appearance has a positive impact on the customer buying decision			
H11: Brand attachment(emotional) has a positive impact on the customer's buying decision			

6. Discussions

The American psychologist Kurt Lewin developed a mathematical pattern to express and describe consumer behaviour: $B = f(P < E)$ where

B is behaviour; P – endogenous influences; E – exogenous influences

Both kinds of influences have covered societal, individual and family factors. But the GC Trifecta model has come up with something new in this paradigm.

The results of the study are mixed. On one hand, the regression model is a good fit model to explain and on the other hand, the b-coefficient table gives a different perspective. In that table, some predictors are statistically significant and have a positive effect and some are not. This explains that there is an extreme variance in the data and that is causing surprising co-relations in the same study.

The GC model predictors are formative in nature to their constructs and their item reliability has been tested and found satisfactory.

Even in the context of neuromarketing, emotional anchoring has a great role in understanding their impact on marketing. This study has used the anchoring effect as a parameter. According to Varian (2006), people's decisions can be impacted by entirely false information due to the effect of anchoring. An individual or group of people will be persuaded to base their purchasing decisions for a particular product on this anchoring price if they are exposed to any information regarding the pricing of the product. Only in cases where the person is inclined to purchase the product can the proposed number be regarded as an anchor. In these circumstances, people tend to be swayed by information gleaned from their surroundings, but they also fiercely stick to their decision once it has been made, no matter what.

The other predictors like, consumer reviews and loyalty, brand attachment etc. have come out as significant influencers in the consumer buying process. GC model empirically validated the fact consumer buying decisions do not only depend on eco-socio-cultural factors but also on certain trio facets that affect the decision.

However, due to limited sample size and geography, the study can't guarantee the generalisation of the model. But it surely opens up a new area to investigate in future.

7. Conclusion and future direction of research

The GC (Ganguly & Chakraborty) Trifecta framework model might have been empirically tested in this paper but the study leaves several questions for the next researchers. The study shows how a trifecta of emotional anchoring, non-verbal communication and the use of powerful words/visuals can influence the buying decision of an average consumer across the purchase situations. It has also tested whether all the hypotheses have been met or not. As per the collected data, all of the hypotheses have been met significantly (statistically) with some of them having a greater effect size on consumer buying decisions. The further direction of the study indicates finding more relevant variables and testing their impact on the model. The study has augmented the thermotical paradigm of the area of influencers in the consumer buying process. The study also recommends that practitioners follow the trifecta study to design their marketing promotions because now they will have a ready reckoner on the influencing variables. Investing in those variables may lead to good ROAS (return on ad spent). It also suggests designing the creatives according to the effect size of the predictors, to get the best equity out of the effort. Most of the time it is the visual content, customer reviews and loyalty followed by satisfaction that works in our favour. The non-verbal communication of the sales guy has also been found to significantly impact the buying over other parameters. It is not clear from this study that if we detach one of the constructs from the model and attach a new one, will it work or not? That also calls for further investigation. The study also has a limited review of literature, maybe more mining can result in more appropriate variable (predictor) identification. But surely the trifecta study laid the foundation for validating the trio effect on consumer buying, which was together never the case in consumer research earlier.

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